

No. 21 of 2010



FIFTH NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

**PARLIAMENTARY DEBATE
(HANSARD)**

**FIRST SESSION
TUESDAY 30 NOVEMBER 2010**

*Ministers**Ministers***THE CABINET****(Formed by Dr. the Hon. Navinchandra Ramgoolam)**

Dr. the Hon. Navinchandra Ramgoolam, GCSK, FRCP	<i>Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications</i>
Dr. the Hon. Ahmed Rashid Beebeejaun, GCSK, FRCP	<i>Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities</i>
Hon. Charles Gaëtan Xavier-Luc Duval, GCSK	<i>Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Social Integration and Economic Empowerment</i>
Hon. Pravind Kumar Jugnauth	<i>Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development</i>
Hon. Anil Kumar Bachoo	<i>Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping</i>
Dr. the Hon. Arvin Boolell	<i>Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade</i>
Dr. the Hon. Abu Twalib Kasenally, FRCS	<i>Minister of Housing and Lands</i>
Hon. Mrs Sheilabai Bappoo, GOSK	<i>Minister of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare</i>
Hon. Nandcoomar Bodha	<i>Minister of Tourism and Leisure</i>
Dr. the Hon. Vasant Kumar Bunwaree	<i>Minister of Education and Human Resources</i>
Hon. Satya Veyash Faugoo	<i>Minister of Agro-Industry and Food Security</i>
Hon. Showkutally Soodhun	<i>Minister of Industry and Commerce</i>
Hon. Devanand Virahsawmy, GOSK	<i>Minister of Environment and Sustainable Development</i>
Dr. the Hon. Rajeshwar Jeetah	<i>Minister of Tertiary Education, Science, Research and Technology</i>
Hon. Satyaprakash Ritoo	<i>Minister of Youth and Sports</i>
Hon. Mrs Leela Devi Dookun-Luchoomun	<i>Minister of Social Security, National Solidarity and Reform Institutions</i>
Hon. Louis Hervé Aimée	<i>Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands</i>
Hon. Mrs Santi Bai Hanoomanjee	<i>Minister of Health and Quality of Life</i>
Hon. Mookhesswur Choonee	<i>Minister of Arts and Culture</i>
Hon. Tassarajen Pillay Chedumbrum	<i>Minister of Information and Communication Technology</i>
Hon. Louis Joseph Von-Mally, GOSK	<i>Minister of Fisheries and Rodrigues</i>
Hon. Ashit Kumar Gungah	<i>Minister of Civil Service and Administrative Reforms</i>
Hon Shakeel Ahmed Yousuf Abdul Razack Mohamed	<i>Minister of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment</i>
Hon Yatindra Nath Varma	<i>Attorney General</i>
Hon John Michaël Tzoun Sao Yeung Sik Yuen	<i>Minister of Business, Enterprise, Cooperatives and Consumer Protection</i>

Members

Members

PRINCIPAL OFFICERS AND OFFICIALS

<i>Mr Speaker</i>	Purryag, Hon. Rajkeswur, GCSK, GOSK
<i>Deputy Speaker</i>	Roopun, Hon. Prithvirajsing
<i>Deputy Chairman of Committees</i>	Hossen, Hon. Abdullah Hafeez
<i>Clerk of the National Assembly</i>	Dowlutta, Mr R. Ranjit
<i>Deputy Clerk</i>	Lotun, Mrs B. Safeena
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MAURITIUS

Fifth National Assembly

FIRST SESSION

Debate No. 21 of 2010

Sitting of Tuesday 30 November 2010

The Assembly met in the Assembly House, Port Louis,

at 11.30 a.m.

The National Anthem was played

(Mr Speaker in the Chair)

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RODRIGUES REGIONAL ASSEMBLY - BUDGETARY REQUESTS

The Leader of the Opposition (Mr P. Bérenger) (*by Private Notice*), asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to the 2011 budget for Rodrigues, he will state the budgetary requests made by the Rodrigues Regional Assembly, compared to the sums provided for in the 2011 Estimates, in particular, in relation to –

- (a) the expansion of Plaine Corail Airport;
- (b) an under-the-sea cable for the development of internet and ICT activities;
- (c) the development of local water resources;
- (d) social housing;
- (e) the fisheries sector, and
- (f) sports development.

The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development (Mr P. Jugnauth): Mr Speaker, Sir, the budgetary requests made by the Rodrigues Regional Assembly (RRA) must be considered in the context of the overall budget allocation to all Government Departments and Local Authorities in the Republic of Mauritius.

In this context, the overall requests for spending in 2011 were about Rs12.5 billion above the level appropriated by the National Assembly for 2010 whilst we could only responsibly afford to increase expenditure by Rs7.5 billion. It was, therefore, inevitable, as in all budgetary exercises, to prioritise and provide additional financing as compared to 2010 where it would have the biggest impact on growth and to consolidate social justice. Moreover, it is a general principle of good budgeting that only well prepared projects with a good feasibility study should be funded.

The Project Plan Committee routinely requests Ministries and Departments that have submitted a concept idea to turn this into a properly evaluated project. In such cases, where the idea seems worthwhile, funds may be provided to finance the feasibility study. Such a process is important to ensure that public money is spent on only well prepared projects that are viable. It

is with these various elements in mind that the Estimates Committee for Rodrigues approached the subject matter.

The Estimates Committee for Rodrigues recommended that a good share of the additional current spending requests be accommodated. In fact, they recommended a 7 percent increase for the RRA notwithstanding the difficult budgetary situation. Similarly, the Estimates Committee has recommended a 10.1 percent increase in the Capital Budget for Rodrigues.

The total recommended by the Estimates Committee amounts to Rs1.6 billion, almost an 8 percent increase compared with 2010. The main reductions made by the Estimates Committee to the capital projects requested by the Rodrigues Regional Assembly concern –

- concept ideas for development of water resources consisting of dams, desalination and subsidy to the Rodrigues Water Company Ltd in the form of equity;
- additional funding to meet the large excess spending above the agreed project value for the Port Mathurin market, and
- increasing subsidy to the Rodrigues General Fishing Company, which is supposed to be self financing.

In the case of the water resources, we have provided Rs50 m. for continuing the very effective programme for rehabilitation, cleaning and maintenance of small dams for water catchment and supply, and for promoting rain water harvesting.

Larger investments in dams and desalination are being considered as part of the assistance from the *Agence Française de Développement (AFD)*. A feasibility study by the AFD concluded that Pistache dam is not a viable project pending the geological survey. Similarly, the feasibility study for the desalination project has concluded that it would only be viable if we can mobilise grants from development partners. AFD is assisting in this process and AFD is also undertaking studies on water security and support for irrigation. Once the results are available, we will provide funding for viable options.

It should also be noted that, under the provisions of autonomy to Rodrigues, the Budget only provides a block grant to the Rodrigues Regional Assembly, which decides on its own priorities. Therefore, the issue of which projects we are funding does not arise directly, whether,

with regard to Plaine Corail Airport, an undersea cable, social housing, the fisheries sector or sports development, unless these are funded directly by the national budget.

In this regard, Mr Speaker, Sir, the House may wish to note that this Budget is providing funding for a feasibility study under the Ministry of Rodrigues for the undersea cable and for the Plaine Corail Airport. Mr Speaker, Sir, we could have financed the airport study earlier, but we were expecting the Rodrigues Regional Assembly to do so as a priority. In this respect, the selection of the consultants for the airport is in the process of being finalised.

We are also providing additional funding for the fisheries sector as announced in my Budget Speech and Rodrigues will also benefit from our national efforts on housing. All five schemes are open to Rodrigues.

The national budget is providing funding to Rodrigues, *inter alia*, for the following items -

- Rs40 m. to Rodrigues for the purchase of semi-industrial boats;
- Rs10 m. for the slaughterhouse under the Ministry of Agro-Industry;
- Rs10 m. for preparation and fencing of agricultural land;
- Rs10 m. from the Local Infrastructure Fund for infrastructure projects;
- Rs40 m. under the ERCP for the Special Holiday Package Scheme that has boosted tourism above the projected targets;
- Rs15 m. under the NEF for a variety of empowerment projects under the Rodrigues Project Executive Committee and further funding is expected from other national programmes such as CIS housing and education for vulnerable groups and water storage;
- Rs16 m. for replacing of the synthetic track at Camp du Roi stadium;
- Rodrigues will also benefit from national programmes such as solar water heater, water tank schemes, SC and HSC subsidies on exam fees amongst others;
- similarly, Rodrigues will benefit from tax measures such as duty free on 4X4;
- in addition, DBM, Enterprise Mauritius, SMEDA and other agencies are providing financial resources to SME's development in Rodrigues. DBM has alone provided some Rs214 m. over the last five years;

- Rodrigues is also benefiting from our efforts to improve law and order and revenue collection, which remain under Central Government responsibility and where increased spending will also benefit Rodrigues, and
- Public Sector pensions for Rodrigues also continue to be paid by our Budget.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the budget for the Rodrigues Regional Assembly also provides for the neediest. We have provided all the funding required to meet social aid and pension obligations, including for the increase above the rate of inflation in the benefits. In addition, funds have been provided for Rodrigues to the Ministry of Social Integration for Eradication of Absolute Poverty and the Education of Children from Vulnerable Groups.

Mr Speaker, Sir, beyond the wide range of interventions by the Central Government, the numbers demonstrate our commitment to Rodrigues. The grant to the budget of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly will rise to over Rs42,000 per citizen in 2011 from some Rs27,000 at the time autonomy was introduced, an increase of 57 percent. In contrast, proposed spending per citizen on local authorities in Mauritius for 2011 is less than Rs1,600.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the data speaks eloquently on our commitment to both the autonomy of Rodrigues and its development. Rodrigues and the outer islands are clearly an integral part of our efforts for rebalancing growth and consolidating social justice.

Mr Bérenger: Mr Speaker, Sir, in spite of the figures, which the hon. Minister of Finance has quoted, I am sure he must be aware *que la colère gronde à Rodrigues*, but before I get to that, I would like a few points of clarification. In the Budget Speech, at paragraph 274, the hon. Minister said -

“We are providing Rs50 m. to the Rodrigues Regional Assembly for its water projects.”

And he added -

“This is over and above its budgetary allocation of Rs1.55 billion.”

Yet, when we go to the estimates of the Ministry of Fisheries and Rodrigues at page 545, we have two block grants: the current grant, which is Rs1.244 billion and the capital grant, which is Rs360 m. - which add up exactly to Rs1.6 billion. Why talk of the budgetary allocation of Rs1.55 billion? In fact, the budgetary allocation in the estimates is Rs1.6 billion. What I want to know is why that Rs50 m. was kind of treated separately in that paragraph where, as I said, when

you add the two grants, the budgetary allocation is not Rs1.55 billion, but Rs1.6 billion? What is the point there?

Mr Jugnauth: Mr Speaker, Sir, my first visit outside Mauritius was to Rodrigues. I wanted to have consultations with the stakeholders of Rodrigues with a view to preparing the Budget. Although, we had already agreed on a capital budget at that time, of course, there were a lot of representations about a number of projects including water. When I visited the different parts of the island looking at the problems that Rodriguans were facing with regard to water, I, in fact, told the Commissioner for Rodrigues and the stakeholders there that the situation is very, very difficult and tight. However, I will look into the matter and I will see what best we can do in order to continue to support Rodrigues facing that problem. Of course, when we worked here, while preparing the Budget for Mauritius, we took that into consideration and, therefore, we were able to make a special effort for Rodrigues. This is how the Rs50 m. has been earmarked for different water projects in Rodrigues.

Mr Bérenger: Therefore bringing up the budgetary allocation to Rs1.6 billion and not Rs1.55 billion! Can I ask the hon. Minister, on recurrent expenditure, the Budget allocates Rs1.244 billion; the Chief Commissioner of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly alleges that, in fact, correspondence shows that the Ministry of Finance had already agreed to Rs1.264 billion and they are, therefore, complaining that there are Rs20 m. missing as far as recurrent expenditure is considered? Can I have a point of clarification?

Mr Jugnauth: Mr Speaker, Sir, with regard to that specific point of Rs20 m. to the Rodrigues Water Company Ltd., let me give some explanations. I hope the House will bear with me. First of all, there is a correspondence to the Island Chief Secretary stating that private companies that are going to be set up should be financially sustainable and that Rodrigues Regional Assembly should not provide any subsidy directly or indirectly. The companies should submit a business plan together with an audited annual report and so on. This correspondence dates back to 05 June 2008.

Secondly, there was a question that was asked by the hon. Member representing Rodrigues in PQ No. 1B/159 at the sitting of 29 June 2010, whereby I replied that my Ministry has informed the Rodrigues Regional Assembly that those companies that are being set up and, with regard to the specific company, it should be financially sustainable and that, again, I

emphasized that the Rodrigues Regional Assembly should not provide any subsidy directly or indirectly to this company.

Thirdly, Mr Speaker, Sir, why did I answer in that direction? It is because there is the report of the Audit. Let me quote - I will not go long because I hope that Members can take note...

(Interruptions)

Yes, but I need to explain! There is the management letter from the Director of Audit which clearly says, and I will just read the conclusion -

“(...) that the Rodrigues Regional Assembly may have to revisit its stand regarding the existence of these private companies which are wholly owned by Government, because (according to him) there was a lack of transparency and funds, which were being spent, were not being accounted for.”

If we go to the Audit Report itself, there is the conclusion that the Rodrigues Regional Assembly should ensure that the companies must submit regular reports and so on and so forth, and again criticizing this issue. That is why I spoke personally to the Island Commissioner, informing him – he was already aware, but I emphasized on these reports from the Director of Audit - on a matter of principle also that we could not agree to financing to the tune of Rs20 m. this water company. Do you know what was his reaction at that time? He told me that he understood the situation and, in fact, when they had revised their proposal through the Estimates Committee, they had removed the Rs20 m. from those estimates that were submitted to the Ministry of Finance. Therefore, I thought it was understood; I see now that not only the Commissioner is making a lot of noise, but also this Opposition is saying that...

(Interruptions)

Mr Bérenger: The Chief Commissioner will react to what is being said by the Minister – the Chief Commissioner is not here. Why is he so nervous? I am asking for clarification.

(Interruptions)

He should cool down! It is that kind of behaviour that makes him earn certain epithets. On Capital Budget, Mr Speaker, Sir, I understand that the Rodrigues Regional Assembly had requested for Rs608 m. They have been granted a capital grant of Rs360 m. which, according to

my figures, is an increase of only Rs33 m. in the capital grant, therefore, a shortfall, as per their request of Rs248 m. I am sure that the hon. Minister is aware that the reaction has been that there is no way that any new project will get going with that kind of money. Is the Minister prepared to have a fresh look at the capital grant and increase it in a way that it will allow Rodrigues, as far as capital development is concerned, to move forward?

Mr Jugnauth: I am not nervous at all, Mr Speaker, Sir, and I would request everybody to keep cool. When I look at the figures, the request that was made for capital project is Rs510 m. What has been granted is Rs360 m. but, again, when you look at the list of projects, when you look at the amount that has already been earmarked out of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly's budget by different Ministries - I did not have the time to compute the figures - I would not be surprised if it goes beyond the Rs510 m.

Mr Bérenger: The hon. Minister should do his addition before he says something like that; it does not add up. The Minister has said that we vote two block grants: capital and recurrent, and it is the Rodrigues Regional Assembly that decides on priorities and the allocation of those grants. The Chief Commissioner, for his part, says: No, *l'esprit de l'autonomie a été violé*, decisions are taken here. I would like to have the reaction of the Minister on that, and, at the same time, to see more clearly; to say how many times did the Minister of Finance meet with the Chief Commissioner before finalising those two grants - capital and recurrent?

Mr Jugnauth: Well, as I said, my first visit outside Mauritius, Mr Speaker, Sir, was to Rodrigues. With the hon. Prime Minister, we talked about it and he supported me all the time that I should make a trip to Rodrigues. The fact that I visited Rodrigues by itself shows the consideration that we are giving to Rodrigues. They were the first ones with whom I had consultations for the Budget.

The hon. Leader of the Opposition is saying that *ce n'est pas l'esprit de l'autonomie*. I understand *l'esprit de l'autonomie* to be different, unless there is a new interpretation about *l'autonomie*. *L'autonomie* is that we discussed and we have had meetings when I was in Rodrigues. We have had telephone conversations with stakeholders. I have had regular meetings with my colleague, Minister Von-Mally with regard to Rodrigues specifically and we have agreed on an amount with respect to capital projects.

Mr Speaker, Sir, it will be up to them - and this is within the principle of autonomy - to decide for which project they would give priority. I will give you one example, Mr Speaker, Sir. I think that is the most obvious one that I can quote. We all want to support Rodrigues, especially with regard to the tourism and infrastructural sectors. With regard to the Plaine Corail Airport, as I said in my reply, had the Rodrigues Regional Assembly treated it as a priority – we have spent four years now – the feasibility study would have been over by now. Then, my colleague has been pressing for that. When I was there, I talked to the Commissioner and I told him if he can, at least, move on that issue. I am happy that the consultant will be chosen in a matter of days. Ultimately we will look at this study and we will see how best we can support Rodrigues.

Mr Bérenger: We have had reactions to what is being said on the expansion of Plaine Corail Airport and on the undersea cable for the development of Internet and ICT activities in Rodrigues. I am sure the hon. Minister will agree with me that the intention is good. They want to create employment. The idea is through the airport, tourism, but also through export of agricultural products and Call Centres, ICT development in general. We will see who is responsible for things to have dragged on according to the hon. Minister. Will he agree with me that this should be the priority: Plaine Corail expansion and this undersea cable for the development of Internet and ICT activities in Rodrigues?

Mr Jugnauth: Mr Speaker, Sir, *on ne peut pas être plus royaliste que le roi!* If, for the past four years, the Rodrigues Regional Assembly has not thought it as a priority to engage into tender for the consultancy for the feasibility project, who are we to go there and tell them: “no, you must do this, because this is what we think is best for you.” I have just said. I have consistently requested the Commissioner and the other stakeholders that, for us, I think, it is a priority. I agree with the hon. Leader of the Opposition it is a priority, but then they must move on also. If they move on, we are going to support.

Mr Bérenger: I am glad that the hon. Minister has not insinuated even *entre les lignes* that the request in terms of capital grant by the Rodrigues Regional Assembly is not exaggerated. They are at a turning point. They want to start new projects; they want to get development going. Is the hon. Minister aware of the statements made by Mr Wong So, former Commissioner for Rodrigues, now Chairperson of the Rodrigues Airport Company, also in charge of the Empowerment Fund in Rodrigues who, only this morning, said that, at least, Rs500 m. are

requested to solve the water problem? He knows Rodrigues; he is a responsible person and what he is arguing is that without this water deadlock being broken, nothing else will follow. Therefore, I ask again if the hon. Minister is prepared to have a fresh look at the capital grant.

Mr Jugnauth: Mr Speaker, Sir, the Republic of Mauritius is at a juncture where we are seeing what is unfolding with regard to the European economies and I don't want to go into the details because people are aware now, they know what is happening. This is why I stated in the Budget, we have to be very careful but, at the same time, we have to strike a balance between capital spending and what we can afford. We should not sacrifice on capital spending, but then our resources are not unlimited also. We have to take decisions but, at the same time, we have to support the social justice principle that this Government is standing for.

Therefore, with regard to Rodrigues, also there are decisions to be made and, as I said, whilst there were representations with regard to water in Rodrigues, I assured the stakeholders in Rodrigues that we will try to do our best here. This is why we have made an additional allocation of Rs50 m. specifically for water. It is not only a problem in Rodrigues. We all know that for Mauritius also, it is a problem, and we have to allocate resources. I think we have done and we have struck a right balance with the limited resources that we have. I will let it for people to judge on that balance.

Mr Bérenger: Does the budgetary provision for Rodrigues allow for, and is it intended for, the NHDC to start activities in Rodrigues; to construct, therefore, cheap social housing? As far as the fisheries sector is concerned, last year we voted Rs6 m. in the 2010 Estimates for an aquaculture project in Rodrigues. Can I know what has happened to that aquaculture project in Rodrigues?

Mr Jugnauth: With regard to the aquaculture, I know that the Ministry for Rodrigues is going ahead with the project because MRC is undertaking this study. With regard to housing, as I said in my reply, all the schemes that I have announced are applicable for Mauritius and Rodrigues as well. Let me also add since it has been kind enough for my officer to do the addition - with regard to the capital grant of Rs360 m., when we add up all the other projects it comes to Rs501 m. altogether.

Mr Bérenger: We have a capital grant of Rs360 m. It is in the Budget and the Minister, himself, confirms that the capital grant *in toto* is Rs360 m., so we can't go outside the budget, of course.

As far as sports development is concerned, I understand that this is a very touchy issue in Rodrigues. Has a financial provision been allowed for to set up a Rodrigues Sports Council? I understand that the Rodrigues Regional Assembly made a request that funds be provided for Rodrigues - like Mayotte - to take part in the Jeux des Iles de l'Océan Indien separately from the mainland teams? We know the situation in Mayotte, Comores and so on. Has provision been made for these two items?

Mr Jugnauth: With regard to the first part of the comment that was made by the hon. Leader of the Opposition, I am not going outside the budget. What I am saying is: there is a block grant of Rs360 m. for capital projects, but there are Ministries which have already provided an amount for other projects which are not counted in the capital block grant. Therefore, those must be counted. I mean I am a bit surprised that the hon. Leader of the Opposition has made this comment.

Secondly, with regard to the sports sector, again, Mr Speaker, Sir, there is autonomy. I mean what is best for Rodrigues will be decided by the Rodrigues Regional Assembly. I know that, for example, when I was there, mention was made about the Camp du Roi stadium. A synthetic track has to be replaced and, again for this project also, we are providing, I think, Rs16 m. I will leave it for the Rodrigues Regional Assembly to decide on what projects they want to go ahead.

Mr Speaker: Last question!

Mr Bérenger: My last question, Mr Speaker, Sir: as I said, the hon. Minister must be aware *que la colère grande à Rodrigues*. Can I ask the hon. Minister what step does Government, the Minister, intend to take *pour désamorcer la crise entre Rodrigues et le gouvernement central*? Is he going to meet the Chief Commissioner urgently - we know that legislation provides for the Chief Commissioner to be invited exceptionally by the Prime Minister to meet with Cabinet on that issue only - or is the Prime Minister and the Minister of Finance going to meet, not just the Chief Commissioner, but the Minister for Rodrigues and

other Commissioners? There is an urgent need de *désamorcer la crise*. Can we be enlightened what way forward the Government is looking at?

Mr Jugnauth: Mr Speaker, Sir, let me say and I will use modest words. I think the Commissioner, Mr Roussety, is being unreasonable, because when we look at all these projects, the share that Rodrigues is getting is a fair share. I think it is not proper. I think it is not patriotic also *pour essayer d'allumer le feu*. I will end on this because it is an opportunity also for me to reply to the comments made by the hon. Leader of the Opposition in the Budget. He said -

“There is no mention of Rodrigues. Not a word! *C’est du Sithanen, c’est la continuité.*”

Mr Speaker: The Minister will have an opportunity when he...

(Interruptions)

Mr Jugnauth: Let me say, Mr Speaker, Sir, that seven times I have mentioned Rodrigues in the Budget *et il vient dire que* I have not even mentioned: “*Il n’y a pas une somme que je donne tant d’argent et tant d’argent pour le budget* (full stop).” At paragraph 274, Mr Speaker, Sir, he has just said –

“We are providing Rs50 m. to the Rodrigues Regional Assembly for its water projects. This is over and above its budgetary allocation of Rs1.55 billion.”

As I said, seven times I have mentioned Rodrigues. Let me conclude, Mr Speaker, Sir. Seven times I have mentioned Rodrigues with all these allocations. The hon. Leader of the Opposition was Minister of Finance and presented the 2003/2004 Budget. You know I read this Budget throughout - I burned, as we say, the midnight candle - there is only one line for Rodrigues and he said: “I am providing in the National Budget Rs1.1 billion for Rodrigues.” That is all!

(Interruptions)

The Leader of the Opposition should look at what he did in the past and compare with what this Government is doing!

(Interruptions)

The Speaker: Order! Time is over! Questions addressed to Dr. the hon. Prime Minister! The Table has been advised that Parliamentary Question No. 1B/744 in regard to retiring allowances payable to Members of Parliament will be replied by Dr. the hon. Prime Minister.

CITE HIBISCUS & CITE ARGY – DRUG TRAFFICKERS

(No. 1B/684) Mr D. Khamajeet (Second Member for Flacq and Bon Accueil) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in regard to hard drugs, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to the number of operations carried out against the traffickers thereof, in the region of Cité Hibiscus, behind the ex-Flacq Terminus and at Cité Argy, in Central Flacq, since May 2010 to date, indicating the number of -

- (a) persons arrested in relation thereto, and
- (b) officers attached to the Anti Drug Supporting Unit at the Central Flacq Police Station.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, in regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that during the period May 2010 to 25 November 2010, four drug cases were established by the Anti-Drug Smuggling Unit, that is, ADSU at Cité Hibiscus and Cité Argy, Central Flacq and four persons were arrested. Police inquiry into these cases is in progress.

In addition to these four cases, during the same period, ADSU Flacq executed five search warrants at Cité Argy and one at Cité Hibiscus, but nothing incriminating was found.

In regard to part (b) of the question, I am informed that 22 Police Officers are attached to ADSU at the Flacq Police Station as follows -

- 2 Inspectors
- 4 Police Sergeants
- 1 Woman Police Sergeant
- 1 Woman Corporal
- 13 Police Constables
- 1 Woman Police Constable

I should also add that the ADSU personnel is supported by the regular Police at the Flacq Police Station, the ERS, the CID and other units of the Police Force.

POLICE OFFICERS - EXTRA DUTY - FEES

(No. 1B/685) Mrs J. Radegonde (Fourth Member for Savanne and Black River) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in regard to the extra duty work performed by the Police Officers, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to the –

- (a) present rate at which they are paid per hour and per each grade, indicating when same was last reviewed, and
- (b) measures taken to -
 - (i) ensure equal sharing thereof amongst the Police Officers, and
 - (ii) avoid undue delay in the payment of the fees.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, in regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that the performance of extra duty by Police Officers is governed by Standing Order 111 of the Police Standing Orders. The rates were last reviewed in July 2005 and I am tabling a copy of the current rates payable to the different grades of Police Officers.

In regard to part (b)(i) of the question, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that extra duties are performed by Police Officers who are off-duty and volunteer to perform such duties up to a maximum of 15 hours during a month. In certain cases where the Police Officers already detailed fail to turn up at the last moment, they are replaced by any off-duty Police Officers who volunteer to do so though they may have already completed their 15 hours of extra duties.

I am further informed that all details of extra duties to be performed are prepared well in advance at Divisional Headquarters and a master register for each month is kept for the proper distribution of such duties.

The Internal Control Unit of the Police Department also conducts regular audit exercises on the distribution of such duties to ensure a fair distribution and its reports are submitted to the Commissioner of Police.

Mr Speaker, Sir, in regard to part (b)(ii) of the question, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that payment for extra duties performed is effected after the reception, the computation and input of the individual claims in the computerised system of the Central Information Systems Division. This process usually takes, at least, two months to be completed following which the necessary payments are made along with the monthly salary and other allowances payable to Police Officers.

Mrs Radegonde: Mr Speaker, Sir, as regards part (a) of the question, will the hon. Prime Minister request the Commissioner of Police to consider the possibility of reviewing the rate payable in view of the fact that the cost of living has increased considerably?

The Prime Minister: I can pass this to the Commissioner of Police, but he will have to look at all the issues involved because there is other personnel also who get extra duties. Perhaps I should add, for example, the personnel of the traffic branch also get this; so all these have to be looked at.

Mrs Radegonde: Can I know from the hon. Prime Minister if actions are taken to Police Officers by Divisional Commanders who perform extra duty work over and above the rules prescribed in Standing Orders of the Police which are 15 hours.

The Prime Minister: I have just explained, Mr Speaker, Sir, that sometimes, at the last minute, if a Police Officer, who was supposed to call for that extra duty, does not turn up then the Police replace him by other off duty Police Officers who volunteer for the work even though they might have done the 15 hours of extra duties already.

Mrs Radegonde: Mr Speaker, Sir, Police Officers are, at present, being paid the extra duty fees after more than three months from the date they perform their duty. Will the hon. Prime Minister request the Commissioner of Police if this period could be shortened?

The Prime Minister: Certainly we should try to pay them as quickly as possible, but unfortunately as they said they have to get the reception of the fact that they have worked there and then they will do the computation of the individual claims, they go through the Central Information Systems Division. This usually, I am told, takes two months; we should cut it as much as possible.

CIVIL AVIATION PATROLMAN - POST

(No. 1B/686) Mrs F. Labelle (Third Member for Vacoas and Floreal) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in regard to the post of Civil Aviation Patrolman, he will state if consideration will be given for a review of the job title thereof, with a view to enabling female candidates to apply therefor.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, in fact, I thank the hon. Member for this question and I agree with her. I have, in fact, already asked the Department of Civil Aviation to give due consideration to review the job title for the post of Aviation Patrolman to allow female candidates also to apply for this position whenever vacancies are advertised in the future.

In fact, by way of a Circular Letter No. 31 of 2010 dated 28 June 2010, Supervising Officers in charge of Ministries and Departments have been instructed by the Ministry of Civil Service and Administrative Reforms to review the title of posts on their respective establishment to make them gender neutral.

I should say, Mr Speaker, Sir, that the PRB Report of 2008 also refers to the need to address gender issues in the Public Sector.

The Department of Civil Aviation will, in this context, set up appropriate infrastructure and provide necessary amenities to facilitate the integration of female officers within the Department.

Mrs Labelle: I thank the hon. Prime Minister for his answer and he has mentioned that there was a circular letter dated 28 June to sensitise the civil sector, but after that date there has been an advertisement for the recruitment of patrolmen. So, may I ask the hon. Prime Minister what will happen to that advertisement which has appeared after the 28 of June where it was only male who were to be recruited for this post? What will happen for this one?

The Prime Minister: You see the hon. Member is well informed, in fact, that is the case. It should not have happened and I have asked them – if it is possible - to re-advertise the whole series so that women can also apply for that job.

MBC – MISS N. L. H. C - RESIGNATION

(No. 1B/687) Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin and Petite Rivière) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in regard to one Miss N. L. H. C., he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation, information as to if she has resigned from the Corporation and if so -

- (a) when;
- (b) the post she was occupying, and
- (c) the date she joined the Corporation.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, in regard to parts (a) and (b) of the question, I am informed by the Director-General of the Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation that Miss N.L.H.C., who resigned on 09 November 2010, was occupying the post of Producer at the Corporation.

In regard to the last part of the question, I am informed by the Director-General that Miss N.L.H.C. joined the Corporation on 02 February 2006.

Mr Bhagwan: I am very sad for that notorious guy who has to listen to what I have to say live and direct. Sir, can the hon. Prime Minister inform the House whether that lady was so harassed by the Director-General that she was forced to resign; that was the ultimate thing she could have done, just resign in order not to get sick with that mad man there.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Bhagwan you cannot call people mad man, will you agree with me. No, no, I am sorry, please withdraw the words 'mad man'. You have to behave, you are a Member of Parliament – do you realise...

Mr Bhagwan: I will bow to your ruling, Sir, but that sick man - can I say sick?

Mr Speaker: No. Let me tell you one thing, you know that, in certain jurisdiction, if somebody is attacked and is not a Member of this House, he has the right to write to the Speaker, and state whether he has been unduly criticised. Unfortunately, we don't have these procedures as we follow the British system. The British system says that a hon. Member of the House should act responsibly and not mention names or attack others unnecessarily. So, I would request you to do that.

Mr Bhagwan: The person is behaving like a dictator.

(Interruptions)

The Prime Minister: I have never worked at the MBC, but I cannot say whether it is a dictatorship or not, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Bhagwan: Has the hon. Prime Minister taken cognizance of the statement made by that lady? She was so upset, and if I can quote -

“Mr D. C.” - I won't mention the name of Hitler - *“terrorise les employés de la MBC. Il est comme Hitler ; il est entouré de l'état-major du SAS, et les employés sont comme des juifs. Je refuse de travailler dans un tel climat.”*

That is the statement made by that lady. Can I know whether the hon. Prime Minister was made aware of that statement, and whether he has discussed that issue with the Director-General?

The Prime Minister: I am really very glad to see that the hon. Member is sympathising with somebody's daughter who I know very well.

(Interruptions)

It's very good. I did, in fact, discuss with some members of the Party about this. I have seen it in the press but, as I said, she has already resigned.

Mr Bhagwan: Mr Speaker, Sir, this is the third case involving women employees. We had the case of Mrs Rehana Ameer, then Pamela Patten, and this is the third case. Has the attention of the hon. Prime Minister been drawn to the fact that there is serious harassment against ladies there and employees by the Director-General? I say harassment. *Elles sont persécutées à tel point qu'elles sont forcées soit de prendre congé soit to be on sick leave, or just resign.* Has the attention of the hon. Prime Minister, as Minister responsible for the MBC, been drawn and has he discussed with the Director-General?

The Prime Minister: There are also men who have resigned from the MBC.

(Interruptions)

Whether that points to the other direction, I don't know.

(Interruptions)

That's very often the case in this country, but I will look into it.

Mr Bhagwan: Can I ask the hon. Prime Minister whether the time has not come for Government, for him, at least, to have this Director-General sacked, in the interest of all those people paying Rs100, which amount to nearly Rs30 m. monthly?

The Prime Minister: You could have a motive for saying that after the general elections, I suppose. Rs100 is a very small sum. In fact, we should increase it.

Mrs Ribot: Mr Speaker, Sir, I would like to ask the hon. Prime Minister whether he does not consider that it is high time for a proper inquiry to be carried out into what would seem to be an anti-women policy?

Mr Speaker: I am sorry. This question is about one particular person. The hon. Member can come with a substantive question. Hon. Labelle!

Mrs Labelle: Mr Speaker, Sir, with you permission. In a very short period of time, three women - at a time when we are asking women to take responsibilities - have been harassed, and are out of the MBC right now. Will the hon. Prime Minister, Dr. Navinchandra Ramgoolam, see to it that there is a climate which is proper for women to evolve at the MBC?

The Prime Minister: As I said, I don't have the series of names here, but there are also men who have been resigning, so I don't know whether they have been - if we can use the word - 'harassed' but we can certainly look into the matter again.

Mr Bhagwan: Recently, Government has commissioned Professor Thorul to look into the industrial problems at the MBC TV. Can I know from the hon. Prime Minister whether Government has received Professor Thorul's report, whether it has had a look at that report and studied it? Have recommendations been made, and will the report be made public?

The Prime Minister: We don't have to make all reports public as the hon. Member knows. We have had the report, we are still studying it.

ABERCROMBIE POLICE STATION - POLICE QUARTERS

(No. 1B/688) **Mr G. Lesjongard (Second Member for Port Louis North and Montagne Longue)** asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in regard to the Police quarters located behind the Abercrombie Police

Station, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to -

- (a) the number thereof which are -
 - (i) occupied;
 - (ii) unoccupied, and
- (b) where matters stand in relation to the vacation thereof.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, in regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that there are five Police Quarters in the compound of the Metropolitan North Divisional Headquarters at Abercrombie. Four are occupied by Police officers, and one is occupied by a former Police officer.

In regard to part (b) of the question, I am informed that a notice to vacate the Quarters was served on the former Police officer. Another notice was served on one Police officer for repeated breaches of Police Standing Order 131 on the “Conditions of Tenancy for Police Married Quarters”. Both were requested to vacate. However, they failed to do so. Legal action was subsequently initiated for their eviction from the Quarters as they were each served with a “*Mise en Demeure*” on 13 February 2008 requesting them to vacate the Quarters. Once again, they did not leave the Quarters within the delay.

In the case of the Police officer, following an incident in which his family was involved in March this year, another notice was served on him on 15 March 2010, ordering him to vacate the Quarters within a month. On 14 April 2010, he made a request for an additional delay of two months to enable him to find a suitable house, and his request was acceded to. However, upon expiry of the delay, he has again failed to leave the Quarters.

The Police have initiated action, with a view to obtaining a Court eviction order in each case.

Mr Lesjongard: Mr Speaker, Sir, the hon. Prime Minister will agree that this is a long pending case. The officers at Abercrombie Police Station are complaining now that they do not have sufficient space for officers, and we still have Police officers, where notices of eviction have been served, who are still occupying the Quarters. May I know from the hon. Prime Minister what then can be the course of action for them to vacate the Quarters?

The Prime Minister: In fact, the hon. Member is right to say that it is taking a long time. I tend to agree with him. In fact, all the procedures have been started, but it will take time. The eviction orders are already there, and I know that the Commissioner of Police is looking at it very closely.

MAURITIAN CHILDREN - ADOPTION PROCEDURE

(No. 1B/689) Dr. S. Boolell (Second Member for Curepipe and Midlands) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in regard to the Mauritian children, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to the number thereof adopted by foreign and Mauritian nationals respectively over the last five years, indicating in each case the average time taken for the adoption procedure.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed that, from 01 January 2005 to 26 November 2010, the National Adoption Council has authorised 85 applications from foreign nationals for adoption of Mauritian children to be made to the Judge in Chambers, and that adoption procedures have been completed in respect of 84 of these 85 children.

In accordance with section 6(3) of the National Adoption Council Act, the Council has to hear and pronounce itself on an application for adoption within 60 days of the demand. Legal procedures to be undertaken for the adoption at the Supreme Court normally take up to three months.

As regards the adoption of Mauritian children by Mauritian nationals, these are dealt with at the Supreme Court under Articles 343 to 370-5 of the Civil Code. I am also informed by the Attorney General's Office that, on the average, such procedures take seven to eight months to be completed.

The information in respect of Mauritian children adopted by Mauritian nationals, requested by the hon. Member, is being compiled and will be placed in the Library of the National Assembly.

Dr. S. Boolell: Mr Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Prime Minister whether, after 20 years of existence, it would not be right to revisit the National Adoption Council Act, and have only one organisation to look into adoption by foreign nationals and by Mauritians? What I have

in mind, if I may say so, is to give priority to the Mauritian nationals for adoption rather than letting the children out of the country.

The Prime Minister: That is a good point. In any case, we have to revisit the Adoption Bill if we have to make it in line with the Hague Convention.

ELECTORAL BOUNDARIES COMMISSION - REPORT

(No. 1B/690) Mr A. Ameer Meea (First Member for Port Louis Maritime and Port Louis East) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in regard to the Report of the Electoral Boundaries Commission on The Review of the Boundaries of the Constituencies 2009 tabled on 10 October 2009, he will state when a motion in relation thereto will be introduced in the Assembly.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, the 2009 Report of the Electoral Boundaries Commission on the Review of the Boundaries of Constituencies was tabled in the National Assembly on the 10 of November and not on the 10 of October 2009, as referred to by the hon. Member.

In the replies I made to the House on two occasions to the Private Notice Question and Parliamentary Question No. B/73 in November 2009 and March 2010 respectively, I mentioned the legal and administrative complexities inherent in the recommendations of the Report and the sensitive nature of the matter. General Elections were held, as you know, on 05 May 2010. Amendments of the Boundaries of the Constituencies are prescribed by the Electoral Boundaries Commission, these amendments would have caused many electors to have been disenfranchised. There was a problem on that side.

It is now proposed that all legal and other implications be considered in the wider exercise of constitutional reforms, including the reform of the electoral system. I think it would be better to table the motion in the House after the completion of this exercise.

Mr Uteem: Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. The report of the Commissioner on Constitutional and Electoral Reform in 2002, commonly known as the Sachs Commission Report, recommended that section 39 of the Constitution be amended to make the recommendation of the Electoral Boundaries Commission binding and not subject to a vote by

Parliament. Is this one of the issues which is being considered in the broader context of the constitutional amendments?

The Prime Minister: I think we could look at the matter and discuss it. I remember - I was not in Parliament then - what was happening before we were talking of gerrymandering and all this, so would this be appropriate for Mauritius in case this happens and we think that there has been gerrymandering. We have to look at it very carefully, but I have an open mind to what can be done and what can't be done.

Mr Ganoo: Will the hon. Prime Minister consider also, when reviewing this particular section, the possibility of having such type of motion to be adopted by a three-quarter majority instead of a simple majority as it is now?

The Prime Minister: I don't know whether that will not complicate matters for everyone. Is it a good idea not to have a three-quarter majority otherwise what will happen? Will we reject it every time? Will that be a possibility?

Mr Bérenger: I am very disturbed because the Constitution is the supreme law of the country. The Constitution says – I am quoting from memory - “that ten years after the previous review, as close as possible to ten years” That is the spirit and the letter of the Constitution. Ten years - the Commission must report as close to the ten years as possible. That is the spirit. Now when they produce their report, the spirit still hangs around. It must be the same thing; it must be brought to Parliament. The Constitution says the report must be brought to Parliament, not necessarily to be adopted. In 1976 with Sir Seewoosagur as Prime Minister, it was discarded. The spirit and letter of the Constitution has it that it must come before the National Assembly as rapidly as possible. So, waiting for a general review of the Constitution of the electoral system, I am afraid one of these days somebody is going to the Supreme Court.

The Prime Minister: I have looked at the Constitution as well Mr Speaker, Sir. It does not give a specific time when it needs to be brought. It says as close as possible. We've just had the election. I should say perhaps to the hon. Members we will have a new census starting in 2011 which will be completed, I believe, in 2011; whether all this should not be taken into consideration that is all I am saying.

Mr Bérenger: It is very disturbing what I have just heard. I believe the historical decision was taken in 1982 that people will no longer be asked which community you belong to? Therefore, we are using figures going back to 1972. From what I have just heard the hon. Prime Minister say. Are people in 2010/2011 going again to be asked which community they belong to otherwise what we are discussing has nothing to do with the population census?

The Prime Minister: This is not what I said Mr Speaker, Sir. I believe we are going to stick to what has been done since 1982. I am, in fact, on record, saying that I am not in favour of that. I think they are doing a housing census to see how many people are staying where? What has been the movement? I think. That is what I think.

ROAD SAFETY MANAGEMENT UNIT - STAFF

(No. 1B/691) Dr. R. Sorefan (Fourth Member for La Caverne and Phoenix) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in regard to the Road Safety Management Unit of the Prime Minister's Office, he will state -

- (a) when it was created;
- (b) the duties and area of responsibilities thereof;
- (c) the number of staff attached thereto, indicating -
 - (i) their respective grades;
 - (ii) the salaries and allowances drawn and any other benefits to which they are entitled, and
 - (iii) the additional facilities put at their disposal, if any.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, in regard to parts (a) and (b) of the question, I wish to refer the hon. Member to my reply to Parliamentary Question No. 1B/527 on 09 November 2010 wherein I mentioned, *inter alia*, that a Road Safety Unit was set up, under the aegis of my Office in November 2009, to coordinate all activities aiming at promoting road safety. Specific duties allocated to the Unit are as follows -

- (i) the formulation of a National Road Safety Strategy based on best international practices;

- (ii) the development of a project for the setting up of a Driver Education and Training Centre having as major objective to improve driving competencies of drivers, and
- (iii) coordination amongst all stakeholders for the establishment of a multi-sector communication strategy to raise awareness on road safety.

In regard to part (c) of the question, the Unit consists of five persons as follows -

- (i) a Special Adviser on road safety matters as Head of the Unit;
- (ii) one Police Sergeant;
- (iii) one Police Corporal;
- (iv) one Engineer who has been temporarily transferred from the Ministry of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport and Shipping, and
- (v) a Confidential Secretary.

I am tabling the information regarding the salary, allowances and other benefits drawn by each of the staff posted at the Unit.

The Unit is provided with adequate facilities to enable its personnel to operate in an effective and efficient manner in the circumstances.

Dr. Sorefan: Thank you hon. Prime Minister. Does the Prime Minister consider the number five of the staff the requirement for such management unit to be enough?

The Prime Minister: It is a small unit under the aegis of my office; it is not the only unit which looks at traffic. They are coordinating and as I said they are looking at how we can improve the driving situation and reduce the casualties on our roads. It is one unit within the Prime Minister's Office which did not exist before which I have put there.

PSC - DELEGATION OF POWERS

(No. 1B/692) Mr V. Baloomoody (Third Member for GRNW and Port Louis West) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in regard to the proposed delegation of powers by the Public Service Commission, as

announced in the Budget Speech 2011, he will state the powers that will be delegated, indicating the reasons therefor.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I shall reply to PQ No. 1B/692 and PQ No. 1B/697 together as they both relate to the same issue. Mr Speaker, Sir, I wish to draw the attention of the House to section 89(2)(a) of the Constitution which provides as follows and I quote –

“The Public Service Commission may, subject to such conditions as it thinks fit, delegate any of its powers under this section by directions in writing to any Commissioner of the Commission or to any public officer”.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the PSC has, since its inception, been delegating its powers of recruitment to Responsible Officers in respect of many grades, mostly in the workmen’s group. In fact, the PSC has so far delegated its powers of recruitment for some 300 grades falling in the workmen’s group. The power to make grade to grade promotion in some higher level posts has also been delegated to responsible officers. Additionally, the PSC has delegated its power of appointment in respect of short-term employment on contract or employment on a part-time or sessional basis, such as the recruitment of doctors by the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Social Security and the recruitment of supply teachers by the Ministry of Education. The conditions of such delegation and the manner in which such delegation is to be exercised are laid down in the instruments of delegation. The PSC, however, remains accountable for such recruitment exercises and has the responsibility to ensure that they are carried out in accordance with the directions and conditions it has set. In case such directions and conditions are not complied with, the power delegated may be withdrawn by the Commission.

Recruitment under delegated power being an existing practice, we do not feel that there was a need to seek legal advice. Mr Speaker, Sir, let me now explain the rationale behind the proposal announced in the Budget Speech by the Vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Finance regarding further delegation of powers by the PSC for recruitment in technical and managerial grades.

I think the statement of the Vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Finance regarding delegation of power by the PSC to line Ministries must be put in its proper context. As he explained in his speech, the intention is to create a more resilient and productive Public Service

and this can only be achieved by cutting down bureaucracy and providing our Public Service with all the necessary resources including adequate human resource in a timely manner. The objective, Mr Speaker, Sir, is to ensure that positions for which funds have been provided are speedily filled.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the trend worldwide is for greater delegation to line Ministries in the matters of recruitment and promotion. Many developed countries now use a delegated system for the recruitment of their personnel except for higher level posts which are still filled through a centralised system of recruitment. There is a similar trend in Commonwealth Countries like India, Malaysia, New Zealand, Australia and Singapore. For instance, prior to 1995, the Public Service Commission was the central authority for appointment; not only for appointment for promotion and disciplinary control of civil servants. It was later felt that greater empowerment of ministries in the recruitment of the civil service personnel would lead to a greater ownership of personnel management. Accordingly, with effect from January 1995, the recruitment, promotion and transfer of most civil servants were devolved from the PSC to a system of Personnel Boards. These Boards, composed of Permanent Secretaries and senior officers, enable line managers to recruit and promote deserving officers on the basis of merit, fair and consistent exercise of authority, rigorous selection, and opportunity for appeal. However, the Public Service Commission continues to be in charge of recruitment for the administrative service, promotion of all senior officers, disciplinary cases, and appeal.

I am just giving examples; I am not saying we should follow that example. I am just giving examples of what is happening. In the United Kingdom, the line ministries are allowed to recruit persons for most positions, except for the fast-stream administrative trainee programme. In New Zealand, heads of department are responsible for hiring all staff on fixed contracts, and agencies are allowed to devise their own procedures in conformity with broad national guidelines.

As far as Mauritius is concerned, as I said earlier, the Constitution already provides for delegation of powers in matters of recruitment. Nevertheless, there have been instances where such recruitment exercises, carried out under delegated authority, have been found to be tainted with favouritism and patronage, as confirmed in the Supreme Court Judgment in the case of Raj Ringadoo v/s Ashock Kumar Jugnauth. However, to be in line with the international trend and in

order to attain the objectives enunciated by the Vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Finance in his Budget Speech with regard to productivity in the public service, I believe that the solution lies in improving the framework within which such delegated powers are exercised rather than going back to centralised recruitment as some people have been suggesting. What we need is a clear and comprehensive set of rules or conditions, established by the PSC, that will ensure that a high standard of efficiency is maintained in the public service, and merit, qualifications and experience as well as seniority continue to be respected in any recruitment exercises undertaken under delegated authority. Besides, the PRB has, in its 2008 Report, recommended that the PSC considers the advisability of delegating more recruitment responsibilities to Ministries but within a framework of principles and roles approved and issued by the PSC. I too believe, Mr Speaker, Sir, that the integrity and credibility of the process can be greatly enhanced by introducing the appropriate safeguards.

The proposals announced in the Budget will be further discussed with the PSC and all parties concerned.

I would like to stress, Mr Speaker, Sir, on the fact that we have deep respect for our institutions, and this Government will not do anything that will undermine the independence of the PSC. The Government has never and will never attempt to impose anything on the PSC or to usurp its powers which would be unconstitutional in any rate. We will only make recommendations regarding further delegation of power for recruitment in certain grades, and ultimately it will be for the Commission to decide on the extent of such delegation.

Mr Bérenger: Just to confirm, the language used in the Budget Speech was an *outrage à la Constitution et à la PSC*. As we know and the hon. Prime Minister has quoted part of Chapter 8 which protects, guarantees the independence and integrity of the PSC, and provides that only the PSC decides when, how it delegates powers. To amend Chapter 8, we need a three-quarter majority. Do I take it, from what I have just heard, that there is no intention of amending the Constitution to take out of the control of the PSC this responsibility for delegation of powers?

The Prime Minister: In fact, when you read the speech of the hon. Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development, in no place does he say that we will have to amend the Constitution. He talks about the further delegation of authority to Ministries and

Departments for technical and managerial staff, except at the most senior grades. We are talking about delegation of powers.

PSC - DELEGATION OF POWERS

(No. 1B/697) Mr C. Fakeemeeah (Third Member for Port Louis Maritime and Port Louis East) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in regard to the delegation of powers by the Public Service Commission to various Ministries, as announced in the Budget Speech, he will state if prior legal advice was sought and obtained therefor.

(Vide reply to PQ No. 1B/692)

Mr Speaker: Time is over! Questions addressed to hon. Ministers! The Table has been advised that Parliamentary Questions Nos. 1B/704 and 1B/711 have been withdrawn. Hon. Mrs Ribot!

PRE-VOCATIONAL CLASSES - REFORM

(No. 1B/698) Mrs L. Ribot (Third Member for Stanley and Rose Hill) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether, in regard to the reform of the pre-vocational classes, he will state where matters stand, indicating if it will be extended by two additional classes and, if so, indicate the -

- (a) curriculum therefor;
- (b) certificate that will be awarded to the students after completion of the five-year course and the equivalence thereof, and
- (c) training programmes elaborated for the teachers therefor.

Dr. Bunwaree: Mr Speaker, Sir, as it may be recalled, on Tuesday last, during my intervention on the Budget Speech, I had the opportunity to inform the House of the new policy orientation of my Ministry to create new and expanded opportunities for students of the

prevocational sector for their continued education, and their integration in the world of work. I highlighted the need to review the pre-vocational sector so that it is more attuned to the needs and aspirations of the students.

Mr Speaker, Sir, in this regard, the High Level Technical Committee has been set up at the level of my Ministry with the objective of finding ways and means to review and revamp this sector in the light of the weaknesses identified. The Committee comprises representatives of my Ministry as well as those of the Mauritius Institute of Education (MIE) and the Mauritius Institute of Training and Development (MITD), and Inspectors of the pre-vocational sector.

Four main groups have been constituted by the Technical Committee on the following issues -

- (i) curriculum, pedagogy and teaching materials;
- (ii) resource requirements;
- (iii) availability of space, and
- (iv) project management.

With regard to the extension of pre-vocational classes beyond three years, I wish to inform the House that all implications are being looked into by the High Level Technical Committee, chaired by the Permanent Secretary of my Ministry.

This Committee will also look into the curriculum aspects, the issue of recognition and award of certificates, and also the training programme to be elaborated for teachers.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I wish to inform the House that, in addition to the above, my Ministry is in the process of evaluating programmes, which have been implemented over the past years, and the evaluation will also cover the pre-voc sector. The outcome of such evaluation will help towards bringing any remedial action, as appropriate.

My Ministry will come forward with a full reorganisation plan by early 2011.

Mrs Ribot: Mr Speaker, Sir, I would you like to know from the hon. Minister if the results of the last exams of the pre-voc students have been examined?

Dr. Bunwaree: Yes, Mr Speaker, Sir. They are being analysed.

Mrs Ribot: I would also like to know from the hon. Minister if, in his review of the pre-vocational departments, everything will be made so that those students can further their studies and be admitted either to *École Hotelière* or IVTB?

Dr. Bunwaree: Yes, we are going into that direction.

Mr Obeegadoo: A few questions, Sir, if you would allow me. My first question is: being given that I note that the number of institutions offering only pre-vocational classes has now increased to seven or eight, will the Minister agree to review this system of educational apartheid and return to the arrangement whereby all schools offer pre-voc and mainstream, and there is no segregation?

Dr. Bunwaree: I don't think we can speak of apartheid in this, Mr Speaker, Sir. I do not follow well the point that is being raised, because, in fact, this is not in our mind; this is not the policy of Government. We are trying to do everything for this sector. In fact, we are reviewing many things. If hon. Members, on the other side, have got what they consider as important projects or plans, we can look into all these. I think it is a very, very important sector, which we are going to review. The idea of extension of classes is seriously being considered. In fact, if I can give an idea; maybe, by next year, we should start already, on a pilot basis, introducing it in Form IV.

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, to provide information for this review, would the Minister agree that there is need for an independent assessment audit review of what has actually taken place over the last seven/eight years and also a tracer study of students having come out of the three years of pre-vocational, to establish the relevance in terms of employability of these young people?

Dr. Bunwaree: I don't know whether an independent study is really needed, because there is nothing to hide there. What I can say is that I, myself, am not much satisfied when we look behind of what has happened in this sector, because these students, after three years pre-vocational, are doing neither well on the academic side nor well on the vocational side. So, there is something to be done. We are looking into all this but, I can, as I said, take into consideration the points that have been raised.

Mr Obeegadoo: Will the hon. Minister agree to consider the international line of thinking today as recommended by UNESCO and all the organisations that we do away altogether with the steaming of students after primary and to offer nine years of schooling?

Mr Speaker: That is not relevant.

Mrs Ribot: Mr Speaker, Sir, is the hon. Minister aware that a few schools, which use to offer prevocational classes, are gradually choosing to discard those classes in their schools?

Dr. Bunwaree: There are, in fact, very few schools, but the reasons that are lying behind are being studied.

ROSE HILL - 24/7 EVENT

(No. 1B/699) Mrs L. Ribot (Third Member for Stanley and Rose Hill) asked the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the last edition of the 24/7 festival in Rose Hill, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Municipal Council of Beau Bassin/Rose Hill, information as to –

- (a) if it has received complaints from the traders of the town and, if so, if inquiries have been carried out thereinto, indicating the outcome thereof, and
- (b) if public funds have been used for the provision of services therefor and, if so, under which item of expenditure.

Mr Aimée: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Municipal Council of Beau Bassin/Rose Hill that no complaints have been received from traders of the township regarding the organisation of the last edition of the 24/7 event.

With regard to part (b) of the question, I am informed that no public funds have been used by the Council for the provision of additional services except its normal statutory services, namely scavenging and street lighting.

Mr Bérenger: It is an awful mess and it is in our constituency. The Minister is responsible for Local Government; it has been a total mess. Has the Minister checked with the State Law Office whether the HRDC is entitled under the law to organise such events?

Mr Aimée: Mr Speaker, Sir, as far as the request of the hon. Leader of the Opposition is concerned, I think - probably for me - it is a decision that the Council should take, not the Ministry.

Mr Bérenger: The HRDC has nothing to do with the Municipality. They are cooking up things to make money.

Mr Aimée: Mr Speaker, Sir, I think the question should be addressed to the Ministry of Education; HRDC is under the aegis of the Ministry of Education.

Mr Bérenger: Is the hon. Minister aware that there have been complaints by all the traders, by everybody? In fact, hundreds of hawkers came from outside on that occasion. It is a total mess, it is chaos and there is absolutely no security, pickpockets are all over the place, food is cooked with oil while kids, women, everybody is walking around on the pavements. There is going to be trouble before long. Can I request the hon. Minister to liaise with the Minister of Education and stop this?

Mr Aimée: The HRDC does not fall under my Ministry, but I would liaise with the Ministry of Education. In any case, I am going to look into it with the Minister of Education whether we will continue with 24/7. I think the Prime Minister, himself, was agreeable that the 24/7 happens all over the big cities so it is difficult for me to be against the project of 24/7.

Mr Bhagwan: Mr Speaker, Sir, I was an eye-witness of what happened in Rose Hill. I stay in Rose Hill. It was organised on the main road. Now that we have come to learn that there would be another 24/7 in Port Louis, can the hon. Minister, at least, give assurance to the House, as Minister of Local Government, that there won't be the same problem? I am not mentioning of the many other things which have happened.

Mr Speaker: We are talking of Beau Bassin/Rose Hill now.

Mr Bhagwan: No, no...

Mr Speaker: If the question relates...

(Interruptions)

You are talking of Port Louis.

(Interruptions)

No, no. If you want to come on a policy-decision of 24/7, you cannot.

Mrs Labelle: May I ask the hon. Minister whether he will liaise with the Municipal Council when there are such events that proper arrangements are being made for all aspects, even for security, for the traffic and so on, because there was none on that particular day at Rose Hill? I live there, I have experienced it.

Mr Aimée: Yes, hon. Member. Mr Speaker, Sir, I am going to liaise with all municipal authorities with regard to the question asked by the hon. Member.

Mr Bhagwan: Has the attention of the Minister been drawn to the fact that the Municipal Council of Beau Bassin/Rose Hill, which falls under *l'Alliance Sociale*, has failed in its responsibility towards even their own Government in the organisation of that activity where the life of people is at risk? I am requesting, through the Minister, to the Prime Minister to make an enquiry on the security of people on that particular occasion at Rose Hill, and whether there were cases of assaults and other types of theft which occurred in Rose Hill?

Mr Aimée: Mr Speaker, Sir, I think I can only advise the Council because the Council is autonomous. Once they take a decision to have things happen in the city of Rose Hill, they are the ones responsible to decide not the Ministry. The Ministry can only advise.

(Interruptions)

Mr Lesjongard: May I ask the hon. Minister which is the lead Ministry in organising this 24/7 event and at what level is the coordination done?

Mr Aimée: Mr Speaker, Sir, with the brouhaha, I have not been able to listen to the hon. Member.

Mr Lesjongard: May I ask the hon. Minister which is the lead Ministry for organising that 24/7 event and at what level is the coordination being done?

Mr Aimée: Mr Speaker, Sir, I don't have this information, but I will look into it and place it in the Library.

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, if I may make a suggestion? Would the hon. Minister, as Minister responsible for Local Government, before this 24/7 event is extended to any other towns, recommend to Government the setting up of an inter-ministerial taskforce to assess the

experience of Rose Hill, taking into account all the complaints we have heard here, before any Council is allowed to transpose the same initiative?

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order! Order!

Mr Aimée: Mr Speaker, Sir, before the launching of the 24/7, I have just mentioned that the Prime Minister had been in contact with the Ministry of Education and he decided to have the 24/7. I don't know who am I to not be agreeable to the 24/7, unless Cabinet takes another decision.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Address the Chair, please! I suspend for one and a half hour.

At 12.57 p.m. the sitting was suspended.

On resuming at 2.32 p.m. with the Deputy Speaker in the Chair.

FLACQ – RIVERS – CLEANING & DREDGING

(No. 1B/700) Mr D. Khamajeet (Second Member for Flacq and Bon Accueil) asked the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the rivers at Boulet Rouge, Riche Mare, La Source, Argy, Hermitage, Poste de Flacq and Plaine de Gersigny, he will state the actions taken, if any, for the cleaning, clearing and dredging thereof, in anticipation of the forthcoming rainy season, with a view to avoiding the overflow thereof, damages to property and threat to the security of the citizens.

Mr Aimée: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in order to be prepared for the rainy season occurring each year and with a view to avoiding and managing floods, damages to property and risks to human lives, the Government has already adopted a national plan for the cleaning of rivers, streams, canals, drains and river courses.

I am contributing to the implementation of this plan and, to this effect, I have, since I assumed function as Minister in February this year, set up roving teams in all local authorities

areas. These teams are very busy cleaning the rivers and all water courses under the supervision of the local authorities. I have also caused equipment to be purchased such as bobcats, excavator/loaders and lorries.

This plan also covers the Moka/Flacq District Council areas including those referred to by the hon. Member.

The hon. Member may wish to know that, in line with Government decision pertaining to cleaning of drains, rivulets and rivers, the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development has also participated in the cleaning/dredging of River Citron near Constance Bridge, River at Allée Mangue, Poste de Flacq and River Ste Anne, Centre de Flacq from January to March 2010.

Mr Seeruttun: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, can the hon. Minister see to it that the same treatment be extended further up the river in the region of Bramsthan, Morcellement Dawotal?

Mr Aimée: The river of Bramsthan is on my list and very soon we will come to that.

FLACQ YOUTH CENTRE - ACTIVITIES

(No. 1B/701) Mr D. Khamajeet (Second Member for Flacq and Bon Accueil) asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether, in regard to the Flacq Youth Centre, he will state -

- (a) the date renovation works thereat started, indicating the proposed date for the completion thereof;
- (b) if consideration will be given for the extension of the lighting time from 19.00 to 21.00 hours, and
- (c) the activities that will be carried out thereat in November and December 2010.

Mr Ritoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with regard to part (a) of the question, I wish to inform the House that renovation works are presently ongoing at Flacq Youth Centre and are being carried out by the Maintenance Unit of my Ministry. The works consist of the renovation of toilet blocks and kitchen; construction of a store and a watchman's shelter and painting works including re-marking of the tennis court and basketball pitch. The renovation works started in September 2010 and are expected to be completed by the end of December 2010.

With regard to part (b), my Ministry is presently in the process of reviewing its policy on opening and closing hours of its youth and sports infrastructure to ensure judicious use and prevent abuse thereof. The request for extension of lighting time will be considered in that context.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, regarding part (c), the list of activities carried out at the Flacq Youth Centre is as follows: actually there are ongoing activities such as aikido, karate, taekwondo, aerobics, kickboxing and gymnastics whereas the tennis court, basketball pitch and volleyball pitch have already been booked by youth clubs for use during school holidays.

RUISSEAU JAMBLON – WATER PROJECT

(No. 1B/702) Mr D. Khamajeet (Second Member for Flacq and Bon Accueil) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to the water project at Pont Jamblon, he will state the reasons for the delay in the implementation thereof, indicating the –

- (a) timeframe for the implementation thereof, and
- (b) estimated duration of the works.

The Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities (Dr. R. Beebeejaun): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, a feasibility study is in progress. Arrangements are underway to test the dry yield of Ruisseau Jamblon. I wish to inform the House that testing during the dry season is very important to be able to see whether it is useful or not. So, once we get the data, we'll proceed further.

TOWN & VILLAGE CENTRES - GREEN AREAS - SETTING UP

(No. 1B/703) Mr J. Seetaram (Second Member for Montagne Blanche and GRSE) asked the Minister of Environment and Sustainable Development whether, in regard to the protection of the environment, he will state if his Ministry is considering the earmarking and setting up of green areas in and around the town and village centres and along the coast.

Mr Virahsawmy: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, my Ministry will continue to undertake embellishment and creation of green spaces in towns, villages and along the coast throughout the island.

Mr Seetaram: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, concerning protection of the environment and in relation to the areas of green spaces, can the hon. Minister consider putting up bins with the specificities, that is, garbage sorting, *triage de déchets*, in specific green areas and nook and corners of villages and towns?

Mr Virahsawmy: We shall consider, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

SEBASTOPOL - BEL AIR – STREET LIGHTING

(No. 1B/704) Mr J. Seetaram (Second Member for Montagne Blanche and GRSE) asked the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the road from Sebastopol to Bel Air, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Moka/Flacq District Council, information as to if street lighting will be provided thereat, as pedestrians using that road regularly face serious risks of accident.

(Withdrawn)

CHEMIN SANS SOUCI, MONTAGNE BLANCHE – COGEFAR – JOGGING TRACK

(No. 1B/705) Mr J. Seetaram (Second Member for Montagne Blanche and GRSE) asked the Minister of Environment and Sustainable Development whether, in regard to the jogging track at Cogefar, situated at Chemin Sans Souci, Montagne Blanche, he will state if same will be re-opened to the public, and if not, why not.

The Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands (Mr H. Aimée): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I shall reply to this question.

I am informed by the Moka/Flacq District Council that there is no jogging track at Cogefar, Chemin Sans Souci, Montagne Blanche because this is a private road. However, there is a private access owned by FUEL.

Mr Seetaram: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, is the hon. Minister aware that the inhabitants of Montagne Blanche do use that private access as a jogging track for their daily activities?

Mr Aimée: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I think that using that road on a temporary basis does not mean that the Government can manage it as it is a private road.

The Deputy Speaker: It is a private property, I understand.

Mr Seetaram: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, is the Minister aware that previously street lights were put up by the Moka/Flacq District Council on the access of that road?

Mr Aimée: I am not aware, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

MINISTRY OF TOURISM & LEISURE - ECONOMIC INTELLIGENCE UNIT

(No. 1B/706) **Mr K. Ramano (Second Member for Belle Rose and Quatre Bornes)** asked the Minister of Tourism and Leisure whether, in regard to the Economic Intelligence Unit set up at his Ministry, he will state –

- (a) the budget allocated therefor;
- (b) the composition thereof, indicating the salary and other benefits drawn by each member;
- (c) the terms of reference thereof, and
- (d) if the reports thereof, if any, will be made available to the public, more particularly to the economic operators of the tourism industry.

Mr Bodha: As you are aware, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the tourism sector is one of the main pillars of our economy and its growth is in line with the vision of this Government to make tourism one of the major engines of growth of the economy.

However, to be able to monitor effectively the performance and evolution of the tourism sector and in order to enable us to formulate the most appropriate policies for the development of the tourism industry, we need to have the necessary data at our disposal. Presently, the only statistics that are available at regular intervals relate to tourist arrivals first and to tourism receipts. The House will agree that these are not sufficient.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it is in this perspective, that we have decided to set up the Tourism Economic Intelligence Unit at the Ministry. The main objective of the Unit is to assist the Ministry in the formulation of appropriate policies for the sustainable development of the industry and better interact with all the stakeholders.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed that there is no separate budgetary provision allocated to the Unit at the Ministry. Second, it is Dr. Lallchand, a former World Bank cadre and Senior Advisor on tourism matters at the Ministry who has been designated to head the Unit. He is supported by officers of the Ministry in the discharge of his duties. In addition, depending on the nature of the assignments carried out, the services of appropriate officials of our parastatal bodies, including the MTPA, will be enlisted.

As Senior Adviser of the Ministry, Dr. Lallchand draws a salary and benefits as prescribed by the PRB and with your permission, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am circulating a copy of the contract of Dr. Lallchand including details on the terms and conditions.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, concerning part (c) of the question, the Unit is called upon to, *inter alia* –

- (i) carry out research and market studies in tourism related fields;
- (ii) carry out research to determine the share of economics of individual tourism sub-sectors to the total contribution of the industry to the economy;
- (iii) make forecasts for future planning of the industry;
- (iv) conduct periodic reviews on the tourism sector;
- (v) prepare position papers on related matters;
- (vi) provide relevant economic and business-related information;
- (vii) assess the contribution of the non-hotel sector in the tourism mainstream, and
- (viii) to advise on mechanisms to evaluate and monitor the economic impact of tourism.

With regard to part (d) of the question, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am advised that no report has been published as yet. There have been some Position Papers and if there is any report whose findings will be useful to the operators of the industry, they will be made available to all.

Mr Ramano: M. le président, le *Mauritius Sector Strategic Plan on Tourism 2010-2015* financé par l'Union Européenne et le ministère des finances fait état de la nécessité d'un *proper market intelligence*. Il est déploré qu'il n'y ait pas de rapport sur la perception des touristes. Est-ce que je pourrais savoir l'état actuel et quelle est la position du ministre en ce qui concerne la perception des touristes concernant le *tourism industry in Mauritius*?

Mr Bodha: From what I understand, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, there is a survey which is carried out with the outgoing tourists on the way they enjoy their stay and how they assess the different activities they have indulged into and the different services they have had during their stay. Usually this is being done at the airport and I agree with the hon. Member that we should have an in-depth and thorough study on the perception of the tourists as regards the Mauritian product and this will help us to better understand our competitiveness. I will take that into account.

Mr Ramano: M. le président, vu l'importance d'un tel rapport, est-ce qu'on pourrait savoir quand est-ce que la première publication de ce rapport est prévue?

Mr Bodha: As I said, the survey is presently carried out on outgoing tourists at the airport so we have a report regularly. I need notice of that question as regards to the next report which will come out.

Ms Deerpalsing: May I ask the hon. Minister whether, in the strategy of this Economic Intelligence Unit, priority could be given to the SME sector in the tourism industry; whether particular emphasis could be given a priority in terms of the analysis and how SMEs can partake more into the sector?

Mr Bodha: Well, I think that is the idea because, as I said, formerly we had only two figures. We have to understand an industry which today is worth Rs42 billion. We need to understand how that industry operates, how each rupee is spent, who are the beneficiaries and how we can do better for a better participation of all including the small and medium enterprises. There is another question coming later as regards to the all-inclusive package, for example. So, we should know how our tourist industry is operating, who are the stakeholders and who are benefiting from the industry to be able to charter a better industry in the future.

Ms Deerpalsing: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, just one last question. In his answer, the hon. Minister said that the Unit will make forecast and planning. May I ask the hon. Minister whether

this will include forecast of resources that the hotel sector will need in terms of water, electricity and all those other resources in order to provide the services?

Mr Bodha: Well, this is a very interesting question, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. So far, forecasts have been as regards to arrivals, markets and spending. This is another side of the industry because very often the industry forgets that the Government is putting billions as regards to the airport, the utilities for the industry to prosper. So, we have to understand this linkage between the industry and the other sectors of the economy and I think that, as regards to the utilities, there is definitely a study to be made relating to the linkage between Government spending and the forecast as regards to the number of arrivals.

PETIT PAQUET, MONTAGNE BLANCHE - FOOTBALL GROUND

(No. 1B/707) Mr J. Seetaram (Second Member for Montagne Blanche and GRSE) asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether, in regard to the project for the construction of a football ground at Petit Paquet, Montagne Blanche, he will state where matters stand.

The Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping (Mr A. Bachoo): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I am replying to this question. I have been informed that the construction of a football ground at Petit Paquet, Montagne Blanche has been completed and is presently under mandatory maintenance period of one year.

The maintenance period will end in November 2011 after which the football ground will be handed over to the Moka/Flacq District Council.

Mr Seetaram: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, considering that the construction is over, may I know from the hon. Minister whether a second phase of the construction project can be considered by the Minister in relation to its fencing, parking and cloakrooms?

Mr Bachoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, there are other projects in that same constituency, I would request the hon. Member to bear with us. Let us complete the other parts and then we will come back again on this.

MOTORWAY M1 – LIGHTING POSTS, OVERHEAD LAMPS, DRAINS

(No 1B/708) Dr. R. Sorefan (Fourth Member for La Caverne and Phoenix) asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to the Motorway M1, he will state how –

- (a) from Sorèze to the Caudan Roundabout, the lighting posts, overhead lamps and the two kilometres of metal protection rail frames and accessories aligning the motorway have been disposed of, indicating –
 - (i) by whom, and
 - (ii) to whom, and
- (b) from Montebello to the Caudan Roundabout, the maintenance of the newly built drain will be carried out due to the narrow inlet of rainwater.

Mr Bachoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the lighting post and overhead lamps will be removed by the contractor of RDA and handed over to the local authorities concerned.

The guardrails and handrails have been removed by the contractor of RDA and handed over to the stores of the RDA.

Maintenance of the newly built drain will be carried out at regular intervals through openable slabs which have been provided.

CUREPIPE - COPPER AND SPICE COMPANY LTD – DEVELOPMENT PERMIT

(No. 1B/709) Mrs F. Labelle (Third Member for Vacoas and Floreal) asked the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the application submitted to the Municipal Council of Curepipe for the issue of a development permit to operate a restaurant, at the Sir Virgil Naz Street, in Curepipe, by Copper and Spice Company Ltd., he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Council, information as to where matters stand.

Mr Aimée: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed that the application for a development permit to operate a restaurant at Sir Virgil Naz Street in Curepipe by Copper and Spice Company Ltd has not been approved by the Municipal Council of Curepipe because there is a Government decision not to issue any new Building and Land Use Permit to economic operators wishing to sell liquor and alcoholic products as from 10 November 2010.

Having been made aware of this situation, I have impressed upon the Council to consider issuing a Building and Land Use Permit with the expressed condition that no alcoholic product should be sold.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Minister to confirm - because it concerns a restaurant - whether he is proposing to have a restaurant without alcoholic products?

Mr Aimée: That's what I have said in my reply to the hon. Member.

The Deputy Speaker: Yes, hon. Dayal!

CAMP THOREL - BUS PARK

(No. 1B/710) **Mr S. Dayal (Third Member for Quartier Militaire and Moka)** asked the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the Bus Park of Camp Thorel, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Moka/Flacq District Council, information as to the date on which same will be –

- (a) completed, and
- (b) operational.

Mr Aimée: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Moka/Flacq District Council that the bus park at Camp Thorel has already been completed. However, the Council is presently constructing two lay-bys and providing street lighting along the access road to the bus park.

I am informed that these works will be completed early next year after which the bus park will immediately become operational.

ST. JULIEN D'HOTMAN - CREMATION GROUND

(No. 1B/711) **Mr S. Dayal (Third Member for Quartier Militaire and Moka)** asked the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the project for the fencing of and the provision of other amenities at the cremation ground, located at St. Julien

d'Hotman, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Moka/Flacq District Council, information as to where matters stand.

(Withdrawn)

MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND QUALITY OF LIFE – DRUGS - PURCHASE

(No. 1B/712) Mr S. Dayal (Third Member for Quartier Militaire and Moka) asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether, in regard to the purchase of drugs by her Ministry, she will state if samples of the drugs are submitted along with the tenders and, if so, who make the assessment of the standard thereof and, in case it is a Committee, indicate the composition thereof and the qualifications of the members.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed that, for the procurement of drugs, submission of samples is not a mandatory condition. However, some bidders do submit samples along with their bids.

Assessment of samples is carried out by a Bid Evaluation Committee (BEC) set up for the evaluation of bids.

The Bid Evaluation Committee (BEC) comprises independent registered evaluators who are experienced and conversant with pharmaceutical products. The Chairperson is a Medical Practitioner specialised in the related field and the members comprise, amongst others, Pharmacists/Senior Pharmacists, Principal Pharmacist, Medical Practitioners, Specialists and senior officers of the Dispensing Cadre.

I wish to add that, for each evaluation exercise, a different evaluation team is constituted.

Mr Dayal: Can I know from the hon. Minister whether the drugs, after having been purchased from the suppliers, are submitted to quality analysis to try to find out whether they are in conformity, in the case where samples have been provided along with the bids?

Mrs Hanoomanjee: In fact, there is a sampling which is done after the bidding and procurement exercise has been made. Accordingly, if ever the samples and goods which have been purchased are not in line with what were in the specifications, then these people are disqualified.

Dr. S. Boolell: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would like to ask the hon. Minister whether there is an off-the-shelf random sampling of the product?

Mrs Hanoomanjee: In fact, this is what I have just said, there is a random sampling. Whether it is off-the-shelf or on the shelf, there is a random sampling which is done.

**MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND QUALITY OF LIFE
- CONSIGNMENTS PURCHASED**

(No. 1B/713) Mr S. Dayal (Third Member for Quartier Militaire and Moka) asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether, in regard to drugs, she will state the number of consignments thereof purchased through the Emergency Procurement Procedure, over the last ten years as a result of disruption of stock, indicating –

- (a) in each case -
 - (i) the value thereof, and
 - (ii) the dates disruption of stocks occurred, and
- (b) the measures that will be taken to avoid disruption in stocks in the future.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, there has been no Emergency Procurement due to disruption of stock of drugs and therefore the other parts of the question do not arise.

However, I wish to inform the House that the Emergency Procurement Procedure has been introduced as from January 2008 with the promulgation of the Public Procurement Act 2006. Prior to January 2008, there was no such provision in the Central Tender Board Act and in cases of emergency, restricted bidding was resorted to.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I wish to add that the following measures have been taken by my Ministry to avoid any disruption of stock of medicines -

- 1) A Drug Monitoring Committee chaired by the Director Curative Services and comprising amongst others the Director, Pharmaceutical Services, Senior Pharmacist (Procurement) and the Manager Procurement and Supply has been set up to regularly monitor the stock levels at the Central Supplies Division with a view to triggering the replenishment process at an early stage;

- 2) Defaulting suppliers, who are responsible in many cases for stock out situations, are monitored and are being regularly reported to the Procurement Policy Office for disqualification;
- 3) The conditions of tender have been revised to include past performance as an evaluation criterion and it is contemplated to introduce bid security as a mandatory condition as from January 2011 with a view to discouraging defaulters;
- 4) The possibility of going for long term/rate contracts (2 years instead of 1 year) with staggered delivery at appropriate time intervals is being explored;
- 5) The Procurement Policy Office is in the process of implementing E-procurement system and my Ministry has been chosen as a pilot site for this project. If this project is implemented, amongst others, the procurement processing time will considerably be reduced;
- 6) A computerised system for inventory control has been installed at the Central Supplies Division (CSD) for a better monitoring and inventory of drugs, and
- 7) A modern warehouse would be constructed to house all our products under one roof, with a view to ensuring better inventory management and distribution.

Mr Dayal: Can I know from the hon. Minister whether, in cases where there has been a rupture of stocks, an inquiry had been conducted to find out whether the rupture of stocks was a genuine or artificial one?

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Well, as I said, for quite some time, there has not been any emergency purchase due to disruption of stock of drugs, but if ever there is, then an inquiry will be carried out for sure.

HAJJ PILGRIMAGE 2010 - "MAAFI" VISAS - BENEFICIARIES

(No. 1B/714) Mr R. Uteem (Second Member for Port Louis South and Port Louis Central) asked the Minister of Arts and Culture whether, in regard to the "Maafi" visas delivered by the Saudi Arabian Authorities for the Hajj pilgrimage 2010, he will, for the benefit

of the House, obtain from the Islamic Cultural Centre, information as to the names and occupation of the beneficiaries thereof, indicating –

- (a) who selected the beneficiaries, and
- (b) the criteria used for the selection.

Mr Choonee: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am advised that it is the practice of the Royal Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to issue passes known as ‘Maafi’, which allow free travel movement within Saudi Arabia, as a sign of goodwill and hospitality to foreign dignitaries, Hajj officials and vulnerable pilgrims. As the performance of Hajj is one of the pillars of Islam, it is proper that due respect and probity be maintained for those who have gone on Holy Pilgrimage. It is therefore not ethical to give publicity to the beneficiaries of such facilities.

Mr Uteem: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the web site of the Ministry in Saudi Arabia responsible for Hajj matters explicitly provides that these special labels will be given to Hajj mission; people who form part of the Hajj mission. We know that there are nine people who are part of the Hajj mission and this is a very important label, because it exempts these people from paying certain charges. May I know from the hon. Minister who are the people who have benefited from those preferential privileges?

The Deputy Speaker: I understand that the hon. Minister has stated that he is not able to give these details for ethical reasons. This is what I understand!

Mr Uteem: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we have in this country a provision under the ICAC laws which makes it an offence if someone has used his position to get a gratification for a member of his family to get these special labels. There is gratification here because they are not going to pay Rs10,000 over of charges. We are in a position to insist, to know if there has been any impropriety in allocation of these passes.

The Deputy Speaker: Unfortunately, I won’t be able to insist on an answer.

Mr Bérenger: The hon. Minister supposedly is replying the way he has replied for ethical reasons. I would grant him that it would not be proper to give the names of those who deserve that kind of visa and have used it. I am sure that the hon. Minister is aware of the abuses, that it is alleged, have taken place. So, can I ask him whether he is going to look into it for ethical reasons and if there have been abuses, he will take action?

Mr Choonee: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, there have been no abuses. For ethical reasons again, when a friendly country, with a spirit of goodwill and hospitality, offers certain facilities to foreign dignitaries, it is not our duty to pop in and disturb that.

Mr Bérenger: The hon. Minister is saying that there have been no abuses. Can I put it to him, therefore, that he has to his knowledge, he knows who are those who benefited, all of them and that he has come to the conclusion that there are no abuses?

Mr Choonee: I cannot disclose this piece of information, Sir.

Mr Hossen: May I know from the hon. Minister whether, in the past, the names of those beneficiaries of Maafi visas have been made public?

Mr Choonee: I don't have the list, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order, please!

Mr Uteem: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, on 12 May of 2009, there was a question again on the same issue of Maafi visa, and the question was put to the effect that certain Members of the Hajj Mission were deprived of this visa while a friend of a Senior Officer from Reunion Island got the same, and this was unacceptable. In answer to this, the hon. Minister Kasenally replied the following, and I quote -

“Mr Speaker, Sir, I took cognizance of that and, in fact, all the visas for the next Hajj Mission are with me. I will ensure, with the help of my colleague, the Minister, and the ICC, that it is properly distributed to those who are involved in the Hajj Mission.”

My question to the hon. Minister is: can he guarantee us that those visas have been given to all the Members of the Hajj Mission?

Mr Choonee: As far as the officials of the Hajj Mission are concerned, yes, they have been given. As I said earlier, this is not a visa; it is a pass, and we have never disclosed names earlier.

Mr Uteem: I would like to ask the hon. Minister whether it was given to any member of the family; wife, children of members of the Hajj mission.

Mr Choonee: I don't have all those details, Sir.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order please! Order please on both sides!

STANDARD HORSE RACING BOOKMAKER SOFTWARE PROJECT

(No. 1B/715) Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin and Petite Rivière) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to the purchase of a uniform software for the bookmakers, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Gambling Regulatory Authority, information as to -

- (a) if a prior study was carried out therefor, and, if so -
 - (i) when;
 - (ii) who carried out same, and
 - (iii) the recommendations thereof
- (b) if tenders were called therefor, and, if so -
 - (i) when;
 - (ii) the name of the successful bidder, and
 - (iii) the cost thereof, and
- (c) if the Authority has approved same and, if so, when and, if not, why not.

The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development (Mr P. Jugnauth): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Gambling Regulatory Authority that, in line with section 109 of the Gambling Regulatory Authority Act of 2007, it launched a tendering exercise, with a view to appoint a Consultant for the Standard Horse Racing Bookmaker Software Project linked to a Central Electronic Monitoring System.

Following the tendering exercise, the services of PricewaterhouseCoopers Ltd were retained in August 2009, as Project Consultant for the Standard Horse Racing Bookmaker Software Project, at the agreed price of Rs4,000,000, inclusive of VAT.

The scope of the project was as follows -

- (i) carry out an evaluation of the existing system;
- (ii) make recommendations on the feasible solution;
- (iii) prepare tender documents, and
- (iv) supervision of implementation.

After carrying out an evaluation of the existing system, PricewaterhouseCoopers Ltd submitted a Current State Assessment Report, and made a presentation before the Gambling Regulatory Board in October 2009. During the presentation, PricewaterhouseCoopers Ltd proposed several project designs, giving indication of the probable project cost.

The Gambling Regulatory Board decided to leave the Request for Proposal open to both the acquisition and rental mode.

Consequently, PricewaterhouseCoopers Ltd prepared the tender documents, and tenders were launched...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Minister Choonee, please!

Mr Jugnauth: in March 2010, through an open advertising bidding process. As at the closing date of 02 April 2010, five companies have responded positively to the Request for Proposal. These five Companies were -

- 1. State Informatics limited;
- 2. Gaming Control Systems;
- 3. Pansoft Ltd;
- 4. ABA Software Ltd, and
- 5. ID Soft Ltd.

Following a technical evaluation, two companies, namely State Informatics Ltd and ABA Software Ltd, obtained the minimum pass mark. Their respective financial bids were opened by the Quotation Committee in June 2010, and their financial offers were as follows -

- i State Informatics Ltd: Rs60.8 m. for acquisition, and Rs70.3 m. for rental.
- ii ABA Software Ltd: Rs40.2 m. for acquisition, and Rs49.1 m. for rental.

The two financial bids were referred to PricewaterhouseCoopers Ltd for evaluation. The final markings obtained by the two companies, after merging both the technical and financial markings, were -

- i State Informatics Ltd: 70 for acquisition, and 71 for rental.
- ii ABA Software Ltd: 89 for acquisition, and 89 for rental.

On 17 June 2010, based on the recommendation of the Quotation Committee, the Gambling Regulatory Board decided to award the contract on an acquisition mode basis to ABA Software Ltd at the lump sum price of MUR Rs40,250,000, inclusive of VAT. A 'Notification of Selected Bidder' was sent to ABA Software Ltd in June 2010.

In the meantime, State Informatics Ltd made an application for review to the Independent Review Panel.

However, in view of the fact that the GRA was engaging the process for the commissioning of other costly software projects, my Ministry requested the GRA not to proceed further with the Racing Bookmaker Software Project. The rationale behind our decision is that it would be more appropriate and cost-effective to have an integrated IT System that would encompass all the stakeholders of the gambling industry in Mauritius, deter fraudulent and illegal activities, and also allow a better monitoring and control of the betting industry. The system should also have the inbuilt capacity to have a direct interface with the Mauritius Revenue Authority for control and revenue collection procedures, and should be compatible with the existing ICT logistics of both the Gambling Regulatory Authority and the Mauritius Revenue Authority.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in order to avoid duplication of projects and minimise costs, and taking into account the fact that my Ministry's decision would entail major modifications to the initial project, the procurement procedures were stopped and a thorough needs analysis is being envisaged, to ascertain that all the requirements in terms of software and other process elements are taken into consideration.

All bidders, having responded to the tendering exercise, were informed accordingly.

Mr Bhagwan: Do I understand from the Vice-Prime Minister that the directives to stop all the procedures came from the Ministry of Finance?

Mr Jugnauth: Yes, Sir.

Mr Bhagwan: Can I ask the Minister of Finance whether the views of the State Law Office were taken or whether it was a policy decision by the Ministry itself?

Mr Jugnauth: Yes, Sir.

Mr Bhagwan: I asked whether the views of the State Law Office were sought with regard to that.

Mr Jugnauth: Yes, Sir.

SCHOOL VANS - CHILDREN - OVERLOADING

(No. 1B/716) Ms S. Anquetil (Fourth Member for Vacoas and Floreal) asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to the transportation of schoolchildren, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the National Transport Authority, information as to if complaints have been registered in relation to the overloading of children in school vans and, if so, indicate -

- (a) in each case if the van attendant was present at that time, and
- (b) the measures that will be taken to ensure the safety of the schoolchildren.

Mr Bachoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, complaints were received, and regular checks are carried out. Four contraventions were established last year. Van attendants were present in each case. Routine checks have been maintained in 2010, and no such offence has been detected so far. I am also informed by the Commissioner of Police that no such complaints have been registered at the Traffic Branch of the Police Department.

Section 34A of the same regulations provides for employment of an attendant in such buses to attend to the safety of children. The attendant should be the holder of an identity card issued by the NTA.

I am also informed that, during checks carried out, it has been observed that most of the school buses already have an attendant to attend to the safety of school children.

As regards part (b), I am informed that a press communiqué was issued by NTA on 15 February 2008, inviting contract bus owners to comply with the above regulations.

Ms Anquetil: *I thank the hon. Minister for his answer.* Je voudrais juste savoir si le ministre est au courant que ce type de transport présente un grand problème d'insécurité, dans le sens que, d'abord les enfants ne sont pas *seat belted*, ensuite les vitres sont très larges et très basses. Elles sont ouvertes la plupart du temps, étant donné que le chauffeur n'utilise pas l'air conditionné et les enfants peuvent basculer très facilement. Est-ce qu'on va continuer avec ce type de transport sachant qu'au Canada et en Inde, ils ont choisis un autre modèle?

Mr Bachoo: The hon. Member spoke to me earlier on this issue. I have already given instructions to the Commissioner of NTA to have a look at it and then to come with certain propositions which we can implement.

CWA - LEGAL ADVISERS

(No. 1B/717) Mr G. Lesjongard (Second Member for Port Louis North and Montagne Longue) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to the legal advisers whose services have been retained by the Central Water Authority over the past five years, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Authority, information as to their names, indicating –

- (a) the amount of fees paid to each of them for appearance before disciplinary committees, and
- (b) if a case of conflict of interest has recently been reported involving a legal adviser and the General Manager of the Authority.

The Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities (Dr. R. Beebeejaun): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I am tabling the reply to part (a) of the question.

As regards part (b), no case of conflict of interest has been brought to my notice. The hon. Member may refer any such case, if he is aware of any, to me so that an investigation can be carried out.

Mr Lesjongard: May I ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether he is aware that there are serious accusations made by a former employee of the Authority against a legal adviser?

The Deputy Prime Minister: I am not aware; otherwise I would have replied accordingly.

Mr Lesjongard: There is a letter addressed to the hon. Prime Minister and I will table that letter, whereby serious accusations are being made against that legal adviser. Now, if the Deputy Prime Minister is not aware, in that letter it is stated that that legal adviser had taken money from that former employee on the basis that the case will be set aside, because he is related to the General Manager of the CWA.

Unfortunately, he lost his job and when he lost his job he went to see that legal adviser and he was refunded the money he had paid.

I am tabling the letter and I would expect that Government will go for a full-fledged enquiry into that case, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

The Deputy Prime Minister: I would like to see the letter first. Thank you.

PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP PROJECTS – 2005-2010

(No. 1B/718) Mr K. Li Kwong Wing (Second Member for Beau Bassin and Petite Rivière) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to Public-Private Partnership (PPP) projects, he will state –

- (a) since 2005 to 2010, the projects that have been –
 - (i) approved;
 - (ii) rejected;
 - (iii) implemented, and
 - (iv) still under consideration, indicating the total amount of FDI that had been obtained from PPP investments, and
- (b) the actions taken to encourage PPP projects.

The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development (Mr P. Jugnauth): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as the House may be aware, the Public-Private Partnership (PPP) Act was passed in November 2004 and proclaimed in March 2005. The PPP Guidance Manual that sets out the process and procedures for implementation of PPP projects was launched in October 2006.

Since 2007, all project proposals from public sector institutions have been examined to identify their potential as PPP projects. For the five identified projects, detailed feasibility studies have been undertaken. These projects are: the New City at Highlands, the Road Decongestion Project which includes the Port Louis Ring Road and the Harbour Bridge, the Rose Hill Municipal Market, the Mahebourg Waterfront (Phase 2) Development and the Wind Farm at Curepipe Point. All the five projects were subsequently approved as PPP projects. As at date, no project which has been subject to a PPP feasibility study has been rejected.

In contrast to traditional projects, PPP projects engage the Public Sector in partnership with private parties over a long span of time. I am informed that, as a consequence, the structuring and procurement of PPP projects, given their complexities, normally take a few years to yield their results. Since the identification of PPP projects only started in 2007, no PPP project has yet reached implementation stage.

Hon. Members would, however, appreciate that the PPP Road Decongestion Project has reached an advanced stage of procurement. This project consists of a network of roads, part of which is being financed by Government and the remaining by a private operator. The operator will also be responsible for operating and maintaining the entire network. Construction works have already started for the publicly funded roads, namely the Ring Road Lot 1 near Sorèze, the widening of the M1 motorway between Phoenix and Caudan and the Terre Rouge/Verdun Road.

Given that none of the PPP projects in the current pipeline have reached financial closure, no FDI has yet been accounted for. However, the approved PPP projects are expected to bring around Rs125 billion as FDI to the country.

Regarding the actions taken to encourage PPP projects, the World Bank recently hired the services of the Institute of Public-Private Partnership, a US based firm to review the PPP legal and institutional framework in Mauritius. Based on the recommendations of the study, my Ministry has started implementing measures to strengthen the PPP framework. As announced in

my recent Budget Speech, the PPP legislation is being amended, amongst others, to broaden the responsibility of the PPP Committee. In addition, a procurement exercise to recruit a full-time PPP Resident Advisor to assist the PPP Unit of my Ministry has reached an advanced stage. The Advisor will help in the identification and assessment of PPP projects, build institutional capacity, develop guidelines and provide advice on PPP policy issues. These reforms are expected to expedite the development and implementation of PPP projects in Mauritius.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I will, as and when appropriate, keep hon. Members informed of the status of PPP development.

Mr Li Kwong Wing: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, during the last five years, has there been any senior qualified staff that has been posted at the PPP Unit at the Ministry of Finance?

Mr Jugnauth: Yes, there have been staff who have been posted. As I said, there is a Unit but, of course, first of all, with the framework under which we are operating, we have been advised that the legal framework has to be consolidated. We have also been advised that there should be more capacity-building because we don't have, of course, enough required officers to undertake the necessary tasks. This is why I have said that we are in the process of recruiting an adviser in order to help the PPP Unit.

Mr Li Kwong Wing: Can we know how many qualified, experienced staff have been attached to that Unit? Is the *métro léger* in the pipeline of the PPP projects because I have not heard mention of this project? Is there any fund allocated in the Budget for a feasibility study of *métro léger* project?

Mr Jugnauth: As the hon. Member has mentioned there must be a feasibility that will be undertaken. With regard to the project itself, of course, we are moving ahead and, as and when we will keep the House informed of developments.

With regard to the details concerning the staff of that Unit, of course, I undertake to circulate this information later.

Mr Uteem: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we have heard the hon. Minister mention that there have already been, at least, five projects which have been identified for PPP. May I know from the hon. Minister whether there has been any request for proposal or expression of interest sent

to the private sector to see if they would be interested to contribute under PPP on these five projects?

Mr Jugnauth: Well, this is the purpose of having identified the five projects because we want to do it on a Public-Private Partnership basis and, therefore, we will be moving ahead, as I have stated in my answer.

Mr Li Kwong Wing: Is the hon. Minister ready to table a report for the benefit of the House of the feasibility study on the Road Decongestion Programme?

Mr Jugnauth: Yes, I can get the details from my colleague and table the information. There is no problem.

Mr Ganoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the issue of PPP is a very complex one. In fact, from years on, from different Governments we have heard about PPP projects, but nothing has come out of earth for different reasons. The question I wish to ask the hon. Vice-Prime Minister is: isn't it precisely a question of capacity building? Today, in view of the fact there are PPP Institutes of world repute to give training to cadres, does not he think that we should send some of our bright boys in the Ministry of Finance for training and come back in order to lead this unit at his Ministry. For example, drafting a PPP contract is, in itself, a difficult and complex matter and there have been no PPP projects so far in Mauritius. So, the question of capacity building - should not we focus on one or two of the officers, train them and make them become experts in building up and monitoring those types of projects?

Mr Jugnauth: Yes, I have stated, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that we need to build capacity in that unit and therefore whenever there is any opportunity or any need that will arise in order to train our officers, we will do so.

Mr Bérenger: The law provides, as amended in 2008, that if an unsolicited PPP bid comes forward, it is processed by the PPP Committee, then under the control of the Central Procurement Board, tenders are called for, tenders are examined and if the original unsolicited bid is within 10% more expensive than the lowest bidder, the unsolicited bidder gets the project. My question to the hon. Minister is: since 2007, has any unsolicited PPP bid reached that stage where the Central Procurement Office processed the bid, prepared tenders, called for tenders and examined the tenders?

Mr Jugnauth: I am not aware, but I will look into that and obviously circulate the information later on.

PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA - MEDICAL INSTITUTIONS

(No. 1B/719) Dr. S. Boolell (Second Member for Curepipe and Midlands) asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether, in regard to the universities of the People's Republic of China, she will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Medical Council of Mauritius, information as to if it has established a recommended list of medical institutions that are recognised for under and post graduate education and, if so, indicate -

- (a) the criteria used therefor, and
- (b) if the members of the Council who sat on the recommendation panel disclosed their interests, if any, including family connections with persons studying thereat.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed that the Medical Council has established a list of 31 recommended universities of the People's Republic of China where Mauritian students can undertake undergraduate and postgraduate medical studies. In this connection, a press communiqué was issued by the Medical Council in September 2010 to inform the public accordingly.

As regards part (a) of the question, the list of 31 recommended universities was ratified by the Medical Council at its meeting of 28 July 2010 on the basis of a list of 28 Medical Institutions provided by the Embassy of the People's Republic of China obtained from the Ministry of Education in China and three other universities which are already recognised in Mauritius. Furthermore, the Council acted on the basis of a list published by the Ministry of Tertiary Education, Science, Research and Technology in May 2010.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with regard to part (b) of the question, I am further informed that no panel was constituted for the recommendation of the abovementioned list instead it was a Council decision.

Dr. S. Boolell: May I ask the hon. Minister whether it is within the functions of the Medical Council to recommend a list to the public or to recognise universities which may accept medical students?

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it is within the parameters of the Medical Council to make recommendations to the Ministry.

Dr. S. Boolell: The word I am using, according to the functions of the Medical Council Act, is it allowed by the Council to recommend - recommend is a publicity stunt, because you are inviting in that *press communiqué* students to come to the Council to attend these universities. Recognise is one thing and recommend is another.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as I said, the Council acted on the basis of the list which was published by the Ministry of Tertiary Education so, whether it is recommended or not, *il ne faut pas faire des jeux de mots*. The Council, within its parameters, can recommend to the Ministry and subsequently can publicise the list.

Dr. S. Boolell: Part of my question, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, concerns the disclosure of interest on the part of some members of the Council. We have close relatives, children who have participated in the act of recommending *sans jeux de mots*. Is this perfectly in order or a matter for public investigation?

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am aware of this. If it was for one university, we could have expected members to declare their interest. It is a question of 29 universities for which a list has been obtained from the Ministry of Tertiary Education. It was not a list which has been submitted in the void. It is a list which has been published already by the Ministry of Tertiary Education. So, it was on the basis of that list that the Council recommended.

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it is elementary that when there is a potential conflict of interest, one should declare one's interest and step down, but, in any case, may we be enlightened as to the nature of this list from the Ministry of Tertiary Education? What was the purpose? Was it a list of recognised institutions?

Mrs Hanoomanjee: There was a list of 31 recommended medical universities from the People's Republic of China by the Ministry of Tertiary Education. That list was published.

Mr Bérenger: The hon. Minister said there was a list of recommended universities by the Ministry of Tertiary Education. Recommended for what? For recognition, not for publicity!

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, when that list was published by the Ministry of Tertiary Education, it was, in fact, for the purpose of making known to all students who want to proceed to China that these universities are effectively recognised by the Council.

Dr. S. Boolell: We have graduates, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, who come to this country, having studied all over the world. I wish to ask the hon. Minister whether it is the first time in the history of the Council that such a list has been published and that we have never seen lists from Pakistan, India France or anywhere else in the world.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it was not the list of one university; it's 31 universities. How come students would know that these universities are recognised and we all know that today there are several students who are proceeding to China for studies.

Mr Bérenger: The point is either on purpose or not. The question is: here we have a list - recommended not recognised - recommended to the students. It is a publicity stunt. The question is simple: has that ever taken place in the case of any other country where not only the list of recognised universities has been published but of recommended universities?

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, *il faudrait qu'il y ait une certaine homogénéité dans ce qu'on fait parce qu'il y avait le ministère de l'éducation, de l'autre côté le ministère du Tertiary Education et le Medical Council, ils ont agi de concert.*

Mr Bérenger: My question is: has this taken place? If it is no, it is no. In any other country where there has been a list of recommended universities for Pakistan, France or UK, is this the first time that publicity is made by the Medical Council?

The Deputy Speaker: For other countries.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I cannot answer for any other country. What I can say is that students have to know whether they can proceed to these universities for studies? Otherwise, if it was not publicised, they would not have known.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Dr. Sorefan, do you have any question?

Dr. Sorefan: May I know from the Minister whether she can table the list of the institutions that are recognised officially in our Medical Act as per the Appendix? Can this list be tabled in the House?

Mrs Hanoomanjee: I have no problem, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

The Deputy Speaker: Yes, hon. Boolell. Final supplementary question!

Dr. S. Boolell: Can the Minister give a guarantee to the House that this recommendation exercise is not linked to any occult form of scholarship donation, that it is all clear?

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I don't think the question of scholarship is being discussed here.

The Deputy Speaker: I will allow only a very last one.

Mr Obeegadoo: Is the Minister aware then this matter of recognition of qualifications and institutions has always been within the exclusive remit of the National Accreditation and Equivalence Council of the Ministry of Education? Has that Council's advice been sought as to medical institutions in China which are recognised in the developed countries and how does it compare?

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we are working in consultation with the Ministry of Education and with the Minister of Tertiary Education.

LAND TRANSFER TAX

(No. 1B/720) Mr K. Ramano (Second Member for Belle Rose and Quatre Bornes) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to the Land Transfer Tax, he will state -

- (a) the rate applicable on transfer of property as from 01 January 2011;
- (b) if it is proposed to extend the rate thereof applicable under the Stimulus Package 2009, in view of the prevailing economic situation, and
- (c) if same will be applicable once Gains Tax is charged.

The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development (Mr P. Jugnauth): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the rate of land transfer tax applicable on the transfer of immovable property is 5% of its market value until 31 December 2010 as provided for under the 2009 Stimulus Package. The tax is paid by the transferor.

Regarding part (a) of the question, as from 01 January 2011, the rate of land transfer tax will be -

- (i) 5% for a property which has been owned for more than 5 years; and
- (ii) 10% for a property which has been owned for 5 years or less.

As announced in the 2011 Budget Speech, the surcharge of 5% on land transfer tax introduced in 2008 will be removed in the forthcoming Finance Bill.

There was also a measure introduced in the 2009 Stimulus Package whereby exemption from land transfer tax and registration duty was granted for acquisition of land for registered projects where the cost of construction would exceed Rs50 m. This benefit is normally ending on 31 December 2010. The exemptions were also extended to cover sale of built up property effected before 30 June 2011 in respect of such registered projects and this measure would remain unchanged.

As regards part (c) of the question, land transfer tax and registration dues paid will be deductible from the computation of the tax on gains on transfer of immovable property in order to prevent any form of double taxation.

Mr Ramano: M. le président, aucune mention n'a été faite quant à la différenciation entre les terrains agricoles sous plantation de cannes et les terrains résidentiels. Vu la situation précaire qui existe dans le secteur agricole n'est-il pas temps de venir de l'avant avec un régime particulier pour le *Land Transfer Tax* comme c'était le cas avant le *Finance Act* de 2006?

Mr Jugnauth: No mention has been made because there is no difference between agricultural and other lands, but, of course, I can look into that and we will see if ever something has to be done.

Mr Ramano: Du fait que pour les pays, tel que l'Angleterre, il y a soit l'application du *Gains Act*, soit l'application du *Land Transfer Tax*, est-ce que le ministre peut considérer le fait que c'est une charge additionnelle qui va apporter une sorte d'inflation galopante dans le secteur immobilier?

Mr Jugnauth: No, it is not going to bring any inflation because what I have stated is: those who have paid the land transfer tax when computing the gains on the transaction will

obviously be allowed to deduct not only land transfer tax, but, in fact, registration duty and other costs that they have incurred with regard to this transaction.

Therefore, I see the point of the hon. Member, but we will have to proceed in a phased manner also, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. Let us go through this. Let us see how it works out and then probably with time we can consider whether we can have one without the other. I can reassure the hon. Member and the House that there is not going to be any double taxation with regard to this.

Mr Ganoo: I want to clear one point with the hon. Vice-Prime Minister. How does he reconcile what he is saying with what was announced in his Stimulus Package - the ERCP, at page 13, I quote: “to facilitate the process for the sale of property, Government is exempting these transactions from Land Transfer Tax for the same period, that is, up to December 2011?”

Mr Jugnauth: Well I must know in which context that measure...

(Interruptions)

Yes, but I need to look at all the measures that have been announced with regard to that specific item and, of course, I can come with an explanation with regard to that.

Mr Ameer Meea: I thank the hon. Minister for his answer and now it’s clear that the land transfer tax would be allowable when calculating capital gains. My question is: would this apply only to companies and to these dealing in land or to individuals as well?

Mr Jugnauth: First of all, we are not calling it capital gains, we are calling it gains on the transaction that is involved with regard to the property concerned, but I can reassure the hon. Member that that will also be applicable to individuals whereby they will be allowed to deduct the land transfer tax also.

SPORTS FEDERATIONS – TRUST – SETTING UP

(No. 1B/721) Mr F. Quirin (Third Member for Beau Bassin and Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether, in regard to the Trust for the raising of funds for Sports Federations, he will state when it will be set up.

Mr Rittoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in 2009, my Ministry set up the Club Maurice Committee which has, as main objective, to follow up and support the preparation of selected athletes and national teams for participation in major international games at regional, continental and world levels. However, it has been found that the main constraint to meet its objective is to get funds to finance its activities.

To enable the Committee to function in a more effective and efficient manner and to raise funds, my Ministry has requested the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development to set up the 'Club Maurice Trust Fund' under the Finance and Audit Act.

The main functions of the Trust would be -

- (i) to raise funds in view of supporting participation of Mauritius in major international games;
- (ii) to support and follow up the preparation of selected national teams and athletes for major international games. This would comprise, amongst others, psychological and medical follow up and provision of sports equipment, and
- (iii) to build team spirit and enhance the sense of patriotism through sports.

Mr Quirin: M. le président, j'aimerais demander au ministre quand il compte venir de l'avant avec justement la mise sur pied de ce *Trust* et par qui ce *Trust* sera géré.

Mr Rittoo: In my answer I have already said that I have requested the Ministry of Finance to set up the 'Club Maurice Trust Fund' under the Finance and Audit Act.

The Deputy Speaker: The second part perhaps, by whom it is going to be managed?

Mr Rittoo: Well, the committee is being set up at my ministry.

The Deputy Speaker: It's okay. Yes, hon. Leader of the Opposition!

Mr Bérenger: Of course, we are making reference to the Estimates for the main countries on page 430 where it is written -

'There is a need to tap other sources of financing to top up financial grants to national sports federations'

and then comes the comment -

“However, there is a lack of sponsorships.”

Then he says a Trust will be set up for fund raising. Well, we know with CSR, it has become still more difficult to find sports sponsorship. Now who is going to fund voluntarily after the CSR episode and so on? Does the Minister think that there would be voluntary contributions to that Trust that will be set up or will it be compulsory contributions to that Trust; from whom?

Mr Rittoo: We have requested the Minister of Finance to set up the ‘Club Maurice Trust Fund’ and then, of course, we are going to tap the companies. I understand that when the CSR concept came, many private companies did not contribute because they were supposed to contribute in the CSR rather than in sports, but then we came forward. Previously we had the Club Maurice Committee and when we participated in events like *Jeux de la Francophonie*, there were only 70 athletes and also in the CJSOI games there were only 125 athletes. We have now got the IOIG games where more than 400 athletes would be participating. So, we need to have additional funds and that’s why we need to have a Trust Fund.

Mr Bérenger: That is not my point. My point is: sponsorship has dried up. It was already difficult; now with CSR, it has become impossible. My point is: contributions to that Trust Fund that is going to be set up where there are contributions from companies or what have you, will that be compulsory or voluntary? If it is voluntary, *c’est un mort-né*. Will it be compulsory, if yes, how?

Mr Rittoo: We are actually discussing with the CSR Committee. We had meetings to find the criteria in order to tap these companies for Club Maurice Trust Fund to be eligible, at least, in the CSR Fund to get money.

Mr Quirin: M. le président, si je comprends bien la réponse du ministre, est-ce que son ministère n’aura aucun droit de regard sur ce *Trust* et uniquement le ministère des Finances ?

The Deputy Speaker: I understand that the Ministry is, in collaboration with the Minister of Finance, setting up the Trust and the modalities are being discussed now. This is what I understand. We move to next one!

(No. 1B/722) Mr F. Quirin (Third Member for Beau Bassin and Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether, in regard to the setting up of a National Institute of Sports, he will state where matters stand.

Mr Ritoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the setting up of a National Institute of Sports (NIS) appears in the Government Programme 2010-2015 and is one of the several projects that my Ministry will implement in the coming years.

The objective of the NIS is to enhance the performance and status of Mauritian athletes at regional, continental and international levels and to provide an environment that would ensure that local sportsmen are identified, nurtured and developed to pursue excellence at all levels.

The situation to date is as follows -

- (i) the project being very ambitious, it will be implemented in phases;
- (ii) the site identified for the project is at the Anjalay Stadium;
- (iii) a survey of the available land and on neighbouring infrastructure has been carried out by the Ministry of Housing and Lands and my Ministry respectively, and
- (iv) a Technical Committee is already looking at all components of the project, including technical and financial.

I also wish to inform the hon. Member that an amount of Rs3 m. has been provided in the 2011 Budget to carry out a feasibility study.

Mr Quirin: M. le président, j'aimerais que le ministre nous dise qui sont les personnes qui travaillent actuellement sur ce projet ?

Mr Ritoo: The Technical Committee is being headed by the Director of Sports of my Ministry.

The Deputy Speaker: The Table has been advised that Parliamentary Questions Nos. 1B/736, 1B/737 and 1B/738 have been withdrawn. We move on to Mrs Radegonde.

NATIONAL SYMPHONIC ORCHESTRA - SETTING UP

(No. 1B/723) Mrs J. Radegonde (Fourth Member for Savanne and Black River) asked the Minister of Arts and Culture whether, in regard to the setting up of the National Symphonic Orchestra, he will state if sufficient funds have been made available to his Ministry, from the National Lottery 2009/2010, for the financing thereof.

Mr Choonee: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, funds were earmarked from the proceeds of the National Lottery for the setting up of the Mauritius Symphonic Orchestra in 2010. In this regard, consultations have been held, among others with the Board of Investment and during the financial year 2009/2010, the *Conservatoire de Musique François Mitterrand*.

Between 04 to 06 December 2010, the visiting Scotland Orchestra will hold a workshop with local stakeholders to provide guidance on the setting up of the National Orchestra.

For the financial year 2011, an amount of Rs2 m. will be provided to effect a study on the setting up of the Mauritius Symphonic Orchestra.

Mrs Radegonde: Allow me to refer to a question asked on 24 November 2009 by the hon. Vice-Prime Minister, Minister at that time, Pravind Jugnauth and to Dr. Sithanen. In that answer, it was stated that the Government was expecting revenues of around Rs400 m. and the first priority was Arts and Culture to support our national artists and physical landscape. The first priority on the list was the upgrading of Plaza and the setting up of a Mauritius Symphony Orchestra. Can I know from the hon. Minister whether the expecting revenues of around Rs400m. have not made provision for the setting up of the Mauritius Symphony Orchestra?

Mr Choonee: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I could not get the question clearly. The Rs400 m. earmarked was for the upgrading of Plaza, of course, we did not specify the figures and for the Mauritius Symphony Orchestra, I told you about it. Plaza is another question. We can give you the information if a question comes up.

STC – PETROLEUM PRODUCTS - HEDGING LOSS

(No. 1B/724) Mr R. Uteem (Second Member for Port Louis South and Port Louis Central) asked the Minister of Industry and Commerce whether, in regard to the petroleum products, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the State Trading Corporation, information as to –

- (a) the amount of hedging loss which still needs to be borne by the Corporation, and
- (b) if the mechanism for the fixing of the price thereof will be reviewed.

Mr Soodhun: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the State Trading Corporation that, in regard to the petroleum products, an amount of Rs1.7 billion representing the hedging loss as at 25 November 2010, needs to be borne by the Corporation.

In regard to part (b) of the question, I am informed that the STC is working on a new mechanism which will be introduced shortly for the determination of price of petroleum products.

Mr Uteem: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I thank the hon. Minister. May I know from the hon. Minister how long more does he expect consumers to bear their hedging losses?

Mr Soodhun: Until April 2012.

Mr Bérenger: If I heard the hon. Minister correctly, we have been informed that Rs1.7 billion of hedging losses that are still to be paid. Can I know how much has already been paid by consumers for past hedging losses?

Mr Soodhun: Rs3 billion, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

Mr Uteem: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in answer to PQ No. B/29 in March 2009, the then Minister of Commerce, hon. Gowreesoo, stated that the services of the Hedging Consultant, Mr Dobson, was recruited to come up and inquire into the responsibility of the hedging loss. May I know from the hon. Minister whether Mr Dobson has submitted his report and whether he has identified who are responsible for those losses?

Mr Soodhun: Yes, there was a report. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, if it is the wish of the hon. Member I am going to table the report on the Table of the National Assembly.

Mr Guimbeau: I did not hear the figures which the hon. Minister just stated and I don't think many people heard about the hedging loss. If the hon. Minister can repeat how much is the hedging loss...

(Interruptions)

He just stated a figure.

The Deputy Speaker: No, this has been answered.

Mr Soodhun: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have already answered the question.

The Deputy Speaker: This has been answered.

Mr Uteem: May I know from the hon. Minister whether any sanction up to now has been taken against anyone who may have been responsible for the hedging loss?

Mr Soodhun: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I do not have the information.

Mr Lesjongard: Can the hon. Minister inform the House whether, with regard to the amount that he has stated, the price structure for petroleum products, that is, mogas and gasoil, has been revised lately?

Mr Soodhun: Not yet, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. I can give the detail if the hon. Member wishes to. I don't have it with me, but it has not yet been revised.

Mr Bérenger: We have been informed today that, until now, Rs3 billion have been paid for hedging losses. Rs1.7 billion will have to be paid. There is a massive figure of Rs4.7 billion. Has Government decided in what way the former Head of STC and the former Ministers concerned will be taken to account?

Mr Soodhun: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I think that this question has already been raised. We have the report of the gentleman that the hon. Leader of the Opposition has been referring to. I am going to table it. If we go through the report and what he has mentioned no punishment was mentioned or no action can be taken, I can assure the House that Government will not hesitate to take any disciplinary action. The hon. Prime Minister is not going to tolerate any corruption.

The Deputy Speaker: A last question, hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the former Minister, Mr Gowreesoo, stated that the report was going to be submitted in two weeks' time, and that was in March last year. We are now more than one and a half year later, and the hon. Minister is telling us that he still hasn't taken cognizance of the recommendation and that Government has still not decided what they are going to do in the light of this report.

Mr Soodhun: The recommendation has not mentioned any sanction, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. How can Government take any action if there is no mention of any sanction?

Mr Bérenger: The point is: if the report has identified guilty parties, then it is not up to that gentleman to recommend punishment. It is up to Government, on the basis of that report and of any other inquiry by the Police or whoever.

Mr Soodhun: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have gone through the report. It has been clearly stated that the decision taken for hedging was the right one at that particular time. The report clearly mentioned it.

Mr Lesjongard: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I will repeat my question with regard to the price structure. It was stated some time back that we had been paying Rs1.50 per litre for the provision of hedging, that is, from 2008 to 31 October 2008. Then, it increased to Rs3 per litre from November 2008, and it is said until today. My question is: is it still Rs3 that we are paying or is it more than Rs3 that we are paying?

Mr Soodhun: It is Rs3.

WAGE COMPENSATION

(No. 1B/725) Mr K. Li Kwong Wing (Second Member for Beau Bassin and Petite Rivière) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to the wage compensation for the year 2011, he will state -

- (a) the estimated cost -
 - (i) to Government, for the public sector, and
 - (ii) the private sector, indicating their respective percentage to Gross Domestic Product;
- (b) the average rate of compensation across all salary brackets, and
- (c) if the current rate of inflation for the year is fully covered by the average rate of salary compensation and, if not, why not.

The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development (Mr P. Jugnauth): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the salary compensation for the year 2011 for both the public and private sectors is as follows -

- i for those earning a salary less than Rs5,000, the rate is 3.2 percent;
- ii for those earning a salary above Rs5,000 and up to Rs12,000, the amount of compensation is Rs175.;
- iii for those earning a salary above Rs12,000 and up to Rs30,000, the amount of compensation is Rs190.

The inflation rate is estimated at 2.7 percent for the calendar year 2010. I wish to point out that employees earning a salary below Rs5,000 have been more than fully compensated at the rate of 3.2 percent, which is 0.5 percent above the inflation rate. On top of this, we have increased the threshold for obtaining the maximal compensation rate from Rs3,800 to Rs5,000. This is indeed a significant effort we have made in favour of workers at the lowest rung of the ladder.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the decisions announced on salary compensation made by Government followed tripartite discussions at the level of the Technical Committee, under the aegis of the National Tripartite Forum and at the final tripartite meeting I presided. These decisions strike the right balance between responding to the current economic imperatives and providing workers the best possible compensation that could be afforded in these difficult times when many countries are cutting pay, reducing pensions and even firing not only in the private sector but also in the public sector.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the cost to Government, that is, for the public sector, is Rs640 m., representing 0.22 percent of GDP. The cost to the private sector is Rs705 m., representing 0.24 percent of GDP. The salary compensation will benefit 86,706 employees in the public sector, representing 87% of the total number of employees. In the private sector, some 308,000 employees will benefit, representing 95% of the total number of employees.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the average rate of compensation across all salary brackets, for both the public and private sectors, is around 1.5 percent.

I must point out that, over the years, the average rate of compensation across all brackets has always been lower than the inflation rate. For instance, for each of the three years when the Finance Minister was the actual Leader of the Opposition, the inflation rates and average compensation across all salary brackets were as follows -

- 2000/2001: Inflation rate was 4.4%; the average compensation across all salary brackets was 2.7%.
- 2001/2002: Inflation rate was 6.3%; the average compensation across all salary brackets was 2.7 %.
- 2002/2003: Inflation rate was 5.1; the average compensation across all salary brackets was 3.6%.

Mr Li Kwong Wing: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, since the average rate of compensation is below the inflation rate for the year, is the hon. Minister in a position to award an increase in that compensation to fully compensate for the erosion of inflation caused to the working public?

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: This has been answered.

Mr Jugnauth: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, probably I am not clear enough. I want to be clearer. This has always been the case. Not only at this time, not only at the time when the hon. Leader of the Opposition was the Minister of Finance, but throughout all the years. I have the list of all the years with inflation rate and the salary compensation that was being given, and the calculation with regard to average compensation. It has always been below the rate of inflation.

Mr Li Kwong Wing: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, whatever had been the decision in the past, the mandate and the electoral promise that has been given was to fully compensate for the loss in purchasing power and not to do any *rattrapage* of previous years' inflation. As there has not been full compensation for the inflation rate for this year, is the hon. Minister in a position to reconsider the award of the increase in salary compensation?

Mr Jugnauth: The hon. Member is wrong, because not only have we raised the threshold from Rs3,800 to Rs5,000, but full compensation above the rate of inflation, that is, 3.2%, has been given to this category of employees.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order, please! The Table has been apprised that PQ Nos. 1B/729, 1B/730, 1B/732 and 1B/733 have been withdrawn.

HOUSING UNITS - CONSTRUCTION

(No. 1B/726) Mr A. Ameer Meea (First Member for Port Louis Maritime and Port Louis East) asked the Minister of Housing and Lands whether, in regard to the construction of 700 housing units, as announced in the Budget Speech 2011, he will state -

- (a) if land has already been identified therefor and, if so, indicate the locations thereof, and
- (b) the total estimated cost of the project, including sites and services.

Dr. Kasenally: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as the House is aware, the provision of housing is high on the agenda of this Government, and it is in this context that we have in this Budget emphasised on providing housing support for families with monthly income less than Rs5,000 and up to Rs50,000.

As regards part (a) of the question, some 10 sites, namely Long Mountain, Pointe aux Piments, Solitude, Beau Bois, Quatre Cocos, Camp Ithier, Camp de Masque, Sebastopol, Gros Cailloux and Chebel, have been identified for the construction of some 8000 units as well as provision of some 180 serviced sites.

My Ministry is also currently parcelling some 30 plots in the region of Route Militaire, Port Louis to accommodate some squatters together with those from the vulnerable group earning less than Rs5,000 from the region of Plaine Verte and Vallée Pitot.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with regard to part (b) of the question, the total cost of this project, inclusive of the sites and services project, has been estimated to be Rs583 m.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I wish to inform the House that my Ministry has already started consultation with stakeholders, namely the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development, Ministry of Social Integration and Economic Empowerment and the MHC for implementation of this project.

Mr Ameer Meea: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, for the housing units that are to be built at Route Militaire, Port Louis, can I ask the hon. Minister what would be the cost per unit of each house?

Dr. Kasenally: I think that it should not be more than Rs200,000 to Rs250,000, but we will have to work out the final cost because, as you know, at Route Militaire, the topography is a bit different from other sites in the country which are flat.

Mr Ameer Meea: I thank the hon. Minister for his answer, but, is the Rs250,000 the cost price or the selling price?

Dr. Kasenally: We do not sell the house like that, but there are certain criteria which are used, especially for those below Rs5,000 because there is a formula which is set up where they will be getting cash grant and then they will be having soft loan over a period of time.

However, nobody should pay more than 20 to 25 percent of their income for housing.

CAMP LEVIEUX - NHDC HOUSING ESTATE – WATER SUPPLY

(No. 1B/727) Mr D. Nagalingum (Second Member for Stanley and Rose Hill) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to the irregular supply of water at the NHDC Housing Estate at Camp Levieux, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the National Housing Development Company Ltd., information as to if new pumps have been installed thereat and if so, when and if not, why not.

The Minister of Housing and Lands (Dr. A. Kasenally): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I shall reply to this question.

With regard to water supply at Camp Levieux Housing Estate, I am informed by the NHDC that the inhabitants are facing irregular water supply due to frequent cuts and lowering pressure by the CWA.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Camp Levieux Housing Estate was constructed in 1991 with a configuration of Ground plus 3. The Housing Estate consists of about 992 apartments distributed in 21 blocks. At the time the project was implemented, each block was fitted with water pump to push up water to the roof water tanks in case of low water pressure.

However, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, due to non-payment of common electricity bills and lack of maintenance by the residents, some of the pumps have broken down, some have been vandalised and some have simply been stolen.

Mr Deputy Speaker Sir, in reply to previous PNQs and PQs on the rehabilitation works and maintenance of common areas, I have stated that the inhabitants of NHDC Housing Estates are owners *de plein droit* and, as such, they are personally responsible for the maintenance of all common areas and amenities including water pumps. However, it is to be noted that they have not assumed their responsibility at all.

Mr Deputy Speaker Sir, though the supply of water does not fall under the purview of my Ministry, nevertheless, the NHDC has carried out a survey on a one-off basis to identify problem areas. To that effect, defective water pumps and water reticulation networks have been identified on some six NHDC Housing Estates, including Camp Levieux.

Mr Nagalingum: In a reply that the Deputy Prime Minister gave on PQ No. B/178 of 2010, I quote –

“In order to alleviate the water supply problem NHDC will have to install a new pump, which should be maintained regularly.”

Has it been the case?

Dr. Kasenally: I have already stated that we have carried out a survey and there are pumps which are going to be installed. The NHDC has voted a certain sum of money. At Camp Levieux, Malaysian 1, there is an estimated cost of Rs30 m. This is both for water reticulation and water pumps and Camp Levieux Alpha 1, Rs2 m. I think the Malaysian 1 is the most dangerous one.

Mr Bérenger: My colleague has referred to the reply given by the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Energy and Public Utilities and that is why we put the question to him today, but he has transferred the question to the Minister responsible for Housing.

Therefore, as my colleague said, on the 17 August 2010, the Deputy Prime Minister was *catégorique*. These pumps have disappeared; in order to alleviate the water supply problems, NHDC will have to install a new pump which should be maintained regularly. He added: “I am instructing the CWA to liaise with the NHDC accordingly.”

These pumps have disappeared because they were not under lock and key. Of course, they disappeared unfortunately, but they will walk away if they are not under lock and key. No

reference has been made to the reply given by the Deputy Prime Minister. Has the CWA liaised with the NHDC and are those pumps going to be replaced and placed under lock and key?

Dr. Kasenally: As I have already said, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the NHDC is looking after it. In fact, in Camp Levieux we are going to spend Rs17 m. The process is under way. I must also point out that the NHDC is not, I repeat, not going to come and look after these pumps, it is the syndic or whatever, they have to assume their responsibility.

I also wish to point out, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that this is only part of the problem in the NHDC. The problems for water supply in the complex of Camp Levieux have been compounded by irresponsible resident teenagers who have found nothing better than climbing on top of the buildings, unscrew the water tank covers and using the tank as mini swimming pools. By so doing, they had infected the water with ecoli and the NHDC had to undertake a vast and tedious operation of cleaning and disinfecting.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with a view to alleviate the hardship and to ensure that every family is serviced by good infrastructure supply, the NHDC will also be implementing rehabilitation of the water reticulation network, including, as I have said, the fixing of the new pumps. The tender document has been finalised and funds are available.

Now, before we replace completely the pumps, the infrastructure, especially the pipes have to be repaired. It is under way, but this infrastructure is taking a bit more time. The reason is that people are very selfish; they are preventing the NHDC contractors to have access to the block. We can do that much, but there is a limit to what we can do. I think that people will have to assume their responsibility.

Over and above that, we have a consultant which is now going around and trying to organise the syndic in all the NHDC Housing Estates because Government cannot go on spending money and replacing all these infrastructures or even cutting grass for that matter, otherwise we will be called upon to cut the grass in front of everybody's house and to repair the water pump of everybody in this country.

Mr Bérenger: The file is not with me but, here, in the House, like he did a few minutes ago, the hon. Minister hits at all tenants. There might be some who have not been cooperative, but he cannot hit at all tenants like that. Here, he hits at the tenants, but outside....

(Interruptions)

The file is not with me, but I will come back. Outside, he hits at contractors very hard as reported in the press regularly. He hits at contractors and the contractors also have to bear their responsibility. So, can I ask the hon. Minister to be fair?

Dr. Kasenally: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the hon. Leader of the Opposition is right. I am going to hit at everybody who is not assuming his responsibility - not only the contractors. There are certain, I have not said all NHDCs. Some of them are working perfectly well, but I am even hitting at the people of NHDC and members of my staff who are not performing.

Mr Lesjongard: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, since the hon. Minister is saying that he is going to hit at the contractors, can he hit at the contractor who is in charge of works at Vallée des Prêtres because he has already left the site.

The Deputy Speaker: This is a completely different issue. This is not part of the PQ.

Dr. Kasenally: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in fact, I have visited Vallée des Prêtres and I am taking care of that. I will assume my full responsibility. Even if he has disappeared, he must not have left Mauritius.

PLAZA THEATRE - RENOVATION WORKS

(No. 1B/728) Mr D. Nagalingum (Second Member for Stanley and Rose Hill) asked the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the Plaza at Rose Hill, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Municipal Council of Beau Bassin/Rose Hill, information as to –

- (a) the scope of works;
- (b) the works carried out as at to date, and
- (c) the total estimated cost thereof, indicating where matters stand in relation to the renovation of the -
 - (i) Administrative Block;
 - (ii) Salle des Fêtes, and

- (iii) Theatre, indicating the amount budgeted for each and the expected date of completion thereof.

Mr Aimée: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Plaza Theatre is part of our cultural heritage and we should definitely spare no efforts to renovate and preserve it. In view of the considerable amount required for the renovation of the theatre, the Municipality of Beau Bassin/Rose Hill has, therefore, considered it wise to proceed with the works in a phased manner. According to plan, the renovation works should be carried out in three phases as follows -

- Phase I consists of the design, supply and installation of a new roof covering and ancillary works at roof level estimated at Rs90 m. This very first phase is considered to be very important and urgent, in order to prevent the building from falling apart and to protect it from further deterioration;
- Phase II consists of the renovation of the Administrative Block and *Salle des Fêtes* estimated at Rs67 m., and
- Phase III consists of refurbishment of the theatre estimated at Rs390 m.

Mr Deputy Speaker Sir, I am informed that Phase I has been completed. However, Phases II and III will require a total investment estimated at Rs457 m. which the Council cannot afford. Once the funding will be secured, the works will be undertaken and thereafter the theatre and *Salle des Fêtes* will become operational.

With regard to parts (a), (b) and (c) of the question, the detailed information is being placed in the Library.

Mr Nagalingum: Can the hon. Minister tell us if in this Budget any money has been earmarked for Phases II and III?

Mr Aimée: I don't think so, Mr Deputy Speaker Sir.

Mr Bérenger: The hon. Minister says that Phase I has been completed. Can we, at least, know at what cost? It was supposed to cost Rs90 m., what has been the cost?

(Interruptions)

Is he aware that, in fact, already the new roof is leaking? Already, there is a lot of trouble and if it stays like that for a number of months, if not years, we will have spent ninety plus million rupees to no purpose.

Mr Aimée: M. le président, le coût pour la toiture est de R 90 million. Cela a été complété. Justement la toiture a été faite pour empêcher l'eau, en période de pluie, de pénétrer à l'intérieur pour ne pas abîmer le théâtre de Plaza.

Mr Bhagwan: Mr Deputy Speaker Sir, I have two supplementary questions. Can the hon. Minister inquire with the Municipality of Beau-Bassin/Rose-Hill - this is a wooden building, it forms part of the national *patrimoine* - whether there is any insurance on that building. According to my information, there is no insurance actually on the building even as it is?

Mr Aimée: M. le président, je ne peux pas répondre à cette question, mais lors de la prochaine session, je viendrai faire une annonce au parlement pour dire si c'est vrai ou non.

Mr Bhagwan:

Being given that Government has funded part of the reconstruction and renovation works - it is our money, public money - is the Minister agreeable, in the public interest, to ask an independent inquiry through the Ministry of Public Infrastructure; to make an assessment of the present state of the building and works carried out?

Mr Aimée: Mr Deputy Speaker Sir, I just mentioned in my reply the different phases that they are going to undertake for that particular building and I mentioned Rs90 m. for the roof; Rs67 m. for the Administrative Block; refurbishment of the theatre estimated at Rs390 m. So, the survey is there. We know already the estimate that they would need for the project.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: No, the question is for works which have already been completed.

Mr Aimée: Only the roof costs Rs90 m. I have answered to that question.

Mr Bérenger: Is the hon. Minister telling us - I am sure he has experience of construction works, of rehabilitation and so on - that we have provided Rs90 m. *et par miracle*, we have repaired the roof for Rs90 m., not one cent more not one less. It can't be! If it is the

case, it means that there has been something very fishy, that we cut cost on the building works. Therefore, can we know exactly how much has been actually spent and secondly, as my colleague said, let's have the Ministry of Public Infrastructure check whether we have had value for money. According to my information, we have not had value for money at all. Therefore, the Ministry of Public Infrastructure comes in and sees whether we have had value for money, be it Rs90 m., Rs95 m., Rs85 m. or whatever.

Mr Aimée: The estimate contract value of the roof is Rs83,939,039.35.

Mr Guimbeau: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with so much confusion on the Plaza, can the hon. Minister table all the contracts which have been awarded for the renovation of Plaza?

Mr Aimée: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I will either place it in the Library of the National Assembly or circulate it in Parliament.

COURT OF APPEAL - SETTING UP

(No. 1B/729) Ms S. Anquetil (Fourth Member for Vacoas and Floreal) asked the Attorney General whether, in regard to the setting up of a Court of Appeal, as recommended by Lord Mackay, he will state where matters stand.

(Withdrawn)

COURT USHERS

(No. 1B/730) Ms S. Anquetil (Fourth Member for Vacoas and Floreal) asked the Attorney General whether, in regard to the Court Ushers, he will state if it is proposed to bring changes to the profession thereof and, if so, give the details thereof.

(Withdrawn)

The Deputy Speaker: Time is over!

At this stage Mr Speaker took the Chair.

(4.19 p.m.)

**POINT OF ORDER – LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION –
BUDGET SPEECH 2003-2004**

Mr Bérenger: I have a point of order, Mr Speaker, Sir. I would wish to have your ruling as to whether the Minister of Finance did not mislead the House this morning when, at the end of his reply on the Private Notice Question, he said - with a copy of the speech which I made then in his hand – that, when as Deputy Minister and Minister of Finance, I delivered the 2003-2004 Budget Speech, I had spoken one sentence which he quoted. He quoted the sentence supposedly all I said on Rodrigues was I am providing in the National Budget Rs1.1 billion for Rodrigues. Mr Speaker, Sir, that line is one line in the paragraph of seven lines on Rodrigues. He quoted only the last line and there are two other paragraphs on Rodrigues. If you will allow me, Mr Speaker, Sir, paragraph 25 –

‘We have initiated the process for a historic reform of local administration. Rodrigues already enjoys maximum autonomy. It now has its own elected Regional Assembly and a Council to manage the affairs of the island’.

At Paragraph 26 -

‘We have created conditions for sustained growth in Rodrigues. The construction of a new airport of international standard will be completed shortly. The road network has been extended and telephone services upgraded. We have improved water supply and health services, expanded educational facilities and provided decent housing in replacement of *Lacaze Zétoile* and *Lacaze Zénou*. Total budget for Rodrigues under this Government has exceeded Rs1 billion for two consecutive fiscal years’.

and then the longest paragraph 192 -

‘Finally Rodrigues - Rodrigues has just gone through a tough time with cyclone Kalunde hitting the island with full force. The courage and fortitude shown by Rodriguans in adversity has been exemplary. I have also been impressed by the quality of their recent Budget and their choice of development priorities. I wish to congratulate the Rodrigues

Regional Council for its realism and pragmatism. This augurs well for local administration in Rodrigues.’

and then that one sentence which he pretended maliciously –

“I am providing in the National Budget...”

(Interruptions)

Shame on you!

(Interruptions)

“...Rs1.1 billion for Rodrigues’.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order! Order! I have to listen to the point of order, please!

Mr Bérenger: It is on record! He said that with my then speech in his hand, misleading the House that it is only that sentence that I uttered.

Mr Speaker: The question will be to ask for my ruling on whether the hon. Minister has misled the House. If the hon. Leader of the Opposition is categorically saying that he has misled the House, that is not correct. Raise the point and then I will give my ruling!

Mr Bérenger: It is clear to me that I invite your ruling but if he was a gentleman he would have come forward and apologise! Shame on him!

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order! I have listened to the point of order which has been raised by the hon. Leader of the Opposition and I will take time to consider. I’ll have to look into some documents before I can give my ruling.

At 4.22 p.m. the sitting was suspended.

On resuming at 5.01 p.m. with the Deputy Speaker in the Chair.

MOTION

SUSPENSION OF S.O. 10(2)

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

The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development (Mr P. Jugnauth) rose and seconded.

Question put and agreed to.

(5.02 p.m.)

PUBLIC BILL

Second Reading

THE APPROPRIATION (2011) BILL

(No. XVII of 2010)

Order read for resuming adjourned debate on the Appropriation (2011) Bill (No. XVII of 2010).

Question again proposed.

The Minister of Information and Communication Technology (Mr T. Pillay Chedumbrum): M. le président, permettez moi de me joindre aux honorables membres de ce côté de la Chambre, qui sont intervenus avant moi, pour féliciter le vice-Premier ministre et ministre des finances pour la présentation d'un budget que je qualifierai d'impeccable. Le choix de ce qualificatif est plus que fortement justifié quand on tient en ligne de compte la conjoncture économique particulièrement difficile dans laquelle nous nous trouvons comme tant d'autres pays mais force est de constater que nous n'avons pas emboité le pas à certains pays en difficulté. Nous avons vu récemment comment un pays comme l'Angleterre a déployé un plan d'austérité en appliquant des réductions sévères dans le budget de tous les ministères et départements gouvernementaux. En face d'une telle situation, le budget, qui a été présenté par le vice-Premier ministre et ministre des finances, défie les règles car il véhicule tous les éléments

pour favoriser la dimension sociale du développement de l'île Maurice. Ce budget tutoie littéralement les considérations économiques locales et mondiales. Il serait donc de mauvaise foi celui qui n'admet pas que ce budget répond largement aux impératifs du social. A ce titre, je me réfère aux dotations des ministères tels que celui de l'intégration sociale, de la santé, de la sécurité sociale et de l'éducation nationale: R 723 millions pour l'intégration sociale, en plus de 50% du CSR, R 7.9 milliards pour la santé, R 10.7 milliards pour la sécurité sociale et R 9.8 milliards pour l'éducation nationale.

M. le président, le vice-Premier ministre et ministre des finances a annoncé dans son discours que les trois principales orientations du budget sont, je cite –

“Rebalancing growth;

Making a great leap forward on productivity, and

Consolidating social justice”.

Nous avons constaté par les différentes mesures budgétaires préconisées comment la politique gouvernementale, sous l'impulsion du Premier ministre, le Dr. Navin Ramgoolam, favorise l'épanouissement et le bien être de tout un chacun avec une attention particulière pour ceux qui sont économiquement faibles et qui méritent d'être protégés, tout en assurant que des fonds nécessaires soient alloués aux différents secteurs économiques pour que le pays soit mis sur la voie d'un développement moderne qui nous ouvrirait un avenir meilleur.

Il y a un sentiment de grande satisfaction quand on réalise que malgré les conditions économiques difficiles, le gouvernement ne lésine pas sur les moyens pour promouvoir l'éducation et veiller à ce que nos enfants bénéficient d'une scolarité saine qui leur permet de s'épanouir. Cet investissement colossal dans l'éducation a pour ultime objectif d'offrir à nos enfants des opportunités d'emploi quand ils se présenteront sur le marché du travail. C'est là, la meilleure façon de les doter de moyens sûrs et nécessaires pour pouvoir assumer leur rôle dans la vie comme des citoyens responsables. Il est aussi à noter que le budget 2011 prévoit une aide fort appréciable aux parents pour le paiement des frais d'examens de leurs enfants. Des fonds sont aussi alloués pour l'amélioration des infrastructures scolaires ainsi que pour leur aménagement.

M. le président, autre preuve, si preuve il fallait, que ce gouvernement est sensible au sort des personnes âgées, des veuves, des orphelins et des personnes autrement capables, se trouve dans l'allocation d'une grande part du budget pour soutenir les régimes de sécurité sociale. On se souvient encore de ce triste épisode quand le gouvernement d'alors avait initié une mesure pour le ciblage de la pension de vieillesse. Contrairement à cette démarche cruelle, nous, au gouvernement, accordons une attention toute particulière aux personnes qui touchent des prestations sociales en nous faisant un devoir d'augmenter ces prestations chaque année. L'île Maurice a de quoi être fière de pouvoir consacrer des fonds à hauteur de près de R 11 milliards à la sécurité sociale.

M. le président, nous ne pouvons passer sous silence ce que le budget 2011 pourvoit en matière de logement. Un plan ambitieux mais réalisable est prévu et permettra la construction de cinq types de logement pour différentes catégories de personnes par rapport à leur revenus. Nous voyons clairement dans cette démarche la volonté du gouvernement de répondre, à la limite du possible, aux besoins de ceux en quête d'un logement. Venir de l'avant avec un tel plan, nécessitant pas moins de R 700 millions à un moment où les conditions économiques sont ce qu'elles sont, relève presque du domaine de l'impossible. Mais ce gouvernement n'a pas hésité à inclure dans le budget 2011 une telle mesure. Nul doute, c'est une décision fort louable.

M. le président, nous avons aussi noté que le budget 2011 prévoit des investissements conséquents dans le développement infrastructurel, dans l'amélioration de la qualité de la vie de nos citoyens et aussi dans le social. En contrepartie, le budget contient des mesures qui visent à augmenter les revenus pour permettre la mise en œuvre des projets énoncés et des actions qui doivent être menées. Il serait important de faire ressortir ici la dimension de justice sociale qui a été respectée. Ce sont ceux qui ont de gros moyens qui seront appelés à contribuer dans un esprit de solidarité nationale par le biais d'un '*solidarity income tax*' de 10%. Dans cette même mouvance et pour combattre des fléaux qui font rage en ce moment ci, les droits d'accise sur les boissons alcoolisées et les cigarettes ont été majorés tout comme les frais pour les permis d'opération des maisons de jeux.

M. le président, à travers les mesures annoncées, il est plus qu'évident que le gouvernement se prévaut de l'exercice budgétaire pour traduire dans des réalités pratiques sa politique pour un meilleur partage de la richesse nationale et aussi pour rétablir d'une certaine

manière un équilibre social qui permettrait une meilleure et plus harmonieuse coexistence de tous les composants de la société mauricienne. C'est ça la philosophie de notre Premier ministre, le Dr. Navin Ramgoolam.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I shall now come to certain sector specific issues which have to be highlighted in the context of the present debate.

We are alive to the fact that the ICT sector is not an industry in its own right, but also a vital support for almost all the economic sectors that contribute to the national wealth.

The ICT sector is a dynamic one. Government, conscious of this fact, has ensured that this Budget contains a series of measures and I deem it appropriate to mention a few of them.

- We note that there will be a decrease in the cost of traditional international bandwidth services ranging between 16% to 24% as from the beginning of 2011.

Mais, ici, j'aurais aimé ouvrir une parenthèse pour dire qu'une fois que le budget a été présenté, nous avons tout de suite commencé le travail et, au lieu d'attendre le début de l'année 2011 pour procéder à la baisse, on a pu faire le nécessaire et apporter dès demain, c'est-à-dire, à partir du 1^{er} du mois de décembre, une baisse sur les tarifs ADSL Home and Business. La presse avait parlé d'une baisse de 15%, mais nous avons fait mieux; une baisse de 20% au lieu de 15%. Je dois vous dire que ce n'est que le commencement.

- Conditions are being created to enhance capacity building in the ICT sector for sustaining growth. This will be undertaken with the collaboration of the Outsourcing and Telecommunications Association of Mauritius (OTAM). *Très prochainement, un ICT academy verra le jour.*
- E-Government will be introduced across several ministries and departments, to increase competitiveness and productivity.
- Steps are being taken to increase the use of online submission and e-payment facilities across all Government services.
- The functionalities and processes of the Mauritius Police Service are being computerised, to allow connectivity among the Judiciary, the Office of the DPP and the Prisons service.
- A Special-Purpose Vehicle will be set up to ensure a second undersea cable link.

There is no doubt that, with the implementation of these measures, we will witness a boost in the development of the sector, and thus propel it to becoming a stronger pillar of our economy. One thing here I must tell you, is that we are not happy to be the fifth pillar. We want to be the third or second, and why not the first pillar of our economy.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, insofar as the second undersea cable link is concerned, I would like to inform the House that we are moving fast on this matter. With a view to further stimulating competition in the Information and Communication Technology market, Government has already agreed to an 'open access policy' being applied for the operation of undersea cable landing stations in Mauritius. The open access policy will allow interested parties, on equal conditions, with a transparent relation between cost and pricing, to get access to and share communication resources on one level; to provide value added services on another level in layered communication system architecture. It also encourages market entry from smaller local companies and seeks to ensure that no entity can take a position of dominant market power. This will constitute a real democratisation of the market and will directly benefit the end users.

It is an undeniable fact that the sustained growth of the ICT sector relies heavily on the provision of high bandwidth and secured service applications, advanced towards meeting both the mainstream and specialised demands of ICT consumers. Such demand covers the basic essentials such as access to high-quality telecommunication, voice services, Internet access services and so on; to more specialised applications such as e-payment, online banking, online tax returns, and so forth.

For the sake of illustration, allow me, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, to inform the House that, in terms of total international bandwidth capacity, which currently stands at nearly 3,400 megabits per second in 2010, there has been a 20-fold increase compared to the level in 2005. This increase in international bandwidth usage has served as a boost to the various ICT related activities such as IT enabled services and Business Process Outsourcing, call centres, international voice traffic, and Internet access amongst others. Government firmly intends to maintain this trend of bandwidth capacity growth through the new budgetary measures such as the Special-Purpose Vehicle that it is proposed to create, and the defined open access policy to ensure connection to a second undersea cable link. In this regard, we welcome the coming into

operation of various other regional undersea cable projects such as LION Phase II, Eassy, and others in the near future.

With this Budget, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we are also paving the way for the country to respond to the main challenges for a sustainable growth and prosperity. These challenges include -

- Transforming the country into a high skill and high employment economy needed in a globalised environment.
- Reckoning with the foreseeable public expenditure and environment constraints, thus guaranteeing the successful implementation of projects.
- Using ICT as a powerful tool to improve the quality of life of the citizen through better services.

With the convergence of technologies in the ICT sector, ICT is becoming increasingly an important tool in many endeavours of our daily life. We have, in this context, to build trust and secure all the e-applications. It is pleasant for me, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, to inform that the Electronic Transactions (Certification Authorities) Regulations are being made with the approval of Government, with the objective of making digital signature a reality in Mauritius through the deployment of the National Public Key Infrastructure, commonly known as the PKI.

The PKI deployed at national level is a basis for safe, trusted and secure electronic transactions. In PKI-enabled applications, the user is identified through a unique digital signature which cannot be falsified. The user can also protect the integrity of his electronic transactions by encrypting same, thereby preventing unauthorised access to the transactions. In the PKI system, the user is assigned a public-private key pair that is used in generating his digital signature and for encrypting data.

These regulations will come into force as from tomorrow, that is, on 01 December 2010, and will thus provide for the entire policy, regulatory and technical frameworks that are required for a secure electronic transactions operating environment in our country.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, latest statistics pertaining to the ICT sector suggest that, for the year 2009, the value added of the ICT sector, as a percentage of GDP, stood at 5.7%. Based on Central Statistical Office estimates for the year ending 2010, this is expected to rise to 6.1%,

demonstrating the resilience of the sector in spite of the economic uncertainty prevalent in the global arena. Even this percentage is considered to be a very conservative one.

Furthermore, the reduction in the prices of telecom services that we are witnessing will have spill over effect, be it in terms of the consumption for the ICT sector itself or for other sectors that will adopt ICTs. More importantly, the PKI, being put in place, will give a new dimension to the way we are used to do business as this will ensure the confidentiality, non-repudiation and authenticity features that are required in the virtual world. Taking all the above factors together, we can safely expect a contribution of ICT to the GDP that will largely exceed the very conservative estimate I just referred to.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it is worth noting also that, over the period 2005 to 2009, the growth rate of the ICT sector has been maintained in double-digit figures. We have all the reasons to believe that this trend should persist. In the light of this observation, it is anticipated that the sector's contribution to overall GDP will take a better ascendancy. As a matter of fact, a study by the World Bank reports that role of broadband is key towards shaping the economic outlook of a country; in particular, economic growth rises by 1.3% for a given 10% increase in high-speed connections. However, certain pre-conditions must be in place to ensure the sustainability of the above tendency.

These pre-conditions are -

Firstly, the requirement of continued investment in broadband networks is fundamental to the extent that many developed countries earmarked infrastructure investment into broadband networks as part of their economic stimulus packages during the not so distant worldwide recession. This is because such networks bring both direct results in terms of financial outlays and employment at the onset, and in addition, they generate positive spill over effects across other sectors since ICT remain the lynchpin of a plurality of activities in today's economy. At the same time, this ensures that actual and spare capacities are both continuously improved to accommodate increasingly bandwidth hungry services and applications.

Secondly, service providers must be encouraged towards boosting the value-chain by making optimum use of the available capacity to come up with innovative and efficient end user solutions, which can facilitate both private sector and Government interactions

in terms of business to business transactions or customer to business transactions respectively.

Thirdly, while the supply of additional capacity and the generation of new ICT services must be driven forward, it is imperative that the demand for such services is allowed to grow seamlessly. The pre-requisite for this to happen is ensuring access by the masses, which is conditional on the affordability of ICTs in general.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the overall impact of the above factors, working together on the various fronts, is sure to result in a vibrant and competitive sector, and a fully digital and ICT conversant economy, which will strengthen the regional and global position of Mauritius as one of the high-flyers on the ICT scene.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it is known that, for quite some time now, as part of the overall Civil Service Reforms initiative, an ambitious project is being implemented in the civil service by way of computerisation of different tasks and processes with a view to improving public service delivery. We all acknowledge that, by now, ICT has become so pervasive that it touches the life of the citizen on almost all fronts. Therefore, making use of ICT to provide better and more responsive public services is one of the surest means to maximise public satisfaction.

All the buildings housing Ministries and Government Departments will gradually be connected by fibre optic cables through the Government network fibre project. The Government Centre, the Emmanuel Anquetil Building, the Renganaden Seeneevassen Building and the Air Mauritius Centre are candidates for the first phase of the project and works will start in the coming weeks. The way we can make a difference in other segments is to add value to them, mostly through increased application of ICTs in all aspects of public life, be it manufacturing, tourism, education, health, industry, agriculture, governance or the like. We are aiming at becoming a developed economic powerhouse. In the direction we are moving, we shall soon see the transformation of certain public services through the implementation of major projects like e-Health, e-Prisons, e-Parliament and the crime occurrence tracking system.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as announced by my colleague, the Vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Finance and Economic development, Government is undertaking a review of the National ICT Strategic Plan 2007-2011. This review has been one of my priorities since my taking of Office as Minister because it is going to create the right dynamism in terms of adjusting

and redefining the developmental path of the ICT sector by taking on board the emerging challenges and the new policy aims and objectives of Government. The review exercise has started on 25 October 2010 and will be completed in January 2011. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, once measures are announced in the Budget, already steps are being taken by my Ministry towards its implementation.

The ICT sector has a huge potential and can propel Mauritius to another level of socio-economic development. In fact, this review exercise ranks high in the agenda of the Government Programme 2010-2015 and the deliverables will be crucial to make our country an I-Mauritius, that is, an intelligent Mauritius.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Vice-Prime Minister and the Minister of Finance and Economic Development also referred to the Mauritius National Identity Card Project. As a matter of fact, Government is committed to implementing a smart card based identification system which aims at providing to each citizen an identity card which would be intelligent. It is proposed to have a card with such security features, like biometric data to render the card quasi impossible to be counterfeited, tampered with or duplicated.

Moreover, the card would be used for multiple applications such as access to secured areas, payment of pensions and social security benefits, electronic purse, driving licence, health card and transport card.

Besides being a secure identity document, the new smart card will also open up opportunities for the citizens to an array of on-line services accessible anywhere and anytime and for the business community to provide applications built around the card. The safe multi-usage of the card is strengthened by the PKI which is being set up as aforesaid, as from tomorrow, that is, 01 December 2010. I am pleased to inform the House that this project, which, admittedly, has suffered quite some delay, is now registering progress. In fact, the consultancy work has already started.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it has been observed that there is a tendency to believe that the development of the ICT sector benefits the public sector in particular. This misconception should, at all costs, be dissipated. I avail myself of this opportunity here to put things in their right perspective. ICT is, as we all know, an enabler. Government drives national development, but private sector is inextricably associated with this process. We know very well that the private

sector implements many of the development projects and contributes tremendously in wealth creation. Therefore, when ICT is developed to create the desired platform to uphold socio-economic development, it goes without saying that the platform also and equally supports private sector initiatives. That is why we should work towards consolidating the partnership between the public and the private sectors, so that together we can effectively use the ICT facilities to attain our developmental objectives.

This is an avenue which we shall further explore to create a better synergistic combination of public and private sector actions.

M. le président, en guise de conclusion à mon intervention, je voudrais souligner une fois de plus le rôle important que les TICs sont appelées à jouer dans le développement de notre pays et aussi à améliorer la qualité de vie de nos citoyens. Cette tendance va perdurer et il est certain que les TICs occuperont une place privilégiée dans notre vie quotidienne, tout en nous facilitant les multiples tâches qui nous incombent. Prenant en considération cette tendance, le gouvernement s'est engagé et se fait un devoir d'accorder l'appui nécessaire au développement et à l'épanouissement de ce secteur. Les mesures énoncées dans le discours du budget en témoignent. Je suis certain que, dans le court à moyen terme, nous allons vivre des transformations majeures dans la façon dont nous menons nos actions axées sur le développement socio-économique de l'île Maurice et, par ricochet, sur la vie de tous les jours, de tout un chacun. Je peux assurer la Chambre que nous n'allons pas nous arrêter en si bon chemin.

Comme mot de la fin, je réitère mes félicitations au vice-Premier et ministre des finances et du développement économique pour la prestation d'un budget taillé à la mesure de la politique gouvernementale sous l'inspiration et le *leadership* du Premier ministre, le Dr. Navinchandra Ramgoolam.

Merci pour votre attention.

(5.31 p.m.)

Mr G. Lesjongard (Second Member for Port Louis North and Montagne Longue):

M. le président, le ministre des finances a prononcé son discours sur le budget de 2011 depuis le

vendredi 19 novembre et depuis, M. le président, nous débattons sur le discours qui énonce les mesures du gouvernement dans le budget pour l'année 2011.

Peut-être qu'il faudrait remonter à quelques jours avant que le discours fut prononcé parce qu'il régnait une tension entre les syndicalistes et le gouvernement sur le taux de compensation salariale. Les syndicalistes avaient abandonné la table des négociations et c'est le ministre du travail qui a su faire retourner les syndicalistes à la table des négociations. Mais même cela, M. le président, nous savons tous que le taux de compensation proposé par le ministre des finances n'a pas été accepté non seulement par les syndicalistes, mais par la population, parce qu'on avait promis à un certain moment qu'on aurait eu un taux de rattrapage concernant la compensation salariale. Après la présentation du budget, il y a eu l'euphorie habituelle et puis sont tombés les premiers commentaires venant, premièrement, du Premier ministre lui-même où il dit très clairement que c'est un budget de continuité. Je retournerai après pour expliquer pourquoi nous pensons que c'est un budget de continuité. Puis il y a eu les commentaires du *Leader* de l'opposition où il a fait comprendre que c'est un budget où il y a un manque de vision, du déjà vu, M. le président, et où il y a un manque d'inspiration.

Peut-être pour comprendre ces commentaires, il faudrait retourner en 2006 où l'ancien ministre des finances, Rama Sithanen, dans le gouvernement de l'Alliance sociale avait présenté son premier discours. Je me rappelle très bien, M. le président, où il avait évoqué une rupture totale au niveau de la philosophie qu'avait l'ancien gouvernement MMM/MSM entre 2000 à 2005 et l'axe principale de son budget était l'ouverture de notre économie qui avait été très, très contestée à cette époque, puis une politique basée sur la réorientation des subsides et pour terminer la réforme sur la taxation. Il avait évoqué, M. le président, à l'époque en 2006, les secteurs existants de notre économie : le tourisme, le sucre, les services financiers et à l'époque le tourisme et le sucre passaient par des moments extrêmement difficiles et au niveau des secteurs émergents, il avait évoqué l'ICT, le *duty-free paradise* qui est retourné aujourd'hui, le *knowledge hub* et le *medical hub*. Aujourd'hui, on retrouve les mêmes secteurs, M. le président. Cinq années sont passées, et on retrouve les mêmes secteurs excepté pour un secteur qui se retrouve toujours au stade embryonnaire, M. le président, c'était le *Land-Based Oceanic Industry*. Je vais retourner sur ces secteurs un peu plus tard. Il y avait aussi le *Sea Food Hub* et aujourd'hui on n'entend plus parler du *Sea Food Hub*.

Cinq ans après, M. le président, de la présentation de ce budget, est-ce qu'il y a eu un changement de philosophie? En présentant cette rupture, il avait exprimé que nous étions arrivés à la fin d'un cycle et qu'il fallait revoir complètement la situation dans le pays. Cinq ans sont passés, beaucoup de choses ont été dites et, aujourd'hui, grâce à un arrangement électoral, certaines mesures, qui furent annoncées en 2006, n'ont pas vraiment disparu, mais ont été corrigées, M. le président. Je pense que le gouvernement de l'Alliance de l'Avenir est arrivé à la conclusion qu'effectivement ces mesures ont fait beaucoup de tort à la population mauricienne c'est-à-dire qu'aujourd'hui, nous avons un budget de compromis pour la population. Mais on oublie trop facilement que pendant cinq ans, beaucoup de choses se sont passées. Aujourd'hui, on retourne les subsides sur les *fees* de la SC et de la HSC mais on oublie que pendant cinq ans combien d'enfants n'ont pu prendre part aux examens de la SC et de la HSC! Combien de familles pendant ces cinq ans ont dû se sacrifier pour payer ces examens, M. le président! Cela s'applique aussi à la taxe, qu'on appelle NRPT, qu'on a retiré aujourd'hui; combien de ces gens qui ont fait beaucoup de sacrifices pendant de nombreuses années et qui peut-être ont tout abandonné en constatant que voilà, on allait nous taxer sur les terrains qu'on avait acquis après un dur labeur. Il a fallu cinq longues années pour qu'on puisse comprendre le bien-fondé de ce qui a été dit.

M. le président, je me rappelle bien à l'époque où avec ces étudiants, on a protesté ; il y a eu des manifestations, mais on ne voulait pas nous écouter. Il fallait aller dans cette direction parce qu'ils étaient convaincus que ce qui avait été mis en place - et cela avait été dit à l'époque - bénéficiait à ceux qui, en fait, ne pouvaient pas bénéficier de ces subsides; on gaspillait l'argent de l'Etat. Mais, aujourd'hui, ce n'est plus pareil. On est retourné à la même formule, peut-être plus élaborée maintenant, et personne ne dit mot, M. le président. Est-ce qu'il fallait une alliance électorale pour qu'on puisse comprendre cela, pour plaire à certains ? Mais voilà la situation, M. le président! Le budget de 2006 était un budget accès sur une philosophie *pou sanz u la vie*, M. le président, et de faire les citoyens de notre pays qui se trouvent au bas de l'échelle grimpaient l'échelle sociale. Plus de justice sociale, plus d'opportunité à nos citoyens! Cela a été un échec total, une faillite totale. M. le président, c'est vrai qu'on accueille le ministère qui a tout récemment été formé, c'est-à-dire le ministère de l'intégration sociale. Mais est-ce que ce ministère ne donne pas un signal dans ce sens pour dire que tous les efforts et tout l'argent que le pays a investis au fil des années, aujourd'hui n'ont servi à rien, M. le président.

Est-ce qu'on ne vient pas dire cela? Aujourd'hui on a qu'un ministère qui est responsable, au fait avant il y avait plusieurs ministères.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: No cross talking, please! Hon. Hossen and hon. Obeegadoo, please! Hon. Hossen, please! I am on my feet! Hon. Hossen, if you have any problem or any complaint to make, you should address the Chair! Hon. Lesjongard, you may continue.

Mr Lesjongard: Thank you Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. M. le président, je faisais tout simplement le point sur le fait que tous les gouvernements d'avant ont fait l'effort à partir de l'argent public pour soutenir ces gens-là. La constatation aujourd'hui avec un tel ministère, on se pose la question: est-ce que l'effort qui a été fait au fil des années a donné les résultats nécessaires aujourd'hui? Je prends comme exemple, M. le président, un rapport de la *National Economic and Social Council*. Je me réfère à ce qui a été dit dans ce rapport, M. le président, that –

“The gap between the rich and the poor is constantly widening. This gap between the haves and the have-nots is becoming a cause of concern the more so as market forces seem incapable of alleviating the problems of the poor. What is more disturbing is that the income of the richest segment of Mauritian households is progressing at a higher rate than the poorest segment.”

Cette déclaration vient confirmer ce qui a été dit dans le passé, c'est que toutes ces mesures énoncées pendant les cinq derniers budgets de l'Alliance Sociale n'ont pas donné de résultat. Quand on entend le Premier ministre lui-même venir dire que c'est un budget de continuité, est-ce qu'on n'aura pas les mêmes résultats en fin de compte? Déjà la situation économique, comme nous le savons tous, détériore de plus en plus dans le monde et dans notre pays.

M. le président, j'avais posé une question il y a quelque temps de cela sur une loi qui a été votée au Parlement, *l'Equal Opportunity Act*. Je repense à tous les débats qu'il y avait eu au sein de cette auguste Assemblée autour de ce projet de loi. C'est un projet de loi dont le Premier ministre avait fait son cheval de bataille, et deux ans après, la loi n'a pas été proclamée. Le Premier ministre est venu expliquer les difficultés qu'il a à proclamer cette loi et j'avais souligné

qu'un ancien ministre du gouvernement, celui qui avait piloté cette loi, est lui-même venu admettre, M. le président, qu'il n'y a pas de volonté à aller de l'avant avec cette loi.

(Interruptions)

Dans un journal, il l'a dit !

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Ms Deerpalsing, please! You'll get the opportunity to address the Chair and you'll make whatever comments you'll have to.

Mr Lesjongard: M. le président, j'avais posé la question à l'époque. Je préfère ne pas réagir, M. le président, sinon je vais perdre le fil de mes pensées. J'avais posé la question et le Premier ministre m'avait fait comprendre qu'on travaille à nouveau sur le projet de loi.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Obeegadoo, please!

Mr Lesjongard: ...que la loi allait retourner au Parlement et le problème se situerait au niveau de la commission comme stipulé dans la loi. Mais malheureusement, quand je regarde les dotations budgétaires, rien n'est prévu. On est un peu dans l'incertitude, M. le président, quand exactement le projet de loi retournera au Parlement et si, effectivement, on va voter cette loi et si elle sera appliquée au courant de l'année prochaine.

Cette politique d'ouverture de l'économie continue, tant décriée par l'Opposition, même par le MSM à l'époque...

(Interruptions)

Oui, je continue à décrier cette ouverture où, à un certain moment, dans les débats budgétaires de 2006, le *Leader* de l'Opposition d'alors avait dit ceci, et je cite –

“They are proposing a sale by levy of Mauritius to foreigners.”

Et cela continue! Il avait fait la remarque lors de son intervention sur ce qui se passe dans certaines parties de notre île. Je me rappelle bien que l'honorable Sithanen à l'époque m'avait traité de xénophobe quand j'avais évoqué le sujet. Mais, cela s'empire, M. le président. Cela s'empire vraiment dans certaines régions de notre île où certaines personnes parlent même de

ségrégation dans certains endroits. Par exemple, quelqu'un me disait que, dans l'ouest du pays, sur un panneau de signalisation où c'était écrit *Black River*, on avait biffé le *Black* pour mettre *White River*. Il y a un conflit à prendre en considération surtout concernant les habitants de la région. C'est vrai qu'il faut une certaine ouverture, mais l'ouverture que nous évoquons aujourd'hui est en train de nous faire perdre le contrôle que nous avons à un certain moment, surtout concernant les étrangers qui viennent dans notre pays, M. le président.

M. le président, permettez-moi de toucher un autre sujet qui est d'actualité et qui a été évoqué par plusieurs membres de cette Chambre pendant le discours du budget mais aussi à travers des questions parlementaires, c'est-à-dire, le problème d'eau dans le pays. J'ai entendu certains honorables membres parler de l'eau comme source de vie, d'autres que la troisième guerre mondiale sera à cause de l'eau. N'allons pas trop loin, déjà les constatations sont flagrantes. Nous avons une autorité responsable de ce secteur qui fonctionne sans un président du conseil d'administration depuis un certain temps. Le *Chairman* a démissionné, il a fait des déclarations dont nous avons pris connaissance et la situation ne s'améliore pas. Le directeur actuel tente de rassurer la population mais ça ne marche pas, M. le président. Depuis un certain temps, les coupures sont drastiques. On avance comme raison que les réservoirs ne sont pas assez remplis. Oui, mais personne ne vient expliquer les vraies raisons pourquoi on a des problèmes dans différentes régions de l'île. L'un est lié aux travaux que la *Wastewater* fait actuellement dans les régions de l'île. Oui, mais est-ce qu'il y a un manque de coordination aussi profond entre ces services essentiels de notre pays au point où on arrive à la conclusion qu'il n'y a pas eu une bonne planification avant que commencent ces travaux? C'est là le point fondamental.

(Interruptions)

Non, malheureusement, ce n'est pas la solution. Cette coordination doit avoir lieu entre ces services, que ce soit la CEB, la CWA ou la *Wastewater Authority* mais, pas seulement cela, la force policière et les habitants de la région. Si vraiment on parle de fusion, allons fusionner tout ce monde là. Il faut qu'il y ait une coordination entre les services concernés. C'est par manque de coordination qu'on arrive à avoir ces problèmes.

Les ministres responsables – parce qu'il y a eu deux – ont répondu à des questions concernant le *non-revenue water*. C'est un scandale, M. le président, un vrai scandale ! De l'argent est investi régulièrement, année après année. On a eu un emprunt de l'ordre de 43.5

millions d'euros du *European Investment Bank* pour réduire ces *non-revenue water losses*. Chaque année l'argent est investi. Quels sont les résultats, M. le président? A travers une question parlementaire, le ministre concerné est venu confirmer que ces pertes, à partir de 2005 jusqu'à 2009 - il a donné cela en terme de pourcentage - étaient de l'ordre de 44.7% en 2005; 45.2% en 2006 ; 44.4% en 2007 ; 47.6% en 2008 et 49.6% en 2009. Vous réalisez que si on prend là 100 mètres cubes d'eau qui passent par nos tuyaux, 50 mètres cubes vont dans la nature, sont perdus! Mais il n'y a pas que cela. J'ai entendu quelqu'un tout à l'heure dire qu'il faut construire des réservoirs. Oui, il faut construire des réservoirs et nous avons construit des réservoirs, mais depuis ces cinq dernières années, on n'a pas construit de réservoirs. C'est là le vrai problème. Vous réalisez que les chiffres du bureau...

(Interruptions)

J'ai dit cinq ans environ. Heureusement qu'il y a eu le *Midlands Dam*, sinon cela aurait été encore beaucoup plus difficile. Je vous donne un exemple,...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Please, don't interrupt!

Mr Lesjongard: Vous réalisez, M. le président, que les chiffres du bureau des statistiques sur *the amount of rainfall, the surface run-off*, l'eau qui va à la mer, l'évaporation et l'eau qui va dans nos nappes souterraines. L'équation est simple. Sur 4,400 millions de mètres cubes d'eau, 2,664 millions vont à la mer, 1,332 millions mètres cubes évaporées, il y a seulement 444 millions mètres cubes qui vont dans nos nappes phréatiques, c'est-à-dire, M. le président, 444 sur 4,440, 10% seulement! Vous réalisez combien d'eau nous perdons! Il faut construire des réservoirs. On est en retard et je vais venir tout à l'heure sur l'électricité. On est en retard parce que vous êtes en train de lancer des projets qui vont consommer de l'eau – *Tianli, Neotown, Bagatelle town, Higlands town*. Où trouverons-nous l'eau pour fournir?

(Interruptions)

Est-ce que vous êtes au courant que nous allons vers la catastrophe, M. le président, en ce qu'il s'agit de la gestion de l'eau? Ce qu'on vient de nous proposer, M. le président, c'est la fusion entre la CWA, la *Wastewater Authority, l'Irrigation Authority* et le *Water Resources Unit*! Mais, ce n'est pas cela la solution. C'est comme proposer, M. le président, des réservoirs d'eau à des

personnes qui n'ont même pas d'eau pour stocker dans ces réservoirs. C'est ça le raisonnement, M le président.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Lesjongard, please! I will remind the hon. Members that all hon. Members should remain silent when someone is addressing the Chair. I have much difficulty to follow what the hon. Member is stating. I will allow some latitude if someone has to make a little remark, I'll take it that it is part of the game, but it should not just go on and on. It is very difficult if everybody is going to talk at the same time.

(Interruptions)

Mr Lesjongard: L'honorable Ganoo vient de partager quelque chose avec moi pour ces réservoirs d'eau, c'est comme donner des souliers sans lacets. M. le président, permettez-moi...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Mahen Jhugroo please! Hon. Baloomoody!

Mr Lesjongard: Je vais prendre le volet énergétique, M. le président. Allons commencer par le rêve du Premier ministre, Maurice Ile Durable. J'ai avec moi, M. le président, l'interview du Professeur Joël de Rosnay, conseiller du Premier ministre, il vient confirmer que le MID est trop timide. Cela on l'a dit depuis un certain temps. Pour nous timide est égale à une coquille vide. Depuis le lancement de ce concept, il n'y a pas beaucoup choses qui se sont passées, M. le président. J'avais fait une remarque et je pense qu'on a de la peine à comprendre certaines choses. J'avais fait une remarque, dans un discours que j'avais prononcé en 2008 et j'avais dit sur le projet Maurice Ile Durable, c'est un modèle de vie, M. le président. C'est une habitude de vie. C'est de faire le mauricien vivre et mettre en pratique ce modèle de vie.

It is about creating jobs for the Mauritians. We have known the blue and white collar jobs. Today is an era of green "collar" jobs for people of all walks of life, that is, why I am saying: *que la vision est limitée et c'est ce qui vient confirmer le Professeur Joël de Rosnay*. It is creating professional jobs for people such as environmental consultants, biological system engineers, environmental system engineers, green building architects, passive solar engineers, solar energy engineers and wind energy engineers; not only those professionals, but also what we call today organic farmers, ecology educators, eco-technology workers, eco-electricians, eco-

plumbers and eco-construction workers. *Voilà le concept de Maurice Ile Durable, qu'on arrive difficilement à mettre en pratique dans ce pays, M. le président.*

Quand on passe en revue les projets qui ont été approuvés, on constate qu'il y a eu de bons projets. Quand il s'agit des projets qui ont été approuvés sous l'item MID au cours de ces dernières années, on constate que le Professeur Joël de Rosnay a parfaitement raison, M. le président.

Concernant le volet énergétique, M. le président, il y a de l'électricité dans l'air. Plus de chairman à la CEB. On vient de limoger le directeur général qui a été remplacé par un autre. On avait prévenu le gouvernement quelques temps de cela quand ce monsieur avait été nommé. Il y a même eu une *PNQ* à ce sujet. On vous avait dit. Je me rappelle que le *Leader* de l'opposition avait évoqué le cas de plusieurs professionnels compétents au sein de cet organisme et on avait eu comme réponse: ce monsieur est hautement qualifié. Il avait écrit sa lettre au conseil d'administration. Le président du conseil d'administration de l'époque avait accepté la lettre, il avait été convoqué par le *board* et la personne avait été nommée. Voilà le résultat aujourd'hui. *Unsolicited appointment* !

(Interruptions)

Mahen pas fer mwa alle ouvert bann zaffaire qui bizin pas ouvert!

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Please hon. Lesjongard!

Mr Lesjongard: C'est lui qui avait traité des dossiers pendant qu'il était à la CEB, en particulier, le dossier concernant les ampoules économiques, qui a été fatal pour lui. Mais, j'avais posé une question au ministre responsable. Il m'avait fait comprendre qu'il y a une enquête en cours et qu'il faudrait attendre les conclusions pour qu'il puisse partager les informations avec nous. Je vais demander aussi au vice Premier ministre - si c'est possible - comme on enquête sur ce dossier, de prendre en considération un autre aspect. Il avait répondu à une question que l'honorable Varma avait posée en date du 21 novembre 2008, concernant les ampoules économiques. Dans sa réponse, M. le ministre a fait savoir qu'il y aurait distribution de ces ampoules le 21 novembre 2008, au total 305,303 ampoules économiques. Or en répondant à une *PNQ* du *Leader* de l'opposition, il y a quelques temps de cela, le ministre des

finances avait déposé des documents au parlement. Les documents ont trait aux appels d'offre du CEB et en parcourant ces documents je constate que le 21 juillet de 2008 pour un montant total de presque R 9 million, le CEB avait acheté des ampoules *on a restricted bidding basis*.

Alors peut être qu'il faudrait voir parce que c'est la première fois qu'on lance ces ampoules sur le marché local. On ne connaît même pas qui sont les *suppliers* locaux, il peut en avoir beaucoup *and the CEB goes for a restricted bidding. Why? I think that if the inquiry is looking into the purchase of CFL lamps with regard to the latest tender*, peut-être qu'il faudrait aller voir aussi, poser la question, qu'est-ce qui s'est passé en 2008 concernant l'achat de ces ampoules, M. le président ?

J'ai appris aussi ce matin à la radio qu'il y a eu une requête d'augmentation du tarif d'électricité.

(Interruptions)

Non, c'est parce que le même directeur général, qu'on a limogé, avait fait une grande déclaration l'année dernière, disant que le CEB avait fait des profits de R 800 millions. Vous vous souvenez de cela, M. le président. Mais nous on sait quels sont ces profits. Il ne faut pas induire les gens en erreur. Vous savez dans ce pays l'électricité coûte cher car le prix des produits pétroliers augmente, mais quand le prix baisse on ne nous rembourse pas. C'est de l'argent qui rentre dans les caisses du CEB. Certains directeurs viennent de l'avant bomber leur torse pour dire qu'ils ont fait des profits, et puis, en douceur, maintenant, on nous fait comprendre qu'on va augmenter les tarifs d'électricité. Pourquoi augment-on les tarifs d'électricité? C'est parce que le CEB a de gros investissements à faire. Déjà on a investi dans deux moteurs. Avant d'arriver à cela, allons voir un peu la situation, M. le président, sur le plan national. Tout à l'heure, j'avais évoqué le problème d'eau concernant des projets en chantier, mais cela s'applique aussi à l'électricité. Le gouvernement a en main des demandes d'électricité pour plusieurs projets. Il y a le Neotown qui demande 57 mégawatts; le Binani Cement qui demande 6 mégawatts; l'aéroport de Plaisance 27 mégawatts; Bagatelle 20 mégawatts, et le Land-Based Oceanic Industry qui déjà fait une demande de 34 mégawatts. Ajoutons tout cela.

(Interruptions)

Oui! *Développement lors développement !* Mais il faut avoir l'électricité et l'eau !

Aujourd'hui, le Professeur Joël de Rosnay a tué les deux projets qu'il y avait, notamment le *waste to energy* et le projet de Pointe aux Caves. A une question, le ministre avait répondu *that he is going to go along the advice of the adviser of the Prime Minister. Where do we stand without these two projects? We have completed the installation of two generators, that is, 2 by 15 MW*, et là, on a en chantier quatre autres moteurs. Quand je parle de ces deux moteurs, peut-être qu'il faudrait souligner quelque chose. Là aussi, quand on parle de tarifs d'électricité que les gens auront à payer en plus, peut-être qu'il faudrait souligner que, concernant - et le *Leader* de l'opposition l'avait dit - les deux moteurs qu'on vient d'installer, le CEB a payé R 500 millions en plus. Le consultant avait évalué le projet à R 1.2 milliard. Quand on a acheté, cela a coûté R 1.7 milliard. Cela veut dire qu'on a payé. *What was budgeted ?* Ce n'est pas R1.7 milliard *that was budgeted* ; c'était R 1.2 milliard qui avait été budgété, mais on a payé R 1.7 milliard.

I remember clearly the Leader of the Opposition stated that we had to have recourse to emergency procurement. He also said that he hoped that, for the purchase of the four generators, we would not have recourse to emergency procurement, and your answer was 'No'. We might end up with an emergency procurement. I would want to know what is going to happen in case this project is delayed. We have launched a request for proposal for a 100 MW plant, the file is stuck at the Ministry of Finance. Nothing is moving, this is what is in the reply. Au niveau de l'énergie, M. le président, les choses démontrent que, dans les années à venir, on risque d'avoir un très gros problème.

(Interruptions)

Non, mais cela est vrai !

Pour ce qui est des énergies renouvelables, valeur du jour nous n'avons que des projets éoliens en chantier. Nous avons, à un certain moment, trois et il nous reste deux. Il y avait le projet Britannia; il y avait le projet de Plaine des Roches, et il y avait le projet de Bigarra. Pour ce qui est de Bigarra, je sais qu'il y a eu un *request for proposal*. On n'entend plus Britannia, et là on entend le projet de Plaine des Roches. Comme qui dirait nous n'avons pas tiré les leçons nécessaires avec les *unsolicited bids*, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir ! Encore un *unsolicited bidder* qui se retrouve en pleine négociation pour aller de l'avant avec son projet. Depuis le temps qu'on avait dit qu'il fallait mettre en place un régulateur pour que tout ce qui touche à la production de l'électricité puisse être vue en détail, on n'a toujours pas ce régulateur.

A un certain moment, on parlait d'un oiseau rare qu'il fallait chercher. Dans une réponse du ministre, l'oiseau rare on l'a trouvé, mais maintenant on ne trouve pas les membres du *Board*. On donne l'impression qu'il y a un certain agenda, M. le ministre! Il faut dissiper ces confusions dans l'esprit des gens. Je pense que la législation, notamment le *Utility Regulatory Authority*, a été passée quand on était au pouvoir ; il y a eu certains amendements. Depuis 2008, ces amendements sont passés, la loi a été proclamée et le régulateur n'existe toujours pas, M. le président. Alors, moi, je pense qu'il faudrait mettre en place le régulateur pour que tous ces projets, qu'on appelle '*unsolicited bids*', puissent être pris en considération par ce régulateur.

Autre aspect important de l'énergie c'est le *small independant power producers* qui avait été annoncé et qui tarde à venir. On apprend que le *grid code is ready*, le *feed-in tariff* aussi est prêt. Il n'y a aucun budget, mais le rapport vient parler de plusieurs propositions, incluant ce qu'on appelle des *tax incentives* et des *feed-in tariffs*.

On a eu tout récemment la circulation d'un projet de loi concernant l'efficience énergétique, les audits d'énergie. Mais en ce qui concerne cela aussi, il faut qu'on avance au niveau des hôtels, au niveau des bâtiments commerciaux, M. le président.

M. le président, je pense que je vais m'arrêter là; mon temps est épuisé.

(*Interruptions*)

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, let us come to one item, which appears in this Budget, regarding plastic PET bottles, sacs en plastic, et canettes en aluminium. C'est malheureusement les consommateurs qui font les frais, parce qu'il est dit dans le budget, aux paragraphes 292, 293 et 294 -

- '292. Government also wants to discourage the use of PET bottles, plastic bags and cans. They are a big nuisance to the environment. Fiscal disincentive has proved to be an effective way to reduce demand for these products.
- 293. I am therefore doubling the rate of excise duty (...)
- 294. We are exploring the possibility for extending this tax to other types of plastic containers and non-bio-degradable containers.'

Si on va dans le discours du budget de l'année dernière, au paragraphe 155, voici ce qu'on nous avait promis à l'époque –

'155. Mr Speaker, Sir, World Environment Day, celebrated yesterday, is a reminder of the need for action to protect our island. Maurice Ile Durable is also about preserving the environment. We are working with the bottling industry and importers to put in place a solid waste recycling programme to increase the share of recycled plastic bottles over the coming three years from about 22 percent (...)'

On ne l'a jamais mis en pratique. Aujourd'hui, on vient proposer une ré-augmentation sans avoir respecté ce qui avait été dit il y a une année de cela, M. le président.

L'énergie solaire. On continue avec les chauffe-eau solaires. Nous savons tous quel scandale il y a eu à un certain moment. J'espère que cette fois-ci, il y aura beaucoup plus de contrôle; contrôle au niveau des bénéficiaires; contrôle au niveau de la qualité des produits, parce que quand vous regardez ce qui a été dépensé jusqu'à maintenant, c'est de l'ordre de plus que R 590 millions, M. le président.

On entend parler beaucoup de l'Agence Française de Développement qui a mis à notre disposition de l'argent afin qu'on puisse aller de l'avant dans le secteur du développement durable mais ces projets peinent à démarrer. Je suis au courant des cas des compagnies, des hôteliers qui font des demandes - parce que l'argent va en fin de compte aux Banques Commerciales de notre pays - et qui effectivement tardent à venir. Peut-être qu'il faudrait que le gouvernement revoie surtout pour ceux qui veulent bouger vers l'énergie solaire pour ne plus dépendre du gaz, M. le président.

Je vais terminer, M. le président, en disant ceci. Un budget, M. le président, on le comprend que dans son implémentation. Il y a beaucoup de choses qui ont été dites pour changer certaines choses dans le pays parce qu'aujourd'hui on constate, que ce soit au niveau de l'ordre et de la paix ou au niveau de la drogue, que les choses se détériorent. Je vais reprendre une citation de Martin Luther King, M. le président.

(Interruptions)

Oui, parce que c'est important. Je cite –

“Ce qui m'effraie dans mon pays aujourd'hui, ce n'est pas l'oppression des méchants, mais l'indifférence des bons.”

Nous sommes devenus un peuple qui veut de l'argent facile. Les gens veulent toujours gagner; gagner à tous les coups et à n'importe quel prix. Moi, je ne fais pas partie de ces personnes-là, M. le président. Je me demande parfois si c'est cette société que nous voulons léguer à nos enfants. Nous oublions que l'existence même de l'être humain est basée sur ce qu'il peut donner et non pas sur ce qu'il peut prendre, M. le président or, nous voulons tous prendre: le pouvoir, l'argent et ne rien donner en retour. On veut nous faire croire à une catégorisation de notre société qui est basée, premièrement, sur l'appartenance politique et ensuite l'appartenance ethnique, M. le président. Parfois c'est dit avec une certaine arrogance et c'est cette arrogance là qu'il faut qu'on dénonce. Nous sommes un pays de peuplement. Je rêve qu'un jour notre nation se lèvera pour vivre véritablement son credo. Nous tenons pour vérité évidente, que tous les hommes ont été créés égaux. Ça aussi, M. le président, c'est une citation de Martin Luther King et moi aussi j'ai le même rêve.

Merci, M. le président.

(6.25 p.m.)

The Minister of Health and Quality of Life (Mrs S. Hanoomanjee): M. le président, j'aimerais, tout d'abord, féliciter le vice-Premier ministre et ministre des finances, l'honorable Pravind Jugnauth, pour la présentation de son budget - un budget responsable, un budget tourné vers l'avenir, un budget réaliste et réalisable.

M. le président, c'est rare qu'un budget provoque autant de réactions et d'échos favorables au sein de la population et auprès des divers partenaires sociaux et économiques. Même la presse, dans son ensemble, a qualifié par des mots des plus élogieux pour accueillir le Budget 2011 du vice-Premier ministre et ministre des finances. C'est ainsi que certains ont parlé de 'pari réussi' de Pravind Jugnauth, qui, fait-on ressortir, a adopté une philosophie économique, où le social prime, notamment avec les nouvelles mesures annoncées en faveur des groupes vulnérables et de ceux qui se trouvent au bas de l'échelle, et cela plus particulièrement au niveau de l'éducation et du logement.

D'autres commentaires parlent d'un 'honnête effort' de bien faire de la part du ministre des finances qui a tenu à mettre le social au centre de l'agenda national, respectant les promesses

faites à la population durant la campagne électorale de mai dernier. Tout au long de ce budget, le mot ‘social’ revient comme un leitmotiv. Il est aussi question de la vision du ministre des finances, vision empreinte de réalisme et d’humanisme, telle qu’elle a été exprimée dans un ton qualifié, dans la presse, de ‘sobre et sérieux’.

On est, également, unanime à reconnaître que le budget a le mérite de proposer de manière simple, nette et claire des mesures visant à rééquilibrer la croissance nationale et à consolider la justice sociale.

L’objectif à long terme, consiste à emmené, d’ici 2020, la richesse nationale à un *PIB* d’un trillion de roupies, faisant ainsi passer le *GDP per capita* - soit la richesse annuelle moyenne par tête d’habitant - à environ R 620,000.

M. le président, du côté de l’Opposition, comme il fallait s’y attendre, on a eu droit à des critiques qui ont été lancées, pour ainsi dire, gratuitement, pour la bonne et simple raison semble-t-il, qu’il fallait bien critiquer pour le besoin de critiquer. En effet, désespérément acculée, et déboussolée par le premier budget de ce gouvernement, ainsi que par la prestation du ministre des finances, l’Opposition a été, pour ainsi dire, réduite à ne lancer que des critiques sans conviction; en affirmant tout simplement, par exemple, que le budget est, selon elle, mauvais, décevant, fade ou encore que le budget 2011 pècherait par un manque d’inspiration et d’imagination. Aucune vision, aucune orientation, dit-elle, avant d’ajouter que ce budget va appauvrir ceux au bas de l’échelle. En ce qu’il s’agit des promesses faites et tenues par le ministre des finances, elle déclare, tout simplement, que ce dernier a été contraint de les tenir et qu’il ne pouvait faire autrement.

M. le président, je vais m’attarder sur ces critiques pour démontrer que le ministre des finances est un homme de parole et, contrairement à ce que l’Opposition veut nous faire croire, Pravind Jugnauth n’a pas changé. J’aimerais ici savoir quelle aurait été la réaction de cette même opposition si, après les promesses faites lors de la campagne électorale, le ministre des finances n’avait pas tenu parole, dont, entre autres, la promesse d’abolir la *National Residential Property Tax* ; celle d’abolir la taxe de 15 pourcent sur l’épargne ; celle de rétablir sur une base beaucoup plus raisonnable les subsides pour les frais d’examens pour 19,500 élèves du SC et du HSC et celle de rétablir l’exemption de la taxe sur les soixante premières tonnes de sucre pour les petits planteurs. En sus de cela, il y a le rétablissement des droits des planteurs, des fermiers, des

pêcheurs et des responsables des petites et moyennes entreprises pour les voitures 4x4 *duty-free* afin de faciliter leur travail.

Je viens d'entendre l'honorable Joe Lesjongard mais je me pose la question: Qu'est-ce que le *Leader* de l'opposition et les membres de l'autre côté de la Chambre n'auraient pas dit si toutes ces promesses n'avaient pas été tenues. Le *Leader* de l'opposition n'approuve pas...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Barbier, please!

Mrs Hanoomanjee: ...que les membres du gouvernement, plus précisément de ce côté de la Chambre, applaudissent ces mesures parce que, selon lui, les décisions désapprouvent le budget présenté dans le passé par Sithanen et qui avait eu l'approbation du précédent gouvernement mais ce qu'il oublie, c'est que les circonstances changent. Ce qui pouvait être correct en 2005 ne peut être nécessairement correct en 2010. De même il ne faut pas oublier, M. le président, avec quel ardeur le *Leader* de l'opposition négociait une alliance avec le Parti Travailleiste.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: All right, continue. Order, please!

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Il voulait à tout prix concrétiser une alliance avec le Parti Travailleiste au point d'engager un monologue sans que le *Leader* de Parti Travailleiste ne donne son approbation. M. le président, comme je viens de le rappeler il y a quelques instants, le *Leader* de l'opposition s'est permis de parler de manque d'initiative ou d'imagination dans le budget 2011.

(Interruptions)

Je dirais plutôt que c'est lui en personne qui fait montre d'un manque d'initiative et d'imagination dans ses propos et critiques. Pour tout simple citoyen ou observateur, il est évident que le ministre des finances est animé d'une même philosophie dans tous ses budgets - que ce soit pour le budget 2004/2005, celui de 2005/2006 et aujourd'hui celui de 2011. En effet, sa vision est nette et claire. Elle tourne autour de la croissance, de la faire grandir, de la fructifier, de la réorienter afin d'avoir les moyens pour appliquer une politique de justice sociale envers les

différentes classes de la société mauricienne avec une attention toute particulière pour les démunis.

M. le président, les idées innovatrices illustrant la vision et l'imagination du ministre des finances sont multiples. Citons entre autres les mesures annoncées pour attirer un nombre croissant de touristes de l'Inde, de la Chine et de la Russie, la transformation de la DBM en une *Development Finance Agency* pour les PME, plusieurs projets d'infrastructure d'envergure, routes, aéroport, étude de faisabilité pour la construction d'un nouveau port à Mahebourg, construction de 700 *housing units* pour les familles touchant moins de R 5,000, construction d'une unité de maternité à Agaléga et j'en passe.

Pour revenir aux critiques fades et creuses de l'opposition, rappelons que ce même *Leader* de l'opposition, alors qu'il était Premier ministre en 2004 et 2005, avait déclaré *loud and clear* comme le dit mon collègue ici l'honorable ministre Boolell, que le premier budget de Pravind Jugnauth - animé de la même philosophie - était brillantissime. Un coup de maître, avait-il dit. Il avait même alors déclaré et je cite –

“ Je suis d'habitude avare en compliments mais le fait demeure que ce budget a été très bien reçu par la population. aujourd'hui, l'emphase est mise sur le social - sur des mesures concrètes en faveur du social!”

Qui plus est, lors des débats budgétaires 2005/2006 le *Leader* de l'opposition devait alors déclarer qu'avec ce deuxième Budget, on était en présence d'un jeune qui est monté en puissance en quelques années d'une façon admirable.

(Interruptions)

Aujourd'hui, on se trouve plus ou moins dans la même situation où on a devant soi un budget animé de la même philosophie et empreint de cette même touche humaine inspiré du socialisme pragmatique. Voilà que cette même personne trouve cette fois à dire que le Budget 2011 est fade, mauvais et décevant. M. le président, c'est à ne plus rien y comprendre.

En ce qu'il s'agit de la compensation salariale, le ministre des finances a accordé un taux de compensation au-dessus du taux d'inflation qui est de 2,7% soit 3.2% pour tous ceux qui sont au bas de l'échelle salariale. Rappelons ici que dans le passé également quand l'honorable Pravind Jugnauth était ministre des finances, il avait toujours alloué des compensations salariales

supérieures au taux d'inflation. Tel a été le cas pour le Budget 2004/2005. Alors que le taux d'inflation était de 3.9%, il avait accordé un taux de compensation salariale de 4.5%. Pour le Budget 2005/2006, alors que le taux d'inflation était de 5.7%, il avait octroyé une compensation salariale de 6.2%. Aujourd'hui, aussi on peut constater la constance de l'action du ministre des finances.

M. le président, déjà dans le passé, le ministre des finances a démontré son sérieux et sa vision des choses dans tout ce qu'il propose et entreprend. C'est ainsi, par exemple, que quand il était ministre de l'agriculture de 2000 à 2003, il avait réussi le pari de restructurer l'industrie sucrière tout en mettant beaucoup d'accent sur le volet social. A travers le projet VRS, il est venu en aide aux travailleurs de cette industrie en offrant à chacun une compensation financière et un lopin de terre. Par ailleurs, l'île Maurice a été saluée justement pour la réforme que le ministre de l'agriculture d'alors avait initiée et planifiée. Aujourd'hui, dans ce budget, ce sont les petits planteurs qui bénéficient. Le ministre des finances caressait également le rêve de faire de Maurice une *duty-free shopping paradise island*. Ce concept est repris et relancé dans le Budget 2011 et nous n'avons aucun doute qu'avec l'aide et le soutien de toute l'équipe gouvernementale, le *Mauritius Dream* tel qu'il a été conçu et présenté se réalisera dans toute sa plénitude.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I can pursue further in highlighting the inconsistencies in the statements made by Members of the Opposition, but due to time constraint, I prefer now to clarify certain points raised by hon. Members on the other side of the House and to elaborate on some priority health issues

I'll start with what hon. Mrs Ribot had stated. In fact, she stated that, according to a study carried out by Anlène, osteoporosis is a very serious problem affecting mostly women. I do not dispute the fact that osteoporosis is a problem, but, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I wish to draw the attention of the House to the fact that, as an authority, the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life cannot rely on a survey carried out by a commercial enterprise whose main concern is to market its product.

I can assure the hon. member that I am monitoring the situation closely and will, in due course, come up with the appropriate measures. I continue with what hon. Mrs Ribot said. She criticised the fact that the Budget makes provision for a feasibility study for the setting up of a women's hospital. She criticised it. I would have thought that, instead, she would, as a woman,

have acclaimed such an initiative. Allow me to say that hadn't it been for this Government especially the keen interest of the hon. Prime Minister, this project would never have seen the light. I have never heard the MMM talking of such a project. The hon. Prime Minister has, himself, established important contacts in UK and I can give the assurance that the feasibility study will be completed during financial year 2011 and that construction will start thereafter.

Quant au député de l'opposition, l'honorable Satish Boolell, il se fait un grand plaisir ces jours ci de soulever la question de R 1500 qui sont demandées aux cliniques privées pour chaque pinte de sang.

(Interruptions)

Voilà l'honorable madame Labelle dit que c'est normal, mais j'aimerais lui demander s'il n'est pas également intéressé de savoir pourquoi au temps où le MMM gérait les affaires du pays, la situation est restée inchangée et qu'il sache aussi que cette pratique de faire payer aux cliniques privées pour chaque pinte de sang remonte à plus de quarante années et que le MMM n'avait rien fait pour éliminer les R 1500.

The Deputy Speaker: Order, please!

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, however it is a pleasure ...

(Interruptions)

Whether it is Rs1500 or whether it was Rs500 people were paying! That is what we are saying and why is it that the MMM did not remove it? They could have withdrawn the fee, but they didn't. So, it is a language when you are in the Opposition and another language when you are in Government! Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, however it is a pleasure to learn from hon. Reza Issack about...

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Jhugroo, I don't see you, but I hear you!

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, however, it is a pleasure to learn from hon. Reza Issack about his personal experience during his stay at the hospital. This shows that our hospitals are manned by a professional and dedicated personnel. Here, I will also take this opportunity to thank all health care personnel for the good work they are performing despite the fact, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that very often they have to operate under difficult conditions. It is

known that health services by the very nature of their operations have shortcomings in certain areas.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we are dealing with an average of 22,000 patients per day, each one with a different type of ailment. We are dealing as well with a personnel of about 15,000. Problems are bound to happen, but our role at the level of the Ministry is to plan, organise and control all operations thereby minimising all shortcomings. I will take one single example, because we've been blamed for the breakdown of equipment at the level of hospitals. When our X-ray machine is undergoing about 200 to 300 X-rays per day per machine, at the level of private health institutions sometimes they are not even using their machines; sometimes they use it on two or three occasions. If I take the waiting time, people always complain that when they come to the hospital they have to wait. I've tried to reduce the waiting time, but the same people, if they go to private health institutions, would wait for two hours, more than two hours sometimes and they would not make a single complaint. That's why I say we accept criticisms, but sometimes these criticisms should be justified. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I can reassure the House that I am putting a lot of effort to address weaknesses identified and I am confident that little by little the perception that better care is obtained in private health institutions will change *et que nous réussirons à renverser la vapeur*.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, to sustain the delivery of public health services, many countries worldwide have implemented reforms in health care financing with the introduction of user fees or social health insurance schemes. In Mauritius, *malgré la situation économique difficile*, we are still maintaining health care services free; free from primary to secondary and tertiary care services to the entire population. For financial year 2011, Government expenditure on health will be Rs7.95 billion which presents 8.5% of total Government expenditure and per capita public expenditure on health, which is of Rs5953 at present, will increase to Rs6225.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as I have said several times, the major public health threats in Mauritius today are non communicable diseases in particular diabetes, cardiovascular diseases and cancer including the complications which arise from these diseases. Statistics show that NCDs are responsible for about 80% of the burden of diseases in our country and nearly 70% of all deaths in 2009 were due to diseases of the circulatory system, diabetes and cancer.

In addition, the NCD survey of 2009 has revealed that the prevalence of Type II diabetes in the population aged 20 to 75 was 21.3%, the prevalence of hypertension was 37.9%. 65.6% of the population in Mauritius, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir - you would not believe it - were either overweight or obese. More than 75% of the Mauritian adults are not doing any form of physical activity. 40.3% of men smoke. Can we imagine, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that the consumption of tobacco is almost one billion sticks every year for a mere population of 1.2 million? This is unbelievable, not to say, shocking. As regards alcohol consumption, nearly 50% of men take three or more alcoholic drinks per day. The average annual consumption of alcoholic drinks in Mauritius is around 55,000,000 litres still for a population of 1.2 million.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the figures I have just mentioned are indeed alarming...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order, please!

Mrs Hanoomanjee: ... however, it should not be implied that Government or my Ministry has been complacent about the situation. Far from that, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir!

Here, I would like to refer, once again, to hon. Dr. Satish Boolell who, in his address, has stated, I quote –

‘The message is not sent strong enough’.

I believe he is referring to the message in the Budget, but yet he has not made any suggestion.

Let us see, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, what is the situation with regard to that silent killer, diabetes and related diseases are. Some 400 amputations are carried out every year; some 175 eye surgeries are conducted weekly, in addition to about 200 cases of complicated eye problems which are referred for treatment abroad yearly. Some 1000 patients currently undergo dialysis. About 600 cardiac surgeries are being performed annually at the cardiac centre; some 3500 angiographies or angioplasties are being done yearly at Victoria Hospital and cardiac centre altogether. *Devant cette situation, M. le président, j’ai pris certaines initiatives.*

Firstly, a fully fledged diabetes and vascular health centre at Souillac is now fully operational.

Secondly, whereas formerly nursing officers, working in the diabetic section, were called upon to be transferred to any other unit, I am putting up an appropriate structure comprising specialised posts for diabetes nurses which means that those who join these units will become specialised in treating diabetes patients.

Thirdly, foot care is important for diabetes patients. It is well known that a very small injury can eventually lead to an amputation. For the time being, there is only one podiatrist working at Victoria hospital. My Ministry is proceeding with the recruitment of, at least, five podiatrists from India.

Fourthly, it is known that most diabetic patients develop eye complications. Retinal screening facilities will therefore be extended to all regional hospitals and to Rodrigues so as to enable early detection of eye problems.

I must also here highlight the initiative of the hon. Prime Minister who has invested himself significantly in addressing problems relating to diabetes and cardiovascular diseases. It is through consultations which he had during his missions abroad and his personal intervention that we have had the visits of eminent professors from UK, Australia, South Africa and USA, and doctors in cardiology and diabetes are offering their expert advice on these problems – advice which are being implemented.

In fact, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, unhealthy lifestyles including unbalanced diet and physical inactivity as well as tobacco use and alcohol abuse are largely responsible for this alarming situation. I wish, at this stage, to congratulate once again my colleague, the Vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, for taking the bold decision to significantly increase the prices of cigarettes and alcohol.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it is unfortunate that Members on the other side of the House are interpreting this measure only as a means of raising revenue for Government. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I wish to draw attention that this decision is in line with the WHO framework Convention on Tobacco control to which Mauritius is a signatory wherein Member States are expected to increase the price of cigarettes. According to world experts and survey reports,...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order please!

Mrs Hanoomanjee: this is a very effective measure to curb down consumption of cigarettes. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, adopting healthy lifestyles, that is, eating healthy foods and practising adequate physical activity as...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Labelle, please!

Mrs Hanoomanjee: recommended by WHO require a change in our behaviours. Hon. Members will no doubt agree with me that this is indeed a very difficult task for any Government because we can act as facilitators. We can provide the appropriate legal framework. We can offer the best counselling by health professionals and we can also put in place the most appropriate and sophisticated infrastructure and equipment but, most importantly, we need the collaboration of the population and other stakeholders to influence people to change their behaviour and adopt a healthy lifestyle.

As far as my ministry is concerned, we have already initiated some major actions and others are planned for next year. For example, the ongoing multi media campaign has been intensified to inform the public at large of the risk factors for cardiovascular diseases, diabetes and cancer, and to advise the population on healthy living. As far as increasing access to facilities for physical activities is concerned, I wish to point out that some 25 additional health clubs will be set up in the period 2010-2015. Physical activity sessions will be extended to 25 additional existing localities such as women's centres; social welfare and community centres. Five additional health tracks will be set up in different parts of Mauritius and legislation will be reviewed to control access of the unhealthy food to the public.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as far as cancer is concerned, I have noted the interest of various Members of the House particularly those in the Opposition on this subject matter. I must admit that I am also deeply concerned with the state of the radiotherapy services at Victoria hospital which include the chemotherapy unit. In fact, I should say, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that the upgrading of the radiotherapy unit both in terms of infrastructure and quality of services are amongst my priorities. I am convinced that the suffering and hardship of cancer patients and the traumatic experience of their relatives go well beyond political issues.

Hon. Members will surely agree that improvement in hospitals and health centres are taking place, but I cannot accomplish the work which is spanned over a period of five years in six months.

Furthermore, I also propose to provide psychological support not only to terminally ill case cancer patients, but also to their relatives who live a traumatic experience. I wish also to inform the House that training in customer care for front line officers which include communication with patients and their relatives, and developing the proper attitude towards the public will start in December. In the first instance, about 7000 officers will benefit from the training. I must also thank the Sun Resorts for having renovated completely the cancer unit for children at Victoria Hospital under its corporate social responsibility. In this same breath, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in view of limited resources, I extend an invitation to other organisations to follow the same example and to consider providing support for the renovation of the radio therapy services especially the chemotherapy unit. In this respect, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, any suggestion from the hon. Members including those on the other side of the House would be welcome.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, hon. Mrs Ribot yesterday mentioned the increasing trend of breast cancer in Mauritius. In fact, my Ministry is already involved in an aggressive campaign, inviting women to be screened for early detection of such cancer so that appropriate remedial treatment may be provided in time. As this is also a genetic problem, sensitisation is being done at the level of secondary schools as well. Besides, we are also setting up a National Mammography service for which two digital mammography equipment with biopsy facilities are being procured. My Ministry is also consulting the WHO for its expertise to conduct an appropriate study on breast cancer in Mauritius with special emphasis on contributing factors.

As regards cervical cancer, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, hon. Ribot again mentioned that my Ministry is taking time to decide on the introduction of the vaccine. As I have replied in a Parliamentary question last week, research has shown that there are 100 viruses in the cervix of which four cause cervical cancer. Unless it is confirmed that anyone of the four viruses is present in Mauritius and is the cause for cervical cancer, the introduction of any vaccine at this stage will be premature according to our experts.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, recently, there have been many press articles concerning the non availability of beds for admissions of patients at Victoria hospital. It is a fact that Victoria hospital is overcrowded as there is a constant influx of patients. I am very much concerned with the prevailing situation and I am proposing to take the following measures. As a short-term measure, maximum use of existing infrastructure will be made. The ENT hospital which has a bed occupancy of around 55% can accommodate some patients with chronic diseases requiring long hospitalisation from Victoria hospital. At the same time, maximum use can be made of its operating theatres for operating minor surgical cases. This measure will also have to decrease the waiting list for operations at Victoria hospital.

Secondly, as a long-term measure, I propose to redefine the catchment areas of Jawaharlal Nehru hospital and Victoria hospital which have respectively a population of 180,000 and 360,000. The bed occupancy rate at JNH is about 65%. With the redefinition of the catchment areas, there will be a better redistribution of the population between the two hospitals thus reducing the pressure on Victoria hospital.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this budget places special emphasis on the development of Mauritius as a high-tech medical hub and a medical tourism destination. A comprehensive set of measures were announced to give a boost to the health care sector from an industry development perspective. Mauritius is gradually emerging as a hub for high-tech medicine. Recently leading multinational companies and global players in the health care sector have trusted the Mauritius destination and have invested in multi speciality and super speciality centres of excellence. Fortis, Apollo Bramwell, Harley Street Fertility Centre, Challenge Hair, and more recently Dr. Agarwal Eye Hospital are just a few examples of health care providers which have invested in state-of-the-art medical centres in Mauritius. There is yet more to come as there are other interesting projects in the pipeline for the setting up of centres of excellence for plastic and cosmetic surgery. Interestingly, the Mauritian diaspora is also investing in the health care sector.

Medical tourism has, in fact, always been high on the agenda of the Government of Mauritius. In 2005, there were hardly thousand foreign patients travelling to Mauritius for treatment. In 2007, some 1,500 overseas patients visited the country for various medical and aesthetic care. This figure increased to 4,500 patients last year and the projection for next year is 8,500. The main sources of foreign patients travelling to Mauritius in 2010 were from

Madagascar with 30%, followed by Seychelles: 17%, Reunion Island: 14%, France: 11.5%, U.K: 6%, South Africa: 5% and 16.5% for other countries.

Here, I would refer to the intervention made by hon. Dr. Satish Boolell wherein he stated that...

(Interruptions)

Dr. Satish Boolell, in his intervention, stated that Mauritian taxpayers are subsidising patients from Madagascar, Comoros and Seychelles who attend our health institutions for treatment. His statement is not correct, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. In fact, Mauritius has an agreement with Comoros only whereby a maximum of 100 patients from that island are treated yearly in our hospitals free of charge except for consumables for cardiac surgeries. All other expatriates come at their own expense.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, before concluding my intervention on the Budget Speech, I will briefly mention about the health services in Rodrigues and Agalega. As the House is aware, health services in Rodrigues are managed by the Rodrigues Regional Assembly through the Commission for Health. However, my Ministry provides policy directives as well as necessary technical support for the efficient health care delivery there.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, my Ministry will continue to provide facilities in terms of services of medical practitioners both generalist and specialist as well as in terms of sophisticated equipment to ensure that the quality of service extended to the population there, are of the same standards as in Mauritius.

As regards Agalega, my Ministry is already providing 24-hour coverage on the island with the services of a Doctor and nursing staff. However, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, although no survey has been carried out in Agalega, I understand from my colleague, hon. Aimée, Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands, who previously served as Chairman of Outer Islands Development Corporation, that the inhabitants of the island are faced with problems relating to obesity and unhealthy diet.

An important factor contributing to this situation is the unavailability of fresh vegetables on the island. My colleague has taken the initiative to send around 30 tonnes of fresh vegetables regularly in Agalega and production there also. Furthermore, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, many

pregnant women have to come over to Mauritius in the 5th or 6th month of pregnancy for treatment and follow-up until delivery. This causes a lot of hardship and inconvenience to the patients and their families. In addition, all the expenses for the transfer of the patient's board and lodging and other related expenses until the delivery are met by the Outer Island Development Corporation. In this respect, my Ministry fully supports the measure announced in the Budget for the setting up of a maternity unit in the island. My Ministry will provide all necessary support for the implementation of this project. I will further see to it that the health problems in Agalega are addressed in an effective manner by having regular visits there by specialists and dental surgeons.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, providing curative services is a noble, but essential task. However, I believe very much in the preventive aspect as it is said that prevention is better than cure. I am fully aware that the outcome in preventive measures can only be felt in the medium to long term, but I will still lay emphasis on prevention as my actions are not motivated by short term political gains. I may not be seeing the results during this mandate but, for me, what counts finally, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, is the health of each and every citizen.

Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

(7.11 p.m.)

Mr M. Peetumber (First Member for Rivière des Anguilles and Souillac): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, first of all, I would like to place on record my appreciation to the hon. Minister of Health and Quality of Life, Mrs Maya Hanoomanjee, for her appropriate, apt, comprehensive and beautiful exposé, highlighting various projects that have been implemented in the health sector, projects that are going to be implemented soon following the budgetary provisions, and also the efforts that are being made to improve services in the health sector.

Before I come to my intervention regarding the Budget, I would like to comment on what hon. Joe Lesjongard said earlier during his intervention, because listening to him, one would get the feeling that, during five years, from 2005-2010, nothing was achieved by the *l'Alliance sociale* Government. I would like to set the records straight, because if we had not done anything, if we had not deserved the trust of the people of Mauritius during the last general

elections, they, representatives of the MMM would have been on this side, and we would have been on the other side.

(Interruptions)

On the eve of the 2005 general elections, we had made certain pledges with the people of Mauritius, and I must tell you that it was a contract, a pact that *l'Alliance Sociale* had signed with the people of Mauritius and, as soon as we came to power, this was our preoccupation; we were committed to implementing all that we had pledged to the people of Mauritius.

To start with, free public transport. It was our achievement. We gave free public transport to the primary school students, the secondary school students, and the university students. What is more we gave also what we had not promised: free public transport to the senior citizens. We had promised the abolition of income tax for all those earning less than Rs25,000, and we kept our word.

The Equal Opportunities Act, the Public Bodies Appeal Tribunal; all these are our babies. The Prime Minister explained the other day that there are certain technical problems, and once these problems are sorted out, we will be on the right track again.

As regards health, the MMM have been representing Port Louis for more than 25 years in this House, and there was question of reconstructing the Dr. Jeetoo Hospital; not a finger was raised with a view to improving the building, reconstructing the hospital, and giving better health services to the people in Port Louis. It needed the *l'Alliance sociale* Government to come up with the project. We had promised Rs2 billion for the construction of Dr. Jeetoo Hospital, and we kept our word. I am glad that the present Minister of Finance and Economic Development is going in the same direction. He has pledged certain amounts of money, so that we can go ahead with the project and complete it in the interest of all the inhabitants of Port Louis mainly.

They pretend that they are the champions of the electorate in Port Louis! We have got a thorny problem of traffic congestion in Port Louis and, for the last 30 years, nothing has been done. It needed once again the enlightened leadership of Dr. the hon. Navin Ramgoolam to have not only the ring road, but also the link road from Terre Rouge to Verdun, the enlargement of the motorway from Pailles to Caudan, and several others, on which perhaps our hon. Minister Bachoo will elaborate during his intervention. When we talk about the acute problems, major

problems afflicting Port Louis, they did not do anything. They did not raise their finger with a view to solving problems that afflicted Port Louis.

I must also add that, in the Budget presented by hon. Pravind Jugnauth, provisions have also been made for the improvement in infrastructure regarding Victoria Hospital, Bharati Eye Hospital, Flacq Hospital, etc.

Besides the restoration of the universal pension was again our baby. I am sure that you have not forgotten that one MMM Minister had to present his apologies to the nation for all the humiliations that they had inflicted upon the senior citizens of this country.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I place on record my congratulations to the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development for his Budget Speech presented in this august Assembly on Friday 19 November 2010.

I must concede that, like many political observers, I had feared the worst with regard to the Budget. The fact that our country was in dire straits, and the economic and financial situation on the international scene was, to say the least, very unfavourable, I thought it would be next to impossible for the Government to honour its electoral pledges, and that we would start this mandate on a wrong note.

However, I was greatly relieved that, notwithstanding the Euro Zone crisis and the various challenges confronting our economy, the Vice-Prime Minister has honoured several of Government's electoral pledges, *inter alia* –

- (i) the abolition of the National Residential Property Tax;
- (ii) improvements to the SC and HSC examination fees scheme, and
- (iii) waiving the tax on interest earned on financial savings

thus, rendering the Government detractors speechless.

The icing on the cake was in the form of budgetary provisions the Vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Economic Development has made for various Ministries, to bring about improvements in infrastructural facilities. Examples abound. He has provided Rs893 m. in the education sector, exclusively for the upgrading of primary and secondary schools, and another Rs120 m. for the construction of multi-purpose complexes and playfields for the development of the overall personality of the child. I am sure that the hon. Minister of Education will agree that,

when we talk about a good school, it must have the necessary facilities, we mean a good building to house the classrooms, with all the facilities within the classrooms, the laboratories, the specialist rooms, sports facilities and, of course, mention has been made about the play fields. Provision has been made for the construction of play fields in those schools where such facilities do not exist. I think we are going in the right direction and we have got to provide all these facilities if we want to develop the entire personality of the child at school.

The Vice-Prime Minister has provided Rs8 billion for the health sector, which includes infrastructure capacity at the Bharati Eye Hospital, Flacq Hospital, Victoria Hospital and Dr. Jeetoo Hospital. I need not elaborate on this because the hon. Minister, who preceded me, has elaborated lengthily on all projects associated with her Ministry. I will go to something else now.

One of the thorniest problems we are facing in the country at present is linked to the water problem. The water sector is one area which necessitates the mobilisation of all resources available to bring about a marked improvement so as to contain the growing discontent of the people across the country. If one example has to be quoted, I think we can quote the example of people from l'Espérance who expressed their discontent. They just went on the streets and tried to give vent to their frustration and anger regarding the shortage of water in their village.

The measures announced in the Budget are the steps in the right direction. The replacement of old and defective pipes at the cost of Rs454 m., the drilling of boreholes to the tune of Rs53 m.; the support granted for the purchase of 40,000 water tanks for low-income families, the construction of the Bagatelle Dam to the tune of Rs3 billion and other improvement of water infrastructure are expressive of Government's commitment to come to grips with an acute problem afflicting the entire country.

Equally commendable is the Government's commitment to eradicate poverty. Its Social Integration Programme is as ambitious as ever with an estimated Rs5 billion to support, over the next ten years, three programmes, namely -

- social housing;
- eradication of absolute poverty, and
- welfare of children from vulnerable groups.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, on a different note now, it goes to the glory of the Mauritian Nation that, whenever challenges have threatened to harm our interest, we have had the genius to circumvent the hostile factor and rise above the peril. We have belied the forecasts of international experts, who predicted doom for our nascent nationhood, way back in 1968.

How could we have carved out a name for ourselves in the textile and garment sector when we do not even grow the basic raw materials in Mauritius? How is it that, only after 40 years of experience in the hospitality sector, Mauritius should receive the award for the best tourist resort, in spite of its geographical distance from cosmopolitan centres and in spite of unabated competition with countries within the Indian Ocean which offer almost the same facilities?

How is it that, when so many countries in the world are on the brim of collapse, on the verge of famine, on the brink of lawlessness, Mauritius continues to be on the forefront of progress and development and a haven of peace, addressing social issues, alleviating poverty, investing massively in the education sector; considerably increasing the number of scholarships, maintaining free transport for the student community and the senior citizens; continuing its social housing policies and triggering economic growth. How does that happen, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir? Have we ever paused for a while and pondered over this pertinent issue? How is it that Mauritius, which is tiny in size, which is vulnerable, which is not ideally geographically situated, which enjoys fewer natural advantages than the neighbouring countries, should become relatively more successful and an object of envy on the international plane.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the essential factor of progress in any field of human endeavour, is the leadership index. This country has been fortunate enough to have had three leaders of exceptional calibre at three different points of time in our recent history. Each of them has been endowed with exceptional leadership qualities, the ability to galvanise massive support to a national cause and an unparalleled vision to ensure public weal.

Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam's decision to provide a Welfare State, with free educational and health services, State subsidies on essential food items, a strong social security system to protect the poor, the disabled, the widows, the orphans and the elderly, was taken, mind you, not in periods of plenty, but in times of dearth and scarcity. His leadership turned a deaf ear to

those vitriolic detractors, who could not afford to peer into the distant future and see beyond the trappings of the present.

Sir Anerood Jugnauth will also be remembered as a Prime Minister, who has left no stone unturned to ensure the welfare of the people. The prosperity of the country in the 1980s and the various infrastructural changes, that occurred in the country at that point of time, must be attributed to the ingenuity of Sir Anerood Jugnauth.

Today, no one can deny the fact that the country is in good hands. As stated by the Vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Leader of the MSM, that the only point on which he agrees with hon. Paul Bérenger, the Opposition Leader is that, hon. Dr. Navin Ramgoolam should continue to be the Prime Minister of the country.

Everyone reckons that the present Prime Minister understands the spirit of Mauritian nationhood, practises fairness within the framework of tolerance, can listen and have the courage of his convictions when he makes a final choice. He can be futuristic while he prizes the specificity of the moment.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, Mauritius has become a reference in many fields. Our country has carved out an image for itself on the international plane. Each one of us evinces a sense of pride in the sterling performances of our country in different fields of life.

It is a great honour for each and every Mauritian citizen that Mauritius has been conferred with the Award of Excellence at China International Travel Mart 2010 Shanghai. It has also bagged the Indian Ocean's Leading Destination Award.

With respect to good governance, Mauritius has been rated 1st in the Mo Ibrahim index of African Governance for 2008/2009. In the field of business, Mauritius was ranked 17th out of 183 countries in Doing Business survey 2010.

Among many other International Awards, the Leading Airline Award was granted to Air Mauritius by World Travel Awards 2010. Coupled with that, Mauritius is going through, despite all economic and financial constraints, an unprecedented phase of its development be it on the road infrastructure level, in the water sector, in the ICT, the housing sector or in the fields of education and health.

All these changes, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, are not manna from heaven. They are not a matter of luck or coincidence nor are they offered on a platter to those who do not dare. It is a matter of determination, *infatigable* dedication, commitment and vision. In a nutshell, it simmers down to a question of leadership which wants the country to move forward and build on our achievements. Today, the nation has finally found its future and the guide to that future is our present Prime Minister, Dr. the hon. Navin Ramgoolam who is destined to go down in history as the father of modernisation. There you are! Three leaders, exceptional ones for that, who have shaped up the destiny of this great little country of ours and who will be remembered by posterity for their mettle, for their achievements and for their contributions to ensure the welfare of the Mauritian nation.

Now, let me come to a serious problem which has a devastating effect on the population. It is the problem of alcoholism in Mauritius, I would like to congratulate the Vice-Prime Minister for the eleven measures he has announced in the Budget to curtail the consumption and abuse of alcoholic drinks. Curiously enough, some Members of the Opposition do not seem to be pleased with these measures. For their benefit, I would like to remind them that these measures are in line with the recommendations of the World Health Organisation. *On ne peut pas être plus royaliste que le roi*. The problem of alcoholism in Mauritius has assumed alarming proportions. In fact, it has become a scourge causing untold sufferings to both individuals and families. It can ruin the lives of individuals, devastate families and damage the fabric of communities. Besides, it has a serious impact on public health. It has been listed by the WHO as the leading risk factor for premature death and disabilities in the world. Harmful drinking is also associated with cardiovascular diseases, cirrhosis of the liver, infectious diseases like AIDS and various cancers. It is further linked to assaults, child abuse, road traffic accidents, domestic violence, suicides, etc.

(Interruptions)

As per studies conducted by the World Health Organisation, the bigger the number of alcohol outlets in a given area, the higher is the alcohol consumption among young people and the price increases on alcoholic drinks have a much greater impact on drinkers who consume more than those who consume less. Therefore, the measures proposed in the Budget are in tune with what the WHO advocates to reduce the commercial and public availability of alcohol by regulating the number of alcohol outlets and by curbing alcohol consumption through pricing policies and this

is exactly what the Vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Finance and Economic Development has proposed in the Budget, so we are going in the right direction. We mean business, we have got a job to perform and with all sincerity of purpose, we have got to do the job that we are expected to. I am personally very satisfied with the measures announced in the budget to curb this scourge.

Now, regarding some projects in my constituency, I must express a sense of fulfilment over a number of important projects which have either been completed or are nearing completion which give a lot of satisfaction to my constituents as well. Of course, I am not going to enumerate all the projects that have been implemented in my constituency.

The Deputy Speaker: Very briefly!

Mr Peetumber: Very briefly, I am going to talk on the major projects that have been implemented. The construction of a reservoir at Bois Chéri has been completed putting an end to the acute water problems encountered by the inhabitants over the years. I seize this opportunity to express my regards to the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities and also to hon. Minister Abu Kasenally who was the responsible Minister at the time the project was conceived.

(Interruptions)

I will politely request the Deputy Prime Minister to spare some time for the inauguration ceremony. I place on record my gratitude to both Minister Bachoo and to hon. Lormus Bundhoo...

(Interruptions)

the then NDU Minister for the construction of a new volley-ball complex at Grand Bois with lighting and sitting accommodation facilities and the construction of a drain at Gangoo Lane, l'Escalier which has just been completed. I am very thankful to the late Local Government Minister, hon. Dr. James Burty David and the current Minister, hon. Herve Aimée for having implemented two very important projects in Souillac: primo, the upgrading of the Telfair garden which has just been completed; secondo, the construction of a multi-complex which is nearing completion. I thank the Vice-Prime Minister, hon. Pravind Jugnauth and the Minister of Local

Government for the provision made in the Budget for the construction of a market fair at Rivière des Anguilles, a long awaited project.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am sorry I am going to end up on a sad note. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, allow me to express my disappointment over the non-inclusion in the budget of one project which I somehow hold very close to my heart, the construction of a Women's Empowerment Centre at Rivière du Poste of whom Hon. Shakeel Mohamed is aware.

(Interruptions)

The project being rejected a few days before the presentation of the Budget last year, I had made a special appeal in writing to the Prime Minister subsequent to which the project was taken on board and was announced in the Budget Speech last year. This year before the presentation of the Budget, I pressed home to the hon. Minister of Gender Equality of the necessity to go ahead with the project as land had been identified. The laying of the foundation stone had already been effected and the south of the country badly needs such a centre. Now, I don't know hoping against hope, I make a pressing appeal - unfortunately the Vice-Prime Minister is not around, I am sure he will get the message - to the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development to salvage this much awaited project.

Thank you very much, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

At 7.38 p.m. the sitting was suspended.

On resuming at 8.54 p.m. with Mr Speaker in the Chair.

Mr D. Nagalingum (Second Member for Stanley and Rose Hill): Mr Speaker, Sir, the Budget is a political set piece which has developed its own traditions, thus, making the Budget Speech one of the most important events in the life of Parliament. As it is the case traditionally, Friday 19 November last, that exercise has given way to its lots of responses, both from the public and from various other sectors which are, by now, known to one and all and on which I do not wish to dwell on at this stage.

However, I would like to express my heartfelt appreciation to the hon. Leader of the Opposition for his very thorough analysis of the socio-economic issues to which Mauritius is faced, the causes which landed us there and the challenges which we have to address in order to

lay the foundations for a better Mauritius. In addition, to his views and criticisms, supported by very concrete examples, facts and figures, the Leader of the Opposition, you will recall, Mr Speaker, Sir, ended his speech on a positive note and with a glimmer of hope, a sign, Mr Speaker, Sir, that we, on this side of the House, represent a responsible and accountable Opposition; responsible and accountable towards our country and its people.

Before proceeding any further, Mr Speaker, Sir, allow me to digress for a moment and confess that I am pleasantly surprised to find that this National Budget contains some of the measures which appeared in our electoral manifesto which, as you know, was published well before that of the *l'Alliance de l'Avenir*. Thus, may I, by the way, mention that we were the first to undertake to abolish the NRPT, abolish tax on interest income and review the SC and HSC examinations fees scheme, among others.

Mr Speaker, Sir, to come back to what I was talking about, as true patriots, we feel that we are mandated to bluntly express what we think is right or wrong for our country. As Winston Churchill once said, I quote –

“Criticism may not be agreeable, but it is necessary. It fulfils the same function as pain in the human body. It calls attention to an unhealthy state of things”.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I wish to turn to a subject which is causing deep concern among people of various spheres of our society and which is disturbing and worrying for the whole population: the issue of law and order. Mr Speaker, Sir, it is an undeniable fact that there is a constant and progressive deterioration of law and order in Mauritius. Every day, we are having our unwanted share of horrible homicides, rapes, thefts, armed robberies and burglaries, assaults and so on. The situation is already unbearable through, I agree, it is encouraging to note that, in some cases, the Police have rapidly identified suspects. Mr Speaker, Sir, *‘une hirondelle ne fait pas le printemps’*. The situation is worsening day by day and this is causing much harm to our country’s image both at national and international levels.

The hon. Minister stated in his speech, at paragraph 302, that ‘Law and order is an evolving challenge’. True, it is, but, at the same time, we must agree that no major steps had

been taken during the past five/six years to address this instable and unhealthy climate prevailing in our Police Force. At this very same paragraph, the hon. Minister added –

‘(...) the Police Force will be transformed into a Police Service’.

What does this concretely mean? I just can’t refrain myself from asking “what’s in a name?”

The problem with our Police is basically at managerial level. No organisation can pretend to be effective and efficient if the people forming part of that organisation are not motivated, or rather, if they are frustrated and, Mr Speaker, Sir, it is no secret that the Police Force is worn down by frustration and frustration at all levels. Would you believe that Police officers, who have managed to go through their exams, are waiting for promotions for nearly two years? Some have already retired. Promotion is a goal that a lot of Policemen work for and this is a legitimate aspiration and some months back we learned that promotions will be thing done soon, but how soon is soon? Perhaps, the Prime Minister will enlighten the House on this issue shortly.

The Minister spelt out a long list of measures which Government wishes to take with a view to modernise the Police Force. New technologies will be introduced in order to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of various units of the Police Force. This is highly commendable, but within such a wide spectrum it is, of course, necessary to prioritise the measures. Technology does not operate in a vacuum. Who will man these new tools? Manpower is one of the most growing problems of our Police Force. I am glad to learn that Government intends to proceed with the recruitment of 770 trainee Police Constables by March 2011, as mentioned at paragraph 305 of the Budget Speech. Fair enough but, at the same time, we must not forget such commitment is also meant to be honoured inasmuch as we know that, in the past, despite provision was made for the recruitment of Police officers, the recruitment exercise was not carried out, or only a fraction of the targeted number was recruited.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the underlying vision of the Minister of Finance is to bring changes in various sectors. Indeed, the only permanent thing in life is change. Change does not necessarily assure progress, but progress implacably requires change. Education is essential; to change for education creates both new wants and the ability to satisfy them. Thus, education is the basis of progress of every society. I do not wish to stress any further on the issue of education, but rather to create a correlation between education and job creation and to this respect, two measures set

out in the Budget may, indeed, have a very adverse effect, to say the least, on our school leavers and graduates entering the job market.

Firstly, Mr Speaker, Sir, the Minister states at paragraph 90 that Government intends to raise the tertiary enrolment ratio and, to this end, he mentions at paragraph 93 that one of the measures which will be taken is that the students, I mean foreign students, will be allowed to work on a part-time basis. To work on part-time basis, where? *Pou nou meme pas assez.* Mr Speaker, Sir, the unemployment rate in Mauritius stands presently at around 8%. Many of our school leavers, having completed primary, secondary or tertiary education, are not being able to secure a decent job, not even a placement. Mr Speaker, Sir, we all know how difficult it is for them to simply obtain a placement in a firm as part of their studies. If Mauritians themselves are not being able to find a job or even a placement, I must legitimately ask where Government will find jobs to give to those foreign students. In such a climate, can Mauritius afford to attract foreign students and allow them to work be it on a part-time basis? Attracting foreign students in Mauritius is not a bad initiative in itself, but I honestly believe that our country is not ready for such a step. There are immediate challenges which the Government should address before it can set out in such a venture. There is not only the job aspect, but many others, namely, the issue of accommodation, the social repercussions and the safety and security aspects among others.

Secondly, Mr Speaker, Sir, the Minister, at paragraph 234, states that Government, in its endeavour, will further open up our country to foreign talents, the threshold for BOI to issue Occupation Permits for professionals will be lowered to Rs45,000 per month. This threshold is presently Rs75,000 per month. Mr Speaker, Sir, this is an issue of concern as it means that a foreigner who happens to secure a job with a minimum monthly salary of Rs45,000 per month will be eligible for an occupation permit, a document which serves both as a work permit and a residence permit. Mr Speaker, Sir, to my most humble opinion, I believe that this situation will worsen since Mauritian graduates are already having great difficulty in finding a job that match their qualifications and with the opening up of the labour market to foreigners. It is clear that the already unhealthy prevailing situation will go on deteriorating besides this aspect of job competition. Anyway, I consider that the Government should revisit this proposal. We have a duty to provide our graduates with the best they deserve just as we have a duty to protect our society from the emergence of social divides. Thus, Mr Speaker, Sir, I am of the opinion that the

implementation of the proposed initiative of lowering the threshold in order to attract foreign talents calls for much care and attention from the Government.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the employment chaos is not only peculiar among graduates, example in the fields where specialised skills are required, but also among non-skilled workers. The manual workers unfortunately have not been able to acquire a certain level of education. Not only do they complain about the recent labour laws which seem to be very accommodating towards their employers, especially as regards to the right to hire and fire, but they do complain that securing a job as manual worker in building sites is becoming more and more difficult. If we have known cases where countries lending us money wish that the tendering exercise be restricted to companies from that particular country, it is equally true that, in certain building sites, I do not wish to name the name of these countries, the manpower is restricted to that country alone despite the red carpet laid for these people, despite the job opportunities that the project supposedly represent and despite the massive investment of the Government at this level. This is only one example in one sector, Mr Speaker, Sir. The list is unfortunately long.

M. le président, permettez moi de m'exprimer sur le secteur de l'eau. Ce problème ne date pas d'hier, mais force est de constater qu'aucune mesure drastique n'a été prise au cours de ces cinq ou six dernières années pour remédier aux problèmes grandissants touchant ce secteur d'où ce sentiment quasi-unanime, surtout parmi la population toute entière, à l'effet que la gestion de ce secteur laisse à désirer. Les victimes ne sont pas que les ménages, mais également les usines, les hôtels, les hôpitaux, les services d'incendie, le secteur agricole et j'en passe.

M. le président, quelles sont les mesures, tant nécessaires, qui ont été préconisées pour répondre à la demande grandissante de l'eau à travers le pays ? Je ne vois rien, M. le président. Pas de mesures pour améliorer notre stock en eau si ce n'est que le projet de barrage de Bagatelle qui refait surface, un projet qui se fait attendre depuis cinq ans et où on rajoute aujourd'hui celui de Rivière des Anguilles sans définir le délai dans lesquels ces projets seront concrétisés. A ce même chapitre, nous savons tous qu'un volume important d'eau, comme l'a si bien dit mon ami, l'honorable Joe Lesjongard, est gaspillée chaque minute en raison de fuites. Les mesures correctives se font également attendre à ce niveau. M. le président, nous nous targuons d'être en mesure d'accueillir quelques deux millions de touristes dans les années à venir. Le ministre vient d'annoncer que le gouvernement compte améliorer le taux d'inscription dans les établissements

tertiaires, visant essentiellement à attirer des étudiants étrangers. Les complexes commerciaux sont en construction sans compter les projets à l'instar de Jinfei qui seront de gros consommateurs d'eau. Gouverner, c'est prévoir, M. le président, mais à l'heure actuelle notre pays est-il prêt à faire face à ces défis? Malheureusement non. On nous propose maintenant une fusion entre la CWA, l'Irrigation Authority, la Water Resources Unit et tenez vous bien, M. le président, la Wastewater Management Authority. Le problème de la fourniture d'eau est un problème national mais aussi un problème urgent. Les coupures fréquentes ont souvent donné lieu à des manifestations, voire des émeutes dans diverses régions du pays. On ne peut pas préconiser des mesures dont la mise en œuvre peut prendre des années, alors que nous avons sous le bras un problème des plus urgents. Le ras-le-bol parmi la population est palpable alors que des secteurs vitaux du pays sont menacés. Je fais un pressant appel au gouvernement pour que ce problème soit traité avec plus de sérieux possible et il y va du bien-être de ce peuple.

Augmentation de taxes sur les boissons alcoolisées et les produits de tabac - M. le président, dans un autre ordre d'idées, je voudrais aborder la question d'augmentation des droits de régie sur les boissons alcoolisées, sur les cigarettes. Dans le but de combattre l'alcoolisme et le tabagisme, M. le président, la consommation des boissons alcoolisées et des produits de tabac ne respecte en aucune façon la loi économique des rendements non proportionnels. Bien, au contraire, les statistiques ont démontré très souvent qu'une hausse dans la consommation est suivie inévitablement par une hausse des prix, qui, elle-même, mène à l'endettement. Donc il est évident qu'une hausse de droits de régie ou de prix de ces commodités n'est certainement pas la solution. Une lutte efficace contre l'alcoolisme et le tabagisme appelle à identifier les causes profondes de ces maux, soit la dépendance entre autres et, à mon humble avis, une campagne de sensibilisation agressive à tous les niveaux aiderait à surmonter ce problème. L'augmentation abusive des prix, que je qualifierai de taxation répressive, est loin d'être la solution, bien au contraire, elle deviendrait dans un moyen terme une source de problèmes au niveau de la famille mauricienne.

Au chapitre de l'environnement, je déplore le manque de mesures concrètes dans le cadre du projet 'Maurice Ile Durable'. Cette phrase n'est pas la mienne mais celle du Professeur Joël de Rosnay, conseiller spécial en développement durable au bureau du Premier ministre. Je reprends ce que mon ami l'honorable Lesjongard a dit, M. le président. Donc, on ne peut pas être plus royaliste que le roi. Ce sentiment, il l'a exprimé depuis la présentation du budget et il l'a

réitéré hier lors d'une conférence à l'Université de Maurice. Il est évident, M. le président, que le concept Maurice Ile Durable est en passe – s'il ne l'est pas déjà – un slogan creux. Nous ne pouvons pas traduire en réalité un concept aussi lourd de sens avec des actions isolées entreprises au niveau du CEB par exemple. Ce projet requiert des mesures concertées et durables, et surtout qui ne sont pas à l'encontre même du projet, l'incinération des déchets par exemple.

D'autre part, M. le président, l'utilisation du plastique ne cesse de faire du mal à notre environnement. Que faisons-nous pour décourager son utilisation? Augmenter le prix du plastique? Une visite dans n'importe quel supermarché permettra de déterminer l'influence de cette augmentation sur les produits alimentaires. Les ménagères se sont réveillées hier avec un coup de massue sur la tête: l'augmentation du prix de l'huile est venue ajouter au coût de l'huile sur le marché mondial selon les distributeurs l'augmentation du prix du plastique. Le ministre s'était-il rendu compte de la cascade d'augmentation de prix qui allait s'ensuivre avec cette mesure? Les mauriciens font aujourd'hui les frais de cette augmentation - l'eau, les boissons gazeuses, l'huile, les grains secs - et j'en passe - ont pris l'ascenseur! Dire, M. le président, que le budget devrait articuler autour de l'idée de rattrapage du pouvoir d'achat. Il faut trouver une alternative à l'utilisation du plastique – le papier par exemple ou le plastique biodégradable. Mais, en ce qui concerne le plastique biodégradable, déjà disponible, j'ai appris auprès des experts que leur durée de vie est relativement longue pouvant aller même jusqu'à 40 ou 50 ans. Donc, comme dirait l'anglais, *it defeats the whole purpose*. Il faut encourager l'utilisation du plastique vraiment biodégradable tout en exigeant que le nom du fabricant soit imprimé là-dessus afin de pouvoir exercer un certain contrôle avec des tests réguliers. Ceci permettrait d'assurer que le plastique utilisé soit vraiment biodégradable donc *environment friendly*.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I shall now turn to the issue of Local Government. This is a sector in which I expected that the Minister of Finance would have come up with concrete measures and allocated significant budget to respond to the needs of the urban and rural population, but unfortunately I simply find that, I quote paragraph 253 –

253. Government is investing in markets and market fairs for more space, comfort and security.

As such six regions have been identified. On what basis we don't know, but it is common knowledge that there is also need for the construction and modernisation of infrastructure in

many other local authorities also. It is, therefore, hoped that the hon. Minister will have on board other cases also.

Mr Speaker, Sir, some months before the last general election, Government gave the impression that due care is being given to the issue of the Local Government. The newly appointed Minister vouched that a new Bill will soon be introduced in the House. Several interviews were given here and there, until the Budget day, when we had to infer that Local Authorities elections will be held next year as provision for same is made in the 2011 Budget. As the Leader of the Opposition said, this is a sign of utter disrespect towards both the Opposition and the stakeholders of Local Government.

Having said so, Mr Speaker, Sir, the fact of postponing the Local Authorities elections constitutes merely an act of undermining democracy. I do not want to go down memory lane, but *c'est un viol de la democratie*. We postponed Local Authorities election in the past, but the facts and circumstances were totally different.

Mr Speaker, Sir, prior to 2005, when we were in Government, we initiated a long overdue reform process of the local government with namely the adoption of the Local Government Bill 2003, which later became an Act. However, for reasons known to everyone, one of which I term as '*fanatisme politique*', the Act was simply set aside with the advent of a new Government. We were given to understand that a major and most appropriate reform process would be brought to this vital limb of a democratic State. Meanwhile, Mr Speaker, Sir, nearly six long years have elapsed and nothing concrete has cropped up as far as the reform process is concerned.

Now, the law will be amended, so that elections may be held for Chairmen of Village Councils and District Councils, and for the Lord Mayors. The *manzer, bwar va continuer de plus belle* for the councillors in whom the people have put their trust for the sound management of their towns and villages. It is just too bad for those who are expecting the least sign of a new dawn from the Government.

Mr Speaker, Sir, can you imagine the mess going on in the Municipalities? We all know what is happening over there. We all know about the episode of stalls in Quatre Bornes and Port Louis, the allegations of misuse of funds in Curepipe, the mess at Beau Bassin/Rose Hill etc. The grievances of expectations of the people have been left unattended. The Beau Bassin and

Rose Hill market fairs are, to say the least, in a sorry state, despite the fact that renovation of same were pompously announced. The Plaza theatre, which forms part of the cultural heritage of Mauritius, is suffering the same fate. In such an unhealthy situation, the Government has found it appropriate to extend the term of office of these councillors.

Most importantly, Mr Speaker, Sir, I would like to stress on the issue of the proposed reform of local government. At the outset, I must say that I am afraid whether the Government is not taking village councillors, district councillors, municipal councillors and other local government stakeholders for an indeed very long ride.

Mr Speaker, Sir, if Government genuinely intends to bring a reform process to that sector, it goes without saying that financial resources should have been made available to tackle the issue. How can the Minister of Finance reconcile the fact that, on the one hand, Government is shouting from the rooftops that a reform process will soon be initiated in the local government sector and, on the other hand, absolutely no provision has been made in the Budget to cater for same? It is common knowledge that any reform process calls for additional funds. In the present case, funds will be required for the setting up of new Municipal Councils, which implies additional buildings, human resources, facilities, infrastructure, etc.

But, as far as local government is concerned, paragraph 252 simply says that -

“It is also our duty - meaning Government duty - to support local authorities to modernise their infrastructure and expand their services.”

Not a single word on the proposed - not to say supposed - reform, Mr Speaker, Sir. I consider this as a sign of blatant disrespect towards the stakeholders of local authorities. History will bear testimony and recall that never the issue of local government has been treated with such a *légèreté*, as it is presently.

To end, Mr Speaker, Sir, I would say that all of us gathered in this august Assembly has only one goal: to serve our country. We are here to work together, in order to build a truly compassionate, democratic and egalitarian society. This objective will not come about by belief alone. Our action must be targeted towards that goal. Thus, may I conclude by quoting Martin Luther King -

“I have a dream that my little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the colour of their skin, but by the content of their character. We must learn to live together as brothers or perish together as fools.”

May this dream come true. Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir.

(9.25 p.m.)

The Minister of Business, Enterprise, Cooperatives and Consumer Protection (Mr J. Yeung Sik Yuen): Mr Speaker, Sir, I wish to start by congratulating the hon. Prime Minister, Dr. Navinchandra Ramgoolam, for the inspiration and long term vision, and the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development, hon. Pravind Jugnauth, for presenting this Budget to the House.

Mr Speaker, Sir, this Government has initiated a series of laudable actions, and the hon. Prime Minister has created two important Ministries, namely the Ministry of Tertiary Education and the Ministry of Social Integration.

Mr Speaker, Sir, we can see that this Budget is a great team work. *C'est un budget de société, un budget responsable.*

Mr Speaker, Sir, when we listened to hon. Nagalingum, he is pretending that everything in this country is wrong, and I have to say that his criticisms are very unfair. Mr Speaker, Sir, according to them, the country is not well governed. However, we have managed to rank first in two consecutive years, in good governance in Africa, by the Mo Ibrahim Foundation. Again, according to them, the brand Mauritius is not a good one and, again, we have managed to rank first worldwide.

Mr Speaker, Sir, we still remember in 2004, when the hon. Leader of the Opposition, at that time Prime Minister, stated -

- *Notre économie se porte mal;*
- *Bom pé tom lor latet ;*
- *Nous en état d'urgence économique ;*
- *Crise économique sans précédent à Maurice*

Mr Speaker, Sir, our country has managed to go through several crises over the last five years, namely the global financial crisis and the food crisis, and today the euro crisis is a potential threat to us. We can see great countries like Greece, Ireland, England and so on, have gone from a great economy to a sick economy.

When *l'Alliance Sociale* took over in 2005, we have hardly felt these crises, due to the great leadership of our Prime Minister. We have been able to show how we can work as a team. We must all agree that *l'Alliance Sociale* has done extremely well. It is this side of the House who has found the right solutions for each crisis. Good governance and transparency have always been the *devise* of this Government. Economic growth has always been pursued since 2005.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I have to remind them that the elections are over. We are here to work in the Government, while our friends from the other side of the House are here to work in the Opposition for the next five years.

I am recommending them to act as a good patriot, which means: please do come with constructive criticisms. Mr Speaker, Sir, it is also good to note that the population is very happy with this present Budget. We can hear people saying that it is *enn mari budget*.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I take this opportunity to remind the hon. Members that Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam was a man of vision, he was the one who introduced free education in Mauritius. I have to stress out that many of us would not be here today had the education been payable at that time nor our country in this laudable situation today.

Mr Speaker, Sir, Mauritius has the chance to have a great Prime Minister. Under his leadership, *l'Alliance Sociale* introduced free transport for all students and for all senior citizens. It is also this caring Government who has made over 8,000 people becoming owners of ex-CHA houses. Today, the grant under the Roof Slab Scheme has increased from Rs60,000 to Rs65,000.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development has confirmed the abolition of the NRPT and taxes on interest earned. We keep on upgrading the life of the citizens.

Mr Speaker, Sir, it is good to note that the Government has taken necessary measures against *les mauvais vices de la société*. *Pour contrer ce problème le gouvernement taxe*

davantage les jeux du hasard, la cigarette et l'alcoolisme. These bad habits may have a negative impact on our family life. Crimes, drugs and prostitutions are mostly the outcome of the effect of gambling.

Mr Speaker, Sir, it is this Government who will change the destiny of the poor. We have promised and now we are doing what we have promised. Some projects will be implemented in the first year; some will be done in the second year and so on.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the hon. Prime Minister has put the right person in the right place, namely hon. Xavier Luc Duval, the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Social Integration and Economic Empowerment. He has a very big challenge which is to alleviate poverty in Mauritius. We all know that the objectives will be attained by the end of our mandate.

M. le président, ayant vu les résultats du dur labeur de notre ancien ministre du tourisme, je suis convaincu du résultat qu'il donnera dans son nouveau ministère qui est une des plus nobles.

Mr Speaker, Sir, Some 700 houses will be built each year for the very poor ones earning less than Rs5,000 monthly. Several training programmes are available and supports are given for employment at the end of the programme. Pre-primary schools will be opened around the island for needy ones.

M. le président, les subsides pour les élèves prenant part aux examens de la SC et du HSC sont rétablis. Il y aura aussi 38 nouvelles bourses d'Etat, dont 24 seront destinées aux élèves issus de parents pauvres. Ici, on peut applaudir cette initiative.

Mr Speaker, Sir, let me answer my good friend, hon. Obeegadoo, on the matter that he raised on Trou aux Cerfs last week.

(Interruptions)

It is good to know that nothing was done by the Municipal ...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Excuse me, when the hon. Minister is making his speech, it is not important for him to refer to hon. Members in the way he has done.

Mr Yeung Sik Yuen: It is good to know that nothing was done by the Municipal Council of Curepipe, especially at Trou aux Cerfs, when the Council was managed by the MMM during more than 25 years when they were in power in this town. It is this present team as from 2005 that did laudable projects in all the five towns, including Curepipe. I do agree that there is a lack of parking spaces at Trou Aux Cerfs, but I have to point out that people are appreciating the job of this present council. It is this present team who did the resurfacing of Trou aux Cerfs and, today, we have more than two thousand people daily enjoying the Trou aux Cerfs track, which means that had we not resurfaced the Trou aux Cerfs track we would not have all of these health conscious people at Trou aux Cerfs. We are victims of our success. I can reassure the House that parking spaces and new toilets are being considered.

I must also add that the lighting system is working properly and there is no problem of bins at Trou aux Cerfs as stated by the hon. Member. Moreover, recycling bins are also available at Trou aux Cerfs.

M. le président, je dois aussi dire que le Local Government Act 2003 laisse beaucoup à désirer. Il y a beaucoup de lacunes dans cette loi. J'ai été maire d'une ville et je sais de quoi je parle. C'est ce gouvernement responsable de l'Alliance de l'Avenir, sous la férule de mon collègue ministre, l'honorable Hervé Aimée, qu'on va corriger toutes ces lacunes. L'honorable Hervé Aimée est un homme très expérimenté dans l'Administration Régionale. Il a la clé dans sa poche.

I would like to correct my hon. friend that the *manzer, bwar* in the Local Government is not on this side. It is on the other side. We have to compare and you will see there is a big difference on the other side.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I would like to say a few words on what the hon. Leader of the Opposition said on the SMEs. Let me first quote what he said –

“On change le nom de la Banque de Développement et puis on promet une coordination entre la Banque de Développement qui s'appellera maintenant le *Development Finance Agency (DFA)*. On change son nom et puis on préconise *a new coordinated framework that brings together* la Banque de Développement, la SMEDA, le NPCC, le NICE, le *National Women Entrepreneur Council* et

Enterprise Mauritius. Je ne suis pas d'accord du tout. J'aurais aimé un petit éclaircissement.”

He forgot to mention Mauritius Business Growth Scheme (MBGS). He proposed, I quote again –

“La DBM et le SMEDA, *merge these two and come up with a new body that will actively support* les petites et moyennes entreprises. En Afrique du Sud, il y a un *body* pareil, qui s'appelle le khula.”

I would like to reassure the hon. Leader of the Opposition that the proposed Unified Business Enterprise Board is exactly the same thing that exists in South Africa. It is called khula in South Africa and here it will be called Unified Business Enterprise Board. There will be no duplication of mission of each parastatal body, for example, Enterprise Mauritius will concentrate on exportation, SMEDA on mentoring, DFA on access to finance and so on.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the Consumer Protection Unit (CPU), which is the enforcement arm of my Ministry, will introduce a contravention notice and fixed penalty which would act as deterrent against offenders on the spot.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I wish to point out that my Ministry has just approved in Cabinet a new regulation concerning the sale of imported live animals on the occasion of religious ceremony. Today, every animal must be weighted which means no more estimation is allowed. In doing so, we have been able to eliminate organised cartels in the sale of live animals businesses.

Mr Speaker, Sir, in view to bringing transparency in the evolution of prices of commodities and protecting consumers and stimulating competition, a Price Observatory is in the pipeline. This project has already obtained Government approval. The purpose of a Price Observatory is to update the knowledge of the population on the variables that go in the prices of goods, typically of differences between prices of basic products from source to destiny, and publicising the price structure as much as possible.

The purpose of a Price Observatory is to update the knowledge of the population on the variables that go in the prices of goods typically of differences between prices of basic products from source to destiny and publicising the price structure as much as possible. Discussions and meetings have been held with the State Law Office on the modalities to set up the mechanism.

Mr Speaker Sir, in order to enlarge the scope of consumer protection, the concept of a citizen's charter is being reviewed. The collaboration of the banking and insurance sectors has been sought, at first instance, to prepare the Citizen's Charter and I have chaired two meetings in this context. Mauritius Bankers Association Ltd and the Insurers Association of Mauritius have agreed to work in collaboration with all the stakeholders to come with a Citizen's Charter.

M. le président, le ministère de l'industrie et du commerce de mon ami, le ministre, l'honorable Soodhun, travaille déjà pour un nouveau standard qui sera appliqué sur l'importation du riz basmati. Restez assuré, M. le président, que le département pour la protection des consommateurs de mon ministère veillera au grain pour que ces standards soient respectés et ce pour le bien-être des consommateurs qui doivent toujours avoir *value for money*.

M. le président, je dois, à ce stade de mon discours, féliciter le vice-Premier ministre et ministre des finances qui a compris les difficultés que font face les planteurs qui se regroupent en coopératives en enlevant la taxe de 15% qui frappait les coopérateurs de la canne. Nous savons tous les difficultés que font face ces opérateurs avec la fin du marché préférentiel. Nous pensons aussi aider les sociétés existantes à se professionnaliser afin de mieux combattre dans ce monde des affaires. J'accueille aussi les exemptions de la taxe douanière sur les véhicules 4x4.

Pour conclure, M. le président, je dois reconnaître, comme l'ensemble de la population que le vice-Premier ministre et ministre des finances nous a proposé un budget qui touche d'une façon favorable toutes les couches de la population mauricienne et tous les secteurs économiques de notre pays. On avance à grand pas vers une île Maurice moderne où il fera encore mieux vivre.

Merci pour votre attention.

(9.42 p.m.)

Mr A. H. Hossen (Third Member for Port Louis South and Port Louis Central): M. le président, ce présent budget constitue le tout premier budget de l'équipe de l'Alliance de l'Avenir suite à son éclatante victoire aux élections de mai dernier. La population, dans sa grande majorité, a apporté une appréciation positive du bilan du gouvernement sortant pour la période

2005-2010 et dans sa grande majorité, la population a placé sa confiance dans l'équipe du Premier ministre pour les cinq années à venir.

Ce présent budget, M. le président, est inspiré dans les grandes lignes, du programme gouvernemental qui a été présenté pour l'approbation de l'électorat aux dernières élections. Ce premier budget est exact au rendez-vous. Les mesures préconisées dans le programme gouvernemental ont été dans une grande partie retrouvées dans ce présent budget du ministre des finances. La voix du peuple c'est la voix de Dieu, ce budget est donc le budget du peuple, que l'opposition soit contente ou pas. Mes collègues de la majorité, à l'occasion de leurs interventions, ont manifesté une sincérité dans leurs propos en évoquant une situation économique mondiale des plus difficiles. Cette situation économique a connu plusieurs crises depuis les cinq ou six dernières années – crises qu'on pouvait difficilement prévoir. Il y a eu une crise bancaire qui a évolué en crise économique, la flambée du prix du pétrole sur le marché mondial, la crise dans le secteur du textile et le prix du sucre qui a chuté sur le plan international. Le gouvernement sortant de L'Alliance Sociale pouvait difficilement imaginer ou prévoir de telles crises et pourtant pour la période 2005-2010, grâce à la sagesse et la détermination de notre Premier ministre, l'équipe sortante de 2005-2010 a été au rendez-vous. On sera de nouveau au rendez-vous avec ce présent budget lorsqu'on aura à soumettre nos bilans dans cinq ans.

(Interruptions)

Que ce soit *on record* dans le *Hansard* jusqu'à maintenant, il faut déplorer la malhonnêteté intellectuelle de cette Opposition. Personne n'a jusqu'à maintenant mentionné la moindre phrase sur la crise économique internationale et ils prétendent être des démocrates, M. le président! C'est faire preuve d'une malhonnêteté intellectuelle que de garder le silence sur une situation internationale des plus défavorables! C'est un acte antipatriotique de la part de l'Opposition. Ils n'ont pas été au rendez-vous à l'occasion du débat sur le discours-programme et ils sont en train, devant l'histoire pour la postérité, de rater leur rendez-vous lorsqu'on est au début d'un mandat. En véritable démocrate, l'Opposition aurait dû admettre, concéder sa défaite. L'Opposition, en véritable démocrate et patriote, aurait dû se solidariser avec l'équipe gouvernementale pour que le pays puisse faire face, dans des meilleures conditions, à une crise internationale menaçante de plus en plus.

M. le vice-Premier ministre et ministre des finances l'a si bien souligné dans son discours du budget. Notre marché principal, la zone euro est en crise. M. le ministre des affaires étrangères, tel un TGV hier, a énoncé chaque étape de cette crise internationale. Nous dépendons pour nos exportations textiles, nous dépendons de nos arrivées touristiques, nous dépendons au niveau de nos services financiers de la zone euro et cette zone euro est à genoux. Même la Grande Bretagne, M. le président, le parti conservateur, pourtant connu pour sa politique libérale, a adopté des mesures drastiques – l'introduction et l'augmentation des taxes de plus de 50% et une réduction drastique au niveau de l'emploi dans le secteur public. Ce sont des faits, M. le président et l'Opposition a jugé utile de garder le silence sur des éléments autant importants et menaçants pour l'avenir. Je ne parle pas de l'avenir de cette équipe gouvernementale, je parle de l'avenir des enfants et de la jeunesse de ce pays, M. le président. Ce budget fait la part belle à la jeunesse Mauricienne puisque la jeunesse c'est le temps de l'idéalisme et de la générosité, M. le président. C'est notre seule ressource humaine, notre jeunesse et on vient investir massivement pour que cette jeunesse puisse connaître, M. le président, des lendemains meilleurs. On veut faire de notre pays un modèle de *knowledge hub*. Puisque, comme je l'ai mentionné, cette jeunesse est le temps de la générosité, je déplore les propos qui viennent d'être tenus dans cette Chambre à l'égard de notre intention noble de ce gouvernement que d'accueillir dans ce *knowledge hub* les pays avoisinants. Ils prétendent être des défenseurs de la régionalisation, mais les masques sont tombés puisqu'ils ne sont pas contents lorsqu'on ouvre nos bras à la régionalisation et à l'accueil des étudiants des pays avoisinants pour que notre connaissance puisse être partagée.

On vient de citer Martin Luther King mais, quelle ironie, quelle hypocrisie, M. le président ! Je me permets, au pied levé, de citer Confucius –

'There is nothing more pleasant in life, than to pass to others, what one has learnt for oneself.'

Il est temps de prendre des leçons. La malhonnêteté intellectuelle a ses limites, M. le président mais je constate avec regret pourtant j'ai été proche de cette Opposition pendant de longues années. J'ai lutté nuit et jour pendant de longues années à faire preuve de bonne volonté, à manifester une sincérité...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Can I be allowed to listen to the hon. Member in peace? Carry on!

Mr Hossen: ... à faire de ce pays un modèle. Chacun parmi nous au niveau de cette Chambre, effectivement, est appelé à apporter sa contribution à cette édifice - à l'édifice de l'unité nationale et pourtant dans cette même Chambre, on a voulu induire cette Chambre en erreur pas en une occasion au niveau des questions parlementaires et là, tout récemment hier, au niveau du discours du budget. On a prétendu, M. le président, qu'il y a discrimination au niveau des services municipaux, surtout en ce qui concerne la circonscription numéro une de Port Louis.

Je voudrais, avec votre permission, M. le président, citer, selon la transcription officielle, ce qui a été mentionné dans cette Chambre. Ce sont des propos de l'honorable Arianne Navarre-Marie, M. le président. Je cite –

‘Quelques mots sur ma circonscription, M. le président, pour terminer.

M. le président, lors de mon discours sur le discours programme, j'avais mis en garde le gouvernement de vouloir punir, victimiser ou pénaliser des habitants de ma circonscription’.

Ce sont des termes très, très forts et elle continue –

‘Nous recevons des cas, mes deux colistiers et moi, presque tous les jours, des associations sociales pénalisées par la municipalité de Port Louis ou alors le *District Council* de Rivière Noire. On leur reproche leur proximité avec l'Opposition. J'ai eu l'occasion d'en parler au ministre concerné et j'ai posé une question parlementaire. Le ministre m'avait assuré que tel ne sera pas le cas. Il m'avait affirmé que les demandes de facilité seront considérées *on a first come, first serve basis* mais dans la pratique on sait comment cela se passe. Les habitants de notre circonscription continuent d'être pénalisés, surtout quand on sait que certaines municipalités prennent leurs directives des élus de la majorité. Ce n'est pas l'honorable Ms Deerpalsing qui me dira le contraire’.

C'est venir induire d'une part la Chambre en erreur, mais aussi, M. le président, ...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: *Excusez-moi!* You cannot use the word ‘*induire en erreur*’. The hon. Member has to make his point.

Mr Hossen: J'ai en main deux documents officiels de la municipalité de Port Louis que je vais *table* sur la Table de l'Assemblée Nationale. Le premier document concerne toutes les associations, tous les clubs sportifs, les clubs des enfants, les clubs de jeunesse, les clubs de troisième âge, les associations féminines, les organisations socioculturelles et religieuses, et les autres Forces Vives de la circonscription numéro une. Premier document est composé de dix pages et contenant une liste, M. le président, où je mentionne 106 associations et clubs qui sont enregistrés auprès de la municipalité et qui bénéficient à intervalle régulier, comme tous les autres clubs de la ville, des services municipaux. Premier document que je dépose sur la table de l'Assemblée.

Le deuxième document, M. le président, c'est des *estimates* du budget municipal pour l'année 2011 à partir de janvier et qui fait mention d'un tableau comparatif des *grants* qui sont destinés aux différentes associations, clubs et organisations à travers la ville de Port Louis - une liste exhaustive, officielle. Des documents officiels du budget municipal de Port Louis et lorsqu'on parcourt ce document, mention est faite de 33 associations de la circonscription numéro une qui, non seulement pour l'année à venir mais pour les années écoulées, ont bénéficié des *annual grants* de la municipalité de Port Louis et totalisant R 700,000 pour l'année à venir. C'est pour cela que je maintiens, M. le président, que les informations qui ont été communiqués, n'ont pas été fait en toute bonne foi. M. le président, on sait quelles sont les démarches qui sont initiées par cette majorité gouvernementale depuis de longues années, M. le président. L'exemple vient en haut.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker : Order !

Mr Hossen: Notre cher Premier ministre, M. le président, se fait un devoir, à chaque occasion qui se présente, de cultiver la notion de l'unité nationale. A chaque fête, à chaque occasion, il se fait un devoir que de transmettre ce message d'unité vers toute la population et c'est l'exemple que nous autres, nous adaptons, non seulement chez nous, le *Deputy Prime Minister*, et moi-même, dans la circonscription numéro deux, mais cela à travers le pays. Dans toutes les circonscriptions c'est pratiquement un devoir sacré. On s'inspire de notre cher Premier ministre pour transmettre le message de l'unité nationale. C'est fondé sur cette détermination, cette volonté à toute épreuve que le Premier ministre s'est forgé une réputation de rassembleur.

Que cela plaise à cette Opposition; qu'il y ait malhonnête intellectuelle ou pas, cette majorité gouvernementale va poursuivre dans cette voie de l'unité nationale, M. le président!

Le budget fait la part belle aux petites et moyennes entreprises, M. le président. Le budget dans sa philosophie reconnaît que ce secteur de petites et moyennes entreprises est un secteur prometteur, est un secteur d'espoir pour des nombreuses familles aux quatre coins de Maurice, à Rodrigues et dans les îles. C'est pour cela que le vice Premier ministre et le ministre des finances dans sa sagesse procède à une révision fondamentale du rôle que la DBM Ltd est appelée à assumer pour venir en aide auprès du secteur de petites et moyennes entreprises. On le sait, les statistiques le prouvent. Le plus gros handicap qu'a à faire face ce secteur de petites et moyennes entreprises, c'est l'handicap de trouver un financement adéquat.

Notre secteur bancaire a évolué, M. le président, mais, dans toute évolution, dans tout progrès, il y a, ce que l'anglais appelle, le *set back*. Nous avons à Maurice *un world class banking system*. La priorité de notre secteur bancaire privé surtout et commercial n'est pas de venir en aide et de donner au secteur de petites et moyennes entreprises ce tremplin indispensable. La DBM a pu, durant des longues années, essayer de faire le maximum, mais on reconnaît - c'est cela la sagesse de notre Premier ministre et du ministre des finances - qu'il faudrait faire un effort additionnel d'où la révision de la vocation même de la DBM. La DBM sera appelée à financer des secteurs spécifiques concernant les petites et moyennes entreprises, mais surtout à se tenir comme garant auprès des banques commerciales pour que ce handicap de financement n'existe plus, pour que les banques commerciales puissent enfin venir en aide en termes de financement auprès de ce secteur de petites et moyennes entreprises.

Mais il faut aussi reconnaître que le *challenge* réside entre les mains des petites et moyennes entreprises. Elles seront appelées à rehausser leur niveau, à veiller à ce que les études de faisabilité, qui sont présentées aux banques commerciales, soient faites d'une façon qui est conforme aux règles établies de bonne comptabilité et de bonne gouvernance. Je pense aussi que c'est un effort, incessant, inlassable qu'il faudra manifester et qui se manifeste déjà à travers ce premier budget pour que finalement le secteur des petites et moyennes entreprises puissent voir la lumière au bout du tunnel M. le président.

Cependant il faudrait reconnaître qu'au fil des années, la DBM Ltd. a été ce qu'on appelle *that indispensable, executive arm of development* du gouvernement. Il ne faudrait pas que le

gouvernement puisse se priver de cet outil de développement puisque nous avons des secteurs prioritaires. On a mentionné la Local Government, effectivement je vais citer avec votre permission deux exemples, M. le président. Nous avons dans le centre ville de Port Louis le problème de congestion, un problème de manque d'espace pour se garer un manque de parking et cependant il y a de nombreux terrains qui sont loués sans les infrastructures appropriées qui sont destinées au parking des différents usagers qui utilisent notre centre ville. La possibilité d'avoir un *special loan* à des taux très préférentiels pour la construction des *parking towers* M. le président est un *must*. C'est une des priorités afin de pouvoir décongestionner le centre ville de Port Louis et je pense que là, la DBM aurait pu venir en aide au gouvernement à initier un tel *scheme*. Il faudrait veiller à ce qu'il y ait une institution qui soit là présente pour répondre à cet appel. On a mentionné tout à l'heure le secteur de PPPs au niveau du centre-ville de Port Louis. Vous m'excusez, M. le président, je cite toujours Port Louis en exemple puisque le Deputy Prime Minister et moi-même, étant des élus de Port Louis nous sommes très concernés par l'accès dans le centre ville de la capitale.

Donc on aurait souhaité aussi que des projets PPPs soient initiés avec un partenariat secteur privé/municipalité de Port Louis pour le réaménagement des différents quartiers de Port Louis et là aussi la DBM est appelée à assumer son rôle de *development arm of Government*. M. le président, il y a eu au niveau de l'Opposition dans leur intervention en maintes occasions référence a été faite que ce budget répond à l'appel de ceux qui se retrouvent en haut de l'échelle et qu'au bas de l'échelle, rien n'a été envisagé, rien n'a été préconisé. Un hon. membre de l'Opposition a même fait un appel auprès du gouvernement pour que, dans sa circonscription, dans les régions de Tranquebar et Vallée Pitot, les squatters, qui sont appelés à être délocalisés dans le cadre du projet Ring Road, ne le soient pas. Il a fait appel auprès du gouvernement pour que cette délocalisation ne se fasse pas et qu'on trouve un alternatif à ce projet de Ring Road. Malheureusement quelle démagogie, quelle malhonnêteté encore une fois,,,

(*Interruptions*)

Mr Speaker: The hon. Member is not allowed to use the word '*malhonnêteté*'.

Mr Hossen: Quelle démagogie, M. le président, puisque celui qui est assis à vos cotés a été en 2003 l'initiateur de cette démarche en tant que Minister of Housing...

(*Interruptions*)

Mr Ganoo: I was not the Minister of Housing in 2003.

(Laughter)

Mr Speaker: Yes carry on!

Mr Hossen: M. le président c'était bien le ministre Ganoo en 2003 et je cite –

'The fifty five squatters living in and around the ring road project propose alignment would not be provided with utility services and any demolition of their houses would be addressed when the ring road project is implemented'

Et il ne s'arrête pas là -

'Similarly the relocation of the ten squatters in the plots that impede access in Moon street and Sauzier street...'

(Interruptions)

Mr Ganoo: On a point of order!

Mr Hossen: "...may be undertaken..."

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order!

Mr Ganoo: On a point of order!

Mr Speaker: You are rising on a point of order of what? On a point of order! Please let me listen to the point of order!

Mr Ganoo: The hon. Member has been quoting my name and is citing a document. Is it a speech that I made in the House? Which document is that? Can he tell us and table ...

Mr Speaker: I am sorry hon. Ganoo. This is not a point of order, if, at the end of the speech of the hon. Member, you feel that you have been cited for unnecessarily, you have the right on a point of personal explanation to rise and make your point, but, for the time being, I will let him continue. If you feel that you have been wrongly quoted or whatever it is then you will have the right to make a point on a matter of personal explanation. This is the rule you have to accept it and I will request the hon. Member - now that there is a point which has been raised, the hon. Member must cite the source of his information.

Mr Ganoo: This is my point of order!

Mr Speaker: No, it can't be a point of order.

Mr Ganoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, on a point of order again. Is it not the rule of the House as per Erskine May that when a Member is quoting from a document, he must state the origin and even table this document?

Mr Speaker: No, I am sorry you are misconceiving what is said in Erskine May. It is only when a Minister is quoting that he has to lay on the Table the document and cite the document. When a Member is quoting there is no need to lay on the Table, but, being given that some confusion had been raised, I will request the hon. Member to cite the document where he is quoting.

Mr Hossen: Mr Speaker, Sir, I will table the document.

(Interruptions)

M. le président..

Mr Speaker: Hon. Khamajeet, come and take my place!

(Laughter)

Hon. Hossen could you please cite the source from where you are quoting?

Mr Hossen: M. le président ce que j'ai mentionné, *my quote* est à partir d'un document, d'un mémorandum by the Minister of Public Utilities.

Mr Speaker: Now listen. The fact that you have given way....

(Interruptions)

Order I said! Order I said! If somebody is getting his boot too big for his feet, he will get it from me. Is it a document from the Ministry of Public Utilities or is it a statement made by the Minister?

Mr Hossen: A document

Mr Speaker: A document. Okay that is different.

Mr Hossen: Je termine my quote –

‘Similarly the relocation of the ten squatters in the plots that impede...

Mr Ganoo: On a point of order!

(Interruptions)

Mr Hossen: “Similarly the relocation of the ten squatters in the plots that impede access...

(Interruptions)

Mr Ganoo: On a point of order Mr Speaker, Sir. How can the hon. Member quote me when he cannot say when did I say whatever he is quoting...

Mr Speaker: He said that it is a document from the Ministry of Public Utilities...

Mr Ganoo: Not from me!

Mr Speaker: Well not from you. I think he has corrected, he has said that it is a document from the ...

(Interruptions)

Hon. Ameer Meea, please could you keep quiet!

(Interruptions)

You don't do like this with me! I am asking you to keep quiet! Do you understand? I hope that you will keep quiet until the end of the sitting! You have to learn! This is a document from the Ministry of Public Utilities when he was Minister of Public Utilities!

Mr Hossen: Yes. Similarly, the relocation of the ten squatters in the plots that impede access in Moon Street and Sauzier Street may be undertaken together with any relocation for the Ring Road project. These squatters also will not be regularised.

(Interruptions)

C'est la vérité, M. le président!

(Interruptions)

Encore une fois, les masques sont tombés. Il faudrait, M. le président, que fondamentalement - c'est un principe élémentaire - on puisse assumer ses responsabilités. Que l'on soit de ce côté de

la Chambre ou de l'autre côté de la Chambre, il faudrait qu'on assume pleinement ses responsabilités, M. le président.

(Interruptions)

L'honorable Uteem, M. le président, continue et je cite –

“I know of a man in my Constituency who has been on the waiting list of NHDC for more than 15 years.”

15 ans de cela, qui était au gouvernement? Qui était le ministre du logement? Ce n'était pas un ministre MMM ? Qu'est-ce qu'ils ont fait au moment qu'il fallait venir en aide à cette population en détresse?

(Interruptions)

L'autre jour, M. le président, lorsque l'honorable Uteem était intervenu dans le cadre du budget, il a démarré son intervention en faisant référence que dans cette même Chambre, 35 ans de cela, son papa avait prononcé son *maiden* speech. M. le président, dans la vie, une seule occasion nous est donnée, M. le président, de faire une première impression. On peut faire une deuxième impression, une troisième impression, mais cette première impression constitue une unique occasion et, lamentablement, M. le président, l'honorable Uteem, a raté sa première impression et je le cite –

“These people...”

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Hon. Ms Deerpalsing, what is happening to you?

(Interruptions)

You are helping me in putting order in the House! Thank you very much! Carry on!

(Interruptions)

Mr Hossen: This is what hon. Uteem, on the occasion of his maiden speech, had to say, Mr Speaker, Sir, I quote –

“These people could not care less about the religious preference of the candidates in their constituency or if they wear a ‘tika’ or lit a ‘chirag’.”

Quelle honte! What a shame!

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order! Order!

Mr Hossen: M. le président, de tels propos d'un membre du *front bench* de l'Opposition ont été prononcés avec autant de dédain dans un *mood* de raillerie et de moquerie, M. le président!

(Interruptions)

Mr Uteem: Mr Speaker, Sir, on a point of order!

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: There is a point of order. Let me take the point of order!

Mr Uteem: Mr Speaker, Sir, according to Standing Orders, the hon. Member cannot impute motives on what a hon. Member of this House has said. He cannot impute improper motives. That is what is being...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: No, I don't know. I was not here when hon. Uteem spoke. I was not here. I hope that the hon. Member, who is speaking now, is quoting from the speech made in the House.

(Interruptions)

Yes, and if he is quoting from what the hon. Member said, he has the right to do it but then, he should not make provocative remarks.

Mr Hossen: M. le président, je tiens à préciser que le document que j'ai en main *is the official transcription of the House*.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order! Order!

Mr Hossen: Je condamne, M. le président, personnellement, sévèrement. Je trouve que de tels propos sont révoltants et je dois assumer ma responsabilité devant cette Chambre pour

justifier pourquoi je qualifie de tels propos de révoltant puisque, M. le président, pendant toute la campagne électorale...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order!

Mr Hossen: ...on a initié une campagne bassement communale et malsaine à l'égard de notre *Deputy Prime Minister*.

(Interruptions)

M. le président, on a fait circuler pendant toute la durée de la campagne, aux quatre coins de la circonscription numéro deux, une photo manipulée et truquée montrant le Deputy Prime Minister, le Dr. Rashid Beebeejaun, avec un 'tika' au front.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order! Order! Hon. Hawoldar! Order! I will request the hon. Member not to pursue further on this issue because when the hon. Deputy Prime Minister spoke, he made this point. The hon. Member has mentioned it, I allowed him, now he should not dwell further on that point.

Mr Hossen: M. le président, je voudrais cependant, vis-à-vis de l'électorat de la circonscription numéro deux en particulier, mais vis-à-vis de l'ensemble de l'électorat de la nation mauricienne, faire part auprès de notre peuple, que moi autant en tant que musulman, que mauricien, je reconnais le haut symbolisme associé au 'tika' qui représente l'honneur.

(Interruptions)

Je reconnais le symbolisme associé au 'chirag' qui représente la lumière. On fête sur la plan national, le Deepavali, M. le président.

(Interruptions)

Je le redis, et le Deputy Prime Minister s'associe à moi en tant que musulman, autant que mauricien et musulman, on manifeste le respect vis-à-vis de toutes les fois de notre circonscription sur l'ensemble de Maurice.

Pour le mot de la fin, M. le président, c'est regrettable que ces propos vont être dans le Hansard for his whole lifetime and he has missed his first impression. It is a pity. Je voudrais faire appel auprès de mon jeune collègue de cette Assemblée, malgré le fait qu'il se trouve en face au niveau de l'Opposition, je voudrais partager avec lui quelques mots de sagesse venant non des moindres - je vais citer le grand Mahatma Gandhi, who said –

“I do not want my house to be walled on all sides and my windows to be stuffed. I want all cultures to blow freely in my land but I refuse to be blown off my feet by any of them”.

Je vous remercie, M. le président.

Ms Anquetil: Sir, I move that the debate be now adjourned.

Mr Seeruttun rose and seconded.

Question put and agreed to.

Debate adjourned accordingly.

ADJOURNMENT

The Deputy Prime Minister: Sir, I beg to move that this Assembly do now adjourn to Wednesday 01 December at 11.30 a.m.

The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Social Integration and Economic Empowerment (Mr X. L. Duval) rose and seconded.

Mr Speaker: The House stands adjourned.

At 10.19 p.m. the Assembly was, on its rising, adjourned to Wednesday 01 December 2010 at 11.30 a.m.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS**POLICE BRUTALITY – 2006 TO 2010**

(No. 1B/693) Mr V. Baloomoody (Third Member for GRNW and Port Louis West) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in regard to police brutality, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to the -

- (a) number of cases that have been inquired into, over the last five years, and
- (b) actions that have been taken to reinforce public confidence in the police force.

Reply: I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that between 2006 and 25 November 2010, a total number of 498 cases of alleged police brutality were inquired into by the Complaints Investigation Bureau.

I would like to stress that we expect the highest level of professional conduct from our Police Officers. We do not and will not tolerate any form of abuse committed by officers and actions, as appropriate, are taken and will be taken against those who breach the police rules and regulations.

I would like to inform the House that every effort is being made to discourage abuse of authority by Police officers. In this regard, the following measures have been taken by the Commissioner of Police -

- (i) as part of the implementation of the National Policing Strategic Framework, emphasis is placed on community policing with the objective of creating a healthy and safe community environment for all who live and work within a given area. As such, there is greater

interaction and understanding between the Police and the local communities;

- (ii) refresher courses on human rights and customer care are being provided to police officers on a regular basis;
- (iii) there is a module on customer care and human rights in the training course for newly-recruited police officers;
- (iv) the Police Force is equipped with a video recording system for recording statements of suspects involved in high profile cases. Moreover, with the coming into force of the DNA Act, more emphasis is laid on scientific evidence instead of confession. This provides transparency and also eliminates allegations that confessions have been obtained inappropriately, and
- (v) the Police Press Office conducts regular briefings for the media in a spirit of transparency and accountability.

With a view to improving public confidence in the Police in the way in which complaints against police officers are investigated and dealt with, action is being taken to set up a Police Complaints Division within the National Human Rights Commission with statutory powers to investigate complaints in respect of offences and misconduct allegedly committed by the members of the Police Force.

In fact, the Police Complaints Bill which will be introduced along with two other pieces of legislation, namely the Protection of Human Rights (Amendment) Bill and the National Preventive Mechanism Bill which are inter-related, will result in the creation of three divisions within the National Human Rights Commission, that is, the Human Rights Division, the Police Complaints Division and the National Preventive Division to give effect to the Optional Protocol to the

Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel Inhuman or Degrading Treatment of Punishment.

We are currently finalising these pieces of legislation and they would be introduced into the National Assembly at an early opportunity.

POLICE MEDICAL OFFICERS – VICTIMS & SUSPECTS – EXAMINATION

(1B/694) Mrs A. Navarre-Marie (First Member for GRNW and Port Louis West) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in regard to the examination of the victims and of suspects in criminal cases by the Police Medical Officers, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to if same are carried after working hours and if so, the reasons therefor.

Reply: I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that Police Medical Officers provide medical treatment to members of the Police Force and their families and also perform medico-legal and post-mortem examinations.

Police Medical Officers work on weekdays from 09.00 hours to 16.00 hours and on Saturdays from 09.00 hours to noon. However, Police Medical Officers remain on call on a roster basis and are available 24 hours for the medico-legal examination of suspects as well as victims of criminal cases reported to the Police. These examinations are carried out at the Police Medical Unit at Victoria Hospital

and at the Medical Inspection Room at Line Barracks. In cases involving victims of sexual assault, the examination is carried out by Police Medical Officer at the hospital where the victims are admitted. Post-mortem examinations are performed at Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam National Hospital, Victoria Hospital and Dr. Jeetoo Hospital.

I have on several occasions informed the House that Police is shifting from a confession-led to an evidence-led investigation. In this context, Police has to ensure that first-hand evidence of scientific value is collected at the earliest possible to prevent contamination or loss. It is important that the medico-legal examinations be carried out as soon as practicable after an offence is committed so as to link the suspect with the victim or the place of offence. Thus, after the normal hours of duty, on Sundays and on public holidays, two Police Medical Officers in turn, remain on call to attend to any criminal case reported outside normal working hours and which requires urgent medico-legal examination.

**VACOAS - *FEDERATION DES ASSOCIATIONS MISSIONNAIRES*
EVANGÉLIQUES - INCIDENT**

(No. 1B/695) Mr E. Guimbeau (First Member for Curepipe and Midlands) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in regard to the incident which occurred in Vacoas, in October 2010, whereby fire was set to a marquise belonging to *l'Église Chrétienne*, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of

Police, information as to if an inquiry has been carried out thereinto and if so, the outcome thereof.

Reply: I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that on 15 October 2010 at 0350 hours, one Mr G.P, representative of *Federation des Associations Missionnaires Evangéliques*, reported to the Vacoas Police Station a case of fire in a tent erected for the purpose of holding social, musical and spiritual gathering at the corner of John Kennedy and Vacoas Roads, Diolle, Vacoas.

Police immediately initiated an enquiry into the incident and during the course of the police enquiry, three suspects were questioned. They all denied their involvement in the case.

Police enquiry is proceeding.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT SERVICE COMMISSION - CHAIRPERSON

(No. 1B/696) Mr C. Fakeemeeah (Third Member for Port Louis Maritime and Port Louis East) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in regard to the Local Government Service Commission, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commission, information as to the respective terms and conditions of appointment of the Chairperson and of the Members thereof, indicating, in each case the date of appointment.

Reply: I am tabling a statement giving the information requested by the hon. Member.

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY – MEMBERS – RETIRING ALLOWANCE

(No. 1B/744) Mr C. Fakeemeeah (Third Member for Port Louis Maritime and Port Louis East) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to the retiring allowances payable to Members of Parliament under the National Assembly (Retiring Allowances) Act, he will give a list of the beneficiaries thereof, indicating, in each case the monthly amount payable.

Reply: (The Prime Minister) I am informed by the Accountant-General that there are at present 106 former Members of the National Assembly who are drawing a retiring allowance as prescribed in the National Assembly (Retiring Allowances) Act.

PUBLIC PROCUREMENT ACT - AMENDMENTS

(No. 1B/731) Mr A. Ganoo (First Member for Savanne and Black River) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to the Public Procurement Act, he will state if Government proposes to introduce amendments thereto, and if so, indicate if the –

- (a) provisions pertaining to the Right of Review by unsatisfied bidders before the Independent Review Panel (IRP) will be reviewed to render the recommendations of the IRP binding, and
- (b) quantum of the deposit before the application for review is made will be amended.

Reply: As announced in the Budget Speech, we are reviewing our public procurement system with a view to modernising and aligning it to the requirements of international funding

agencies, including the World Bank, so that our system may be used for projects funded by donors. By using our country system, it is expected that project implementation time will be significantly reduced.

In this context, a Review Committee has been set up by Government since August last to propose changes that need to be brought to the legislation taking into account *inter alia* -

- the observations made by the COMESA and the World Bank in their reports on our public procurement system, and
- the weaknesses and shortcomings noted in the course of the implementation of the Act.

As the Review Committee is still at work, and the final recommendations of the World Bank are still awaited, it is premature at this stage to state which specific changes will be brought to the Act.

INSTITUTE FOR JUDICIAL AND LEGAL STUDIES - SET UP

(No 1B/732) Ms K. R. Deerpalsing (Third Member for Belle Rose and Quatre Bornes) asked the Attorney General whether, in regard to the setting up of an Institute for Judicial and Legal Studies, he will state where matters stand.

(Withdrawn)

JUDGES RULES

(No. 1B/733) Ms K. R. Deerpalsing (Third Member for Belle Rose and Quatre Bornes) asked the Attorney General whether, in regard to the Judges Rules, he will state if Government proposes to bring changes thereto, and if so -

- (a) when, and
- (b) give details thereof.

(Withdrawn)

TERTIARY STUDIES - SCHOLARSHIP SCHEME

(No. 1B/734) Mr S. Obeegadoo (Third Member for Curepipe and Midlands) asked the Minister of Tertiary Education, Science, Research and Technology whether, in regard to the Scholarship Scheme for tertiary studies, as announced in the Budget Speech 2011, he will state –

- (a) if the scholarships for undergraduate studies locally will apply to any course in any institution;
- (b) the modalities for a second scholarship for postgraduate studies;
- (c) the criteria for the award of 24 proposed scholarships to students from families with modest income;
- (d) if individual beneficiaries under any one scheme will be provided with the same financial allotment, and
- (e) the mode of implementation of the new Scheme.

Reply The Minister of Education and Human Resources (Dr. V. Bunwaree): With regard to the State of Mauritius Scholarship whereby laureates will have the possibility to choose from different options available, that is, the current scheme or the new scheme, it is necessary to point out that the details, modalities and implementation of the new Scholarship Scheme announced in the Budget Speech are being worked out. As soon as the matter will be finalised, appropriate amendments will have to be brought to the Education Act and Education Regulations in consultation with State Law Office.

ESA/EU - ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT

(No. 1B/735) Mrs A. Navarre-Marie (First Member for GRNW and Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade whether, in regard to the Economic Partnership Agreement between the East and Southern African States (ESA) and the European Union, he will state the reasons why the conclusion thereof is being hampered.

Reply: As the House is aware, the deadline fixed to conclude the EPA Negotiations in December 2007 could not be met. It was therefore agreed to conclude an Interim Economic

Partnership Agreement (IEPA) to ensure that there is no disruption to trade on the EU market in view of the expiry of the WTO Waiver in respect of the trade provisions of the Cotonou Agreement. The IEPA was initialled by 5 ESA countries, namely Comoros, Mauritius, Madagascar, Seychelles, Zimbabwe in December 2007 and later by Zambia. It was signed in Mauritius on 29 August 2009 by Mauritius, Madagascar, Seychelles and Zimbabwe. Zambia and Comoros indicated at the signing ceremony that they would sign at a later stage. However, so far they have not signed the IEPA.

It is important to emphasise at the outset that the IEPA is beneficial to Mauritius on several counts compared to the previous Lomé Conventions and the trade provisions of the Cotonou Agreement, for the following reasons, amongst others -

- (i) the scope of preferential access on the EU market has been expanded to cover all products. Under the Lomé Conventions and the Cotonou trade provisions many agricultural and agro-processed products were excluded from preferential access;
- (ii) the Rules of Origin for garments, canned tuna and several agricultural products, including wheat flour have been significantly relaxed;
- (iii) the canned tuna producers in the ESA group which comprise of Mauritius, Madagascar and Seychelles have obtained an automatic derogation for canned tuna and tuna loins to the tune of 10,000 tonnes, which is equivalent to what the whole of the ACP obtained under the Cotonou Agreement;
- (iv) the IEPA contains a development chapter aimed at providing support to ESA countries to build supply capacity and improve competitiveness.

Mauritius is therefore far better off with the IEPA in terms of access on the EU market than it was under the previous trade regimes.

Regarding the status of the negotiations, there are three main reasons which explain why the other ESA countries have so far not signed the IEPA and why progress is slow in the negotiations toward the full EPA.

First, the EU has set a minimum benchmark of 80% liberalization which signatories of the EPA will have to undertake over a period of 15 years, based on its own interpretation of the WTO “substantially all trade” (SAT) requirement and the “reasonable timeframe” contained in Article XXIV of GATT 1994.

Given that there is no formal agreement at the WTO as to what “substantially all trade” should cover, most ACP countries have pointed out that the EU’s request is far too demanding, in particular for the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and that it does not take into account their levels of development and their sensitivities. As a result, most LDCs have not submitted a market access offer to the EU and are trading under the Everything But Arms (EBA) initiative. This is one of the most important stumbling blocks in the negotiations.

Second, the IEPA contains a number of provisions which many LDC’s in the ESA configuration consider to be contentious. These include the Most Favoured Nation Clause, standstill clause, export taxes, quantitative restrictions, infant industry clause and Bi-lateral safeguard for agriculture. These contentious issues are common in all the interim EPA’s in the other regions within the ACP as well. The LDC’s may consider signing the IEPA and proceed with negotiations towards the full EPA if these contentious issues are satisfactorily addressed.

Third, the EU has not fully committed itself to providing additional financial resources to address adjustment costs resulting from implementing the EPA’s.

I must also add that the negotiations were put on hold for sometime because of a change of the EU Trade Commissioner.

In spite of the seeming stalemate, there has been progress in resolving some of these contentious issues at the level of the ESA group. These contentious issues have been classified in two baskets. Basket one comprises of those issues where significant progress has been made, namely quantities restrictions, infant industries, standstill and export taxes. On Basket two, which includes the definition of substantially all trade, MFN clause and bilateral safeguard, progress has been erratic so far.

I must also add that at the last joint ACP-EC Ministerial Trade Committee Meeting held in Brussels on 22 October 2010, the EU Trade Commissioner has indicated the willingness of the EC to display flexibility in the negotiations. How this will translate into concrete proposals from the EC will have to be seen at the next round of technical negotiations scheduled for 15-16 December in Harare.

Before concluding Mr Speaker Sir, I must emphasise that the contentious issues are not really of concern to Mauritius, especially taking into account that almost 90% of trade takes place on a duty free basis and customs revenue contributes only a modest portion of overall Government revenue. We have also taken care to exclude all products from liberalisation which

are considered sensitive and have negotiated a moratorium of 5 years within which we are not obligated to reduce any tariff. We will start reducing tariffs only in January 2013 and will complete the process of tariff elimination in 2022.

It is to be noted that the LDC's already enjoy duty and quota free access for all products on the EU market under the EBA initiative and many of them are therefore not really interested to open up their market to the EU in the context of the EPA. This is yet another reason why progress has been slow in the negotiations.

To conclude, I must reiterate the commitment of Mauritius to conclude a comprehensive and ambitious Economic Partnership Agreement to provide legal security and predictability to our economic and trade relations with the EU. We are confident that the EPA, just like the Lomé Conventions will help Mauritius on its development path.

LE CORNU, STE CROIX – WATER ACCUMULATION

(No. 1B/736) Ms A. Perraud (Fourth Member for Port Louis North and Montagne Longue) asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping whether he is aware of the problem of water accumulation at Le Cornu, Ste Croix, which occurs during heavy rainfall, thus causing flooding and compelling the closing down of the secondary school found thereat for several days and, if so, will he state if it is proposed to put up drains in the region.

(Withdrawn)

LONG MOUNTAIN VILLAGE COUNCIL– ELECTRICITY SUPPLY

(No. 1B/737) Ms A. Perraud (Fourth Member for Port Louis North and Montagne Longue) asked the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether he is aware that the Long Mountain Village Council is not being provided with electricity and, if so, will he, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Pamplémousses/Rivière du Rempart District Council, information as to since when this situation is prevailing, indicating if remedial measures will be taken in relation thereto.

(Withdrawn)

CHITRAKOOT GOVERNMENT SCHOOL – LAND EROSION

(No. 1B/738) Ms A. Perraud (Fourth Member for Port Louis North and Montagne Longue) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether, in regard to the Chitrakoot Government School, he will state the date on which the study that was commissioned to look into the land erosion problem thereat started, indicating the conclusions thereof.

(Withdrawn)

CUREPIPE - GAME HOUSES/CASINOS

(No. 1B/739) Mr S. Obeegadoo (Third Member for Curepipe and Midlands) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to the Game Houses/Casinos, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Gambling Regulatory Authority, information as to the number thereof presently in operation in Curepipe, indicating if new applications have been submitted thereto for the issue of licences therefor to be operated in Curepipe and, if so, give details thereof.

Reply: There is one Casino and 3 Gaming Houses operating in Curepipe. I am informed by the Gambling Regulatory Authority that it has not received new applications for operating gaming houses and/or casinos in Curepipe.

NON GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS – CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY FUND

(No. 1B/740) Mr E. Guimbeau (First Member for Curepipe and Midlands) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to the Corporate Social Responsibility Fund, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Fund, information as to the -

- (a) names of the Non Governmental Organisations which have benefitted therefrom, since its introduction to date, indicating the quantum thereof in each case, and
- (b) amount remitted to the Mauritius Revenue Authority.

Reply: I am herewith tabling the list of Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) which have benefitted from the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Fund.

The list provides -

- (i) the names of the NGOs;
- (ii) the projects which have been funded, and
- (iii) the amount disbursed as at to-date.

I am informed by the MRA that the amount of CSR collected from January 2010 to date stands at Rs77,390,171.

HOTELS – “ALL INCLUSIVE PACKAGE”

(No. 1B/741) Mr E. Guimbeau (First Member for Curepipe and Midlands) asked the Minister of Tourism and Leisure whether, in regard to the “All Inclusive Package” that is practised in many hotels in Mauritius, he will state -

- (a) if it is in line with the Government Democratisation Programme, and
- (b) the names of hotels using same.

Reply: The “All Inclusive Package” is basically a holiday package which takes various forms and normally comprises accommodation, meals, alcoholic and non-alcoholic drinks. There are different types of holiday packages and some comprise air tickets, transportation and excursion, as well.

In fact, I have been advised that the “All Inclusive Package” is an emerging worldwide trend in travel and tourism prompted by a growing demand from clients for such types of packages. It is being practiced in practically in all destinations including our competitors, namely, Maldives, the Caribbean and Seychelles.

As regards Mauritius, although the “All Inclusive Package” is offered in some of our hotels, according to a recent survey undertaken a few months ago by the *Association des Hoteliers et Restaurateurs-Ile Maurice (AHRIM)*, around 77% of our visitors stay on a half board basis and only 19% avail themselves of the “All Inclusive Package”.

We realise that the “All Inclusive Package” being practiced in some hotels, might not be totally in line with the efforts that we are making to democratise the tourism sector. We are, therefore, taking necessary initiatives in order to induce a shift away from such packages. First, we can act on allocation of permits for tourism related services.

Furthermore, in this respect, efforts are being made to attract an increasing number of tourists from new emerging markets such as China, India and Russia. Since these tourists have different types of behaviour patterns and are normally more inclined to move out of their hotels to discover the history, culture, etc, of the countries that they visit, there will be less demand for “All Inclusive Package”.

Furthermore, we are taking a series of measures to encourage our tourists to move out of their hotels by promoting cultural tourism through the organization of cultural events at Citadel.

In the same vein, with the efforts being made to promote shopping tourism and such segments as wedding/honeymoon and MICE, we expect that there will be a shift away from the traditional “All Inclusive Package”.

Concerning part (b) of the question, I am advised that, in addition to a few Club hotels, which belong to established international chain of hotels and which offer “All Inclusive Package” in accordance to the general strategy of their groups such as Club Med, Marmara and Valtur, only a few other hotels offer exclusively “All Inclusive Package”, namely: Shandrani, Paladien Marina, Tamassa, Le Tropical and Silver Beach.

We are going to carry an in-depth survey as regards to this issue and study the impact on the industry.

ECONOMIC RESTRUCTURING & COMPETITIVENESS PACKAGE - BENEFICIARIES

(No. 1B/742) Mr A. Ganoo (First Member for Savanne and Black River) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to the Economic Restructuring and Competitiveness Package, he will state -

- (a) the firms which have benefitted therefrom, since its implementation to-date, including the names of the Small and Medium Enterprises, if any, indicating the quantum of financial assistance obtained in each case, and
- (b) the number of applications to benefit therefrom which are still pending.

Reply: I am informed that, as at to date, a total of 8 companies has been financially assisted under the ERCP import loan facility and equity investment mechanism for a financial support amounting to Rs309 m. Out of the 8 companies, there are 5 large companies and 3 Small and Medium Enterprises (SMES).

Under LEMS (Leasing Equipment Modernisation Scheme) which is also a financial support instrument of the ERCP, I am informed that as to date an amount of Rs45.6 m. has been disbursed to 7 large companies and Rs16 m. to 11 SMEs for the acquisition of productive equipment. The total amount disbursed as at to date is Rs370.6 m.

I am tabling the list of enterprises which have benefitted from assistance under the ERCP.

In respect to part (b) of the question I am informed that there are 11 cases that are under consideration at the ERCP Office for a total support of Rs180 m.

JINFEI/RICHE TERRE PROJECT – LEASE CONTRACT

(No. 1B/743) Mr C. Fakeemeeah (Third Member for Port Louis Maritime and Port Louis East) asked the Minister of Housing and Lands whether, in regard to the JinFei/Riche Terre Project, he will state if copy of the contract signed between Mauritius and the promoters will be tabled and, if so, when and, if not, why not.

Reply: The lease contract between the State of Mauritius and the Mauritius JinFei Economic Trade and Cooperation Zone Co. Ltd may be consulted by any member of the public at the Registrar-General's Department. Consequently, there is no need to lay it on the table.

MINORS – SEXUAL ASSAULTS

(No. 1A/182) Mrs F. Labelle (Third Member for Vacoas and Floreal) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in regard to sexual assaults on minors, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to the number of reported cases thereof, since July 2006 to-date, indicating the number and percentage of cases in which the perpetrator is a –

- (a) member of the victim's family;
- (b) close relative of the victim;
- (c) non-relative but a person known to the victim's family, and
- (d) complete stranger.

Reply: I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that from July 2006 to 25 November 2010, 931 sexual offences against minors have been reported involving 952 perpetrators. The number and percentage regarding the perpetrators are as follows:-

	Number	Percentage
(a) the perpetrator is a member of the victim's family	137	14.4%
(b) the perpetrator is a close relative of the victim	155	16.3%
(c) the perpetrator is a non-relative but a person known to the victim's family	416	43.7%

(d) the perpetrator is a complete stranger

244

25.6%

ABATTOIR RD, P. LOUIS – TRAFFIC CONGESTION

(No. 1A/183) Mr A. Ameer Meea (First Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether he is aware of the traffic congestion caused by vehicles obstructing the Abattoir Road, Port Louis, in the early morning on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays, during fair days and if so, will he, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to the remedial measures that will be taken, indicating if consideration will be given for the posting of Police Officers thereat for traffic control and booking of contraventions for road obstruction.

Reply: Auction sales of vegetables and fruits are carried out in Port Louis in early morning on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays at the following points -

- vegetables sales take place in an enclosed space adjacent to Motorway M2 and whose access is at around 100 metres through Abattoir Road, and
- fruits sales are held on a plot of land along Abattoir Road near the Roundabout adjacent to ABC Motors garage.

The vegetables and fruits auction sales in Port Louis attract a significant number of operators and goods vehicles from different parts of Mauritius. The auction sale operation starts as early as 01 00 hours and ends at 06 00 hours.

During these auction sales, four Police Constables from Fanfaron Police Station perform duty at Abattoir Road so as to regulate traffic and prevent unlawful parking of vehicles after unloading their fruits and vegetables. There is no traffic congestion to the road users along Abattoir Road. The more so, the volume of traffic at that particular time and place is relatively low. In addition, the Divisional Traffic Police also provides regular mobile patrols in the area to control the fluidity of traffic and to prevent obstruction.

Since January 2010 until 26 November 2010, twenty one contraventions have been established by the Police against vehicle drivers for road traffic offences at Abattoir Road related to illegal parking.

STANLEY AND ROSE HILL – POLICE STATIONS – LARCENY CASES

(No. 1A/184) Mr D. Nagalingum (Second Member for Stanley & Rose Hill) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in regard to each of the Police Stations in Constituency No.19, Stanley and Rose Hill, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to the number of –

- (a) reported cases of larceny over the past two years;
- (b) Police Officers posted thereat, indicating their respective grades, and
- (c) vehicles attached thereto.

Reply: In regard to part (a) of the question, the Commissioner of Police has informed that from year 2008 up to 25 November 2010 a total of 4282 cases of larceny has been reported to the police stations of Rose Hill, Stanley and Camp Le Vieux which are in Constituency No. 19. Details are as follows -

Year	Reported cases of larceny		
	Stanley	Rose-Hill	Camp Le Vieux
2008	751	1226	----
2009	313	919	194
2010 (25.11.10)	233	484	162

It is to be noted that the Police Station at Camp Le Vieux became operational on 1 January 2009.

In regard to part (b) of the Question, a total of 152 police officers are posted in these three Police Stations. Details pertaining to the strength of these Police Stations are as follows -

Police Station	I ¹	Insp	PS	CPL	PC	WPC	Total
Rose Hill		1	6	14	47	5	74
Stanley		1	6	9	25	2	43
Camp Le Vieux		1	5	2	24	3	35
Total		3	17	25	96	10	152

In regard to part (c) of the Question, a total number of seven vehicles have been allocated to the three Police Stations as detailed below:

Police Station	No of motor cycles	No of Vans
Rose Hill		2

Stanley	1	2
Camp Le Vieux		2
Total	1	6

¹ CI: Chief Inspector; Insp: Inspector; PS: Police Sergeant; CPL: Corporal; PC: Police Constable; WPC: Woman Police Constable.

ROSE HILL – TOWN CENTRE – DRUGS & PROSTITUTION

(1A/185) Mr D. Nagalingum (Second Member for Stanley and Rose Hill) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, he is aware of the proliferation of drugs and prostitution in the Town Centre at Rose Hill, especially during the nights and if so, will he, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to the additional measures, if any that will be taken to reinforce security thereat.

Reply: According to statistics provided by the Commissioner of Police, between 2008 and 25 November 2010, 6 cases relating to drugs and 8 for prostitution were established in the town centre of Rose Hill as follows -

<u>Year</u>	<u>No. of Drug cases</u>	<u>No. of Prostitution related cases</u>
2008	1	4
2009	2	3
2010	3	1

as at November 2010

Notwithstanding the above statistics, the Police has taken several concrete measures to deal with the problem of drugs and prostitution in the region of Rose Hill. These measures include:

- (i) special mobile patrols are performed by Anti-Drug Smuggling Unit (ADSU) personnel in collaboration with the CID, the DSU, the ERS and the local police to prevent and combat the sale of drugs, both during day time and night time;
- (ii) regular stop and search exercises are carried out;
- (iii) crack down/joint operations are mounted against drug traffickers with the support of other units of the Force such as, the SSU and the SMF, whenever reliable information are received;
- (iv) mapping of the area is carried out with relevant intelligence inputs for the formulation of strategies and deployment of resources to deal with the problems of drug and prostitution; and
- (v) on the preventive side, the personnel of ADSU participate actively in prevention campaigns in close collaboration with the National Agency for the Treatment and Rehabilitation of Substance Abusers (NATReSA) and local civil society organizations.

The Commissioner of Police has been impressed upon to exercise extra vigilance in the town centre of Rose Hill, especially during the nights.

(No. 1A/186) Mrs F. Labelle (Third Member for Vacoas and Floreal) asked the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the supply of food and beverages for the events organized by or sponsored by the Municipal Council of Vacoas/Phoenix, since October 2005 to-date, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Council, information as to the names of the suppliers, indicating the -

- (a) criteria used for the selection thereof, and
- (b) amount paid to each of them.

Reply: The information requested by the hon. Member is being compiled by the Municipal Council of Vacoas/Phoenix and will be placed in the library as soon as same will be made available.

VALTON ROAD, MONTAGNE LONGUE - DRAIN WORKS

(No. 1A/187) Mr G. Lesjongard (Second Member for Port Louis North and Montagne Longue) asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to the drain works at Valton Road, Montagne Longue, he will state the -

- (a) name of the contractor;
- (b) contract value thereof;
- (c) duration of the implementation thereof, and
- (d) reasons why the works have stopped.

Reply: Regarding the drain works at Valton, Montagne Longue, the Road Development Authority has submitted the following information -

- (a) Name of Contractor – Trio Development Co. Ltd.
- (b) Contract Value – Rs3.4 m.
- (c) Duration of implementation – 21 August 2009 to 07 October 2009
- (d) Re-routing of Central Water Authority pipes/services were required on site and Central Water Authority fittings were not

available on time.

There was slow progress of works from the Contractor. However, the works have been completed on 25 November 2010.

CITE ANOSKA, 16^E MILLE, CUREPIPE - STREET LIGHTING

(No. 1A/188) Dr. S. Boolell (Second Member for Curepipe and Midlands) asked the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the Cité Anoska, 16^e mille, Curepipe, he is aware of the poor lighting of the streets thereat and of the derelict state of the street lamps, and, if so, will he state if he will use his good offices to impress upon the relevant authorities the need to take remedial measures in relation thereto.

Reply: I am informed by the Grand Port/Savanne District Council that 22 street lamps have been fixed at regular intervals along the streets at Cité Anoska, 16^e Mille and which are in good condition.

I am further informed that seven additional lamps will be fixed by the Council by next week.

RESIDENCE MONTBOIS – STREET LIGHTING

(No. 1A/189) Dr. S. Boolell (Second Member for Curepipe and Midlands) asked the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the Résidence Montbois, 16^e Mille, Curepipe, he is aware of the poor lighting of the streets thereat, and, if so, will he state if he will use his good offices to impress upon the relevant authorities the need to take remedial measures in relation thereto.

Reply: I am informed by the Grand Port/Savanne District Council that 7 street lamps have been fixed along the streets at Residence Montbois, 16^e Mille, Curepipe and which are in good condition.

I am further informed that four additional lamps will be fixed by the Council by next week.

MINISTRY OF YOUTH & SPORTS – TECHNICAL EQUIPMENT

(No. 1A/190) Mr F. Quirin (Third Member for Beau Bassin and Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether, in regard to the sports technical equipment available in all the stores of his Ministry, he will table a stock list thereof as at 31 October 2010.

Reply: The list of Technical Equipment available in the store of the Ministry as at 31 October 2010 is as follows -

Basketball shoes	10 pairs
Weightlifting shoes	7 pairs
Barbell Olympic norms	
• 10 kgs	2 sets
• 15 kgs	2 sets
• 20 kgs	2 sets
• 25 kgs	2 sets
Weight for hammer	18
Hammer wire	30

WORLD JUJITSU CHAMPIONSHIP – RUSSIA - DELEGATION

(No. 1A/191) Mr F. Quirin (Third Member for Beau Bassin and Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether, in regard to the World Jujitsu Championship to be held in Russia, on 27 and 28 November 2010, he will state the financial assistance extended by his Ministry to the members of the delegation who will be participating therein.

Reply: My Ministry has not granted any financial assistance to the delegation for its participation in the World Jujitsu Championship in Russia for the following reasons –

- (i) Participation in a World Championship is a progressive process. That is, it requires an athlete to first and foremost record and outstanding performance at the basic levels, which are the regional level, followed by the continental level and

eventually the intercontinental level, prior to envisaging participation in a world championship. Unfortunately this is not the case in the present situation;

- (ii) This championship does not appear in the official calendar of activities of the Mauritius Judo Federation and Associate Disciplines for the year 2010;
- (iii) No mention and no provision were made by the concerned federation in its earmarked budget for this participation for the year 2010;
- (iv) Jujitsu is one of the four associate disciplines of the Mauritius Judo Federation which requires further promotion, development and organisation of more competitions at the national and regional levels in order to evaluate the real potentials of our athlete in this discipline.

QUATRE BORNES MUNICIPAL COUNCIL –

SCAVENGING LORRIES & TRACTORS - PURCHASE

(No. 1A/192) Mr K. Ramano (Second Member for Belle Rose and Quatre Bornes) asked the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the scavenging lorries and tractors recently purchased by the Municipal Council of Quatre Bornes, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Council, information as to the contract value thereof, indicating in respect of each of them –

- (a) the specifications therefor;
- (b) the name of the successful bidder;
- (c) if certificates of origin were submitted along with the vehicles in relation to the chassis and the driver's cabin, as per the tender documents, and
- (d) if same are operational and, if not, the reasons therefor.

Reply: I am informed by the Municipal Council of Quatre Bornes as follows -

- (a) The contract value of the two tipper lorries with Garbage boxes is Rs3,613,844.
- (b) The contract value of the two tractors and three trailers is Rs4,4,296,154.

With regard to the other parts of the question, my Ministry will conduct an inquiry in the matter and the relevant information will thereafter be placed in the Library.

ARTIST WELFARE FUND - SETTING UP

(No. 1A/193) Mrs J. Radegonde (Fourth Member for Savanne and Black River) asked the Minister of Arts and Culture whether, in regard to the Artist Welfare Fund, he will state where matters stand.

Reply: MASA which operates under the aegis of my Ministry has recently set up the MASA Artist Solidarity Fund which caters for (*auteurs/compositeurs*) who are members of the Society.

However the Artist Welfare Fund which will be set up by my Ministry will cover artists of all disciplines/fields, including performing artists. Consultations have reached an advanced stage. The draft Bill is expected to be ready by February 2011.

SENATOR CLUB, CHEMIN GRENIER - PARKING SPACE

(No. 1A/194) Mrs J. Radegonde (Fourth Member for Savanne and Black River) asked the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether he is aware that the Senator Club at Royal Road, Chemin Grenier, in Constituency No.14 - Savanne and Black River does not have a parking space and that it is adjacent to a school, a mosque and in a residential area and, if so, the remedial actions that will be taken, if any.

Reply: I am informed by the Grand Port/Savanne District Council as follows -

- (i) parking accommodation for the Senator Club at Royal Road, Chemin Grenier is found on another site at a distance of 15 metres from the place of business and which is still operational, and
- (ii) according to the planning policy guidance (Paragraph 3.2.1) issued by the Ministry of Housing and Lands, the area where the casino in question is located, is described as Central District and is not as such a residential area.

PORT LOUIS SOUTH AND PORT LOUIS CENTRAL – NDU PROJECTS

(No. 1A/195) Mr R. Uteem (Second Member for Port Louis South and Port Louis Central) asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to the projects undertaken by the National Development Unit in Constituency No.2, Port Louis South and Port Louis Central, since July 2005 to-date, he will give a list thereof, indicating, in each case the –

- (a) nature;
- (b) cost involved, and
- (c) start and completion dates.

Reply: The information is being placed in the Library.

PORT LOUIS MUNICIPAL COUNCIL - LEGAL ADVISERS

(No. 1A/196) Mr R. Uteem (Second Member for Port Louis South and Port Louis Central) asked the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the legal advisers whose services have been retained by the Municipal Council of Port Louis, since July 2005 to-date, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Council, information as to their names, indicating in each case –

- (a) since when their services have been retained;
- (b) their terms and conditions of appointment;
- (c) the total amount of retainer or any other fees which have been paid to them, and
- (d) the criteria used in appointing them.

Reply: This information requested by the hon. Member is being compiled by the Municipal Council of Port Louis and will be placed in the Library as soon as same will be made available.

PUBLIC SECTOR DEBT

(No. 1A/197) Mr K. Li Kwong Wing (Second Member for Beau Bassin and Petite Rivière) asked the vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to the public sector debt, he will -

- (a) give a list of the guaranteed domestic and foreign debts, as at 30 October 2010, indicating the -
 - (i) amount and nature of the guarantees, and
 - (ii) names of the beneficiaries thereof, and
- (b) state the measures that are being taken for the control and reduction thereof.

Reply: In regard to the public sector debt, I am informed that, as at 31 October 2010, the total amount of guaranteed domestic and foreign debts stood at around Rs4.2 billion and Rs6.4 billion respectively. I am laying on the table of the Assembly a statement of guaranteed domestic and foreign debts as at 30 October 2010 showing the beneficiaries together with the nature of the guarantees.

Regarding part (b) of the question, I wish to inform the House that various measures are being taken for the control and reduction of public enterprises debt. Before guarantees are provided to public enterprises, my Ministry assesses their projected cash flow for up to the duration of the loan to ensure that the public enterprise has the capacity for repaying the loan and examines the nature of the project to be financed by the public enterprise.

Since August of this year, Government has approved a new on-lending framework according to which a Public Enterprise which has accumulated major arrears for loans on-lent by Government is not provided any financing or guarantees unless -

- a. its Parent Ministry, with the support of my Ministry, evolves a plan to enable the concerned body to settle its arrears or at best to settle its dues for the current year to avoid accumulation of arrears;
- b. the parastatal body submits a restructuring plan that would allow it to meet its debt service obligations over an agreed time period. This restructuring plan has to be endorsed by the parent Ministry, and
- c. the parastatal body which has accumulated profits/reserves clears its arrears first.

Some public enterprises have already come up with a plan identifying certain interim measures and implementation will start very soon.

After guarantees are provided to Public Enterprises, their debt level is closely monitored. An online public debt management system has been put in place to receive information on debt from public enterprises on a monthly basis. This allows the Ministry to establish whether the Public Enterprises are effecting repayment of their debts on time.

In addition, as I announced in the Economic Restructuring and Competitiveness Programme issued in August of this year, Public Enterprises have been requested to bring their operations in line with Government's policy to deleverage, restructure and to be efficient by global standards. They have been asked to explore all means of enhancing revenue and controlling expenditure. To this end, my Ministry is assessing the financial standing of these enterprises to increase their capitalisation if necessary, reduce their leverage and also to ensure that their operations are commercially viable. Government will continue to provide financing for their investment programme, with the requirement that in the coming years, they will provide a real return of at least 5 per cent on capital employed. These Government owned enterprises will also have to finance their operating costs on their own and not depend on budgetary transfers.

Furthermore, as I have announced in my Budget Speech recently, Government will encourage public sector enterprises with large financing needs to issue corporate bonds. Besides, as part of the public enterprise reforms, certain organizations offering parallel services will be merged to gain synergies and improve operational effectiveness. In addition, the Office of Public Sector Governance under the aegis of the Prime Minister's Office will deepen the culture of governance in the public sector, including the parastatals.

The public enterprise reform we are launching is indeed wide ranging and comprehensive. These would allow many of them to be financially independent and no longer be a drain on public finance. While honouring our pledges on the social front, we have also demonstrated our commitment to sound management of public finances.

MONT ROCHES – SEWERAGE WORKS

(No. 1A/198) Mr K. Li Kwong Wing (Second Member for Beau Bassin and Petite Rivière) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to the works that are being carried out in relation to the house connections to the sewerage system, in the region of Mont Roches, including Verger Bissumbar, he will, for the benefit of the

House, obtain from the Waste Water Management Authority, information as to where matters stand, indicating the measures that will be taken to ensure that all the roads that have been damaged as a result thereof will be resurfaced before Christmas.

Reply: I am informed by the Wastewater Management Authority that house connection works in the region of Mont Roches are being carried out under the Plaines Wilhems Sewerage Project – Lot 1B also covering the regions of Plaisance, Rose Hill and Roches Brunès.

The project comprises the construction of 1,046 house connections and 10,5 km of street sewers. As at 18 November 2010, 162 house connections were operational and 8 kms of street sewers had been laid. About 3 kms of trenches have been reinstated permanently with asphaltic concrete and 5 kms have been temporarily reinstated with DBST and will be followed by permanent resurfacing.

I am further informed that -

- (i) the temporary reinstatement of all roads will be completed and 50% of these will be permanently reinstated with asphaltic concrete before Christmas;
- (ii) the full width permanent resurfacing of all the roads where excavation works have been carried out in Mont Roches will be completed by June 2011.

As regards the Verger Bissumbar, the Hon. Member may refer to my reply to Parliamentary Question No. 1A/79 wherein I informed the House that the project does not fall under the Plaines Wilhems Sewerage project, and that an investigation carried out by the Wastewater Management Authority had found that only 20 houses could be connected. A new project will have to be designed for this region.

LA CAVERNE AND PHOENIX – NDU PROJECTS

(No. 1A/199) Dr. R. Sorefan (Fourth Member for La Caverne and Phoenix) asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to the projects undertaken by the National Development Unit in Constituency No.15 - La Caverne and Phoenix, since July 2005 to date, he will give the list thereof, indicating, in each case, the -

- (a) nature;

- (b) cost involved, and
- (c) start and completion dates.

Reply: The information is being laid in the Library.

PRE-VOCATIONAL STREAM - STUDENTS

(No. 1A/200) Mr S. Obeegadoo (Third Member for Curepipe and Midlands) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether, in regard to the Pre-vocational Scheme at secondary level, he will state the percentage of –

- (a) students having joined in 2007 who remained in attendance until the end of their third year in 2010;
- (b) students having joined in 2007 who successfully passed the third year examinations in 2010, and
- (c) primary level students having failed the CPE for a second time in 2009 who have joined the Pre-vocational stream in 2010.

Reply: As regard to part (a), the percentage of students having joined the Pre-Vocational Scheme at secondary level in 2007 who remained in attendance until the end of their third year in 2009 is 77.6%.

(Note: Those students who joined in 2007 were in their third year in 2009 and not 2010 as stated in the Parliamentary Question).

No. of students admitted to Pre-Voc Year I in 2007	No. of students in attendance in Pre-Voc Year III in 2009	Percentage of students who remained in attendance
3,146	2,440	77.6 %

As regard to part (b), out of the 3146 students admitted in 2007, 2440 of them sat for the 3rd year exams in 2009. All of the 2440 students were successful.

No. of students in attendance in Pre-Voc Year III in 2009	No. of students who successfully passed the Year III in 2009	Percentage of students who passed
2,440	2,440	100 %

As regards part (c), the percentage of primary level students falling under the category referred to is 92.7%.

EDUCATION - PUBLIC SPENDING

(No. 1A/201) Mr S. Obeegadoo (Third Member for Curepipe & Midlands) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to the public spending on education, as a percentage of the Gross Domestic Product, he will state the figures for each of the years 1969 to 2010.

Reply: I am tabling the figures regarding public spending on education as a percentage of Gross Domestic Product compiled by the Central Statistics Office for the fiscal years 1972/73 to 2010. Figures for 1969 to 1972 are not available.

PORT LOUIS - IMPASSE MAIGROT, CITE MARTIAL

– ROAD TARRING, DRAINS, STREET LANTERNS

(No. 1A/202) Mr A. Ameer Meea (First Member for Port Louis Maritime and Port Louis East) asked the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether he is aware of the bad state of the Impasse Maigrot at Cité Martial, Port Louis, and of the presence of stagnant

water accumulating during rainy seasons from Block J09 to Block J12 and the *Impasse* adjacent thereto and, if so, will he, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Municipal Council of Port Louis information as to if consideration will be given for –

- (a) re-instating and tarring of same;
- (b) provision of drains, and
- (c) installation of street lanterns thereat.

Reply: I am informed by the Municipal Council of Port Louis that Impasse Maigrot is, in fact, in a bad state and has many potholes wherein water accumulates during rainy seasons and remains stagnant.

With regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed that reinstatement and tarring works will be undertaken to the road as from the second week of December.

As far as part (b) of the question is concerned, I am informed that drains already exist along this street.

As regards the last part of the question, I am informed that three street lanterns will be fixed along the impasse in the first week of December 2010.

PAVILLON COMPLEX –

HISTORIC AND ENVIRONMENT FRIENDLY BOX TREES

(No. 1A/203) **Mr K. Ramano (Second Member for Belle Rose and Quatre Bornes)** asked the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the Pavillon Complex, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Municipal Council of Quatre Bornes information as to if it has received complaints from the users and the inhabitants of the surroundings thereof in relation to the decision of the Council to remove the historic and environment friendly box trees around the complex and for the replacement thereof by concrete blocks and, if so, will he impress upon the Council to review the said decision for security reasons and in line with the concept of Maurice Ile Durable.

Reply: I am informed by the Municipal Council of Quatre Bornes that –

- (i) to secure the premises of J. Roland Delaître Sports Complex (Le Pavillon) against theft and anti social behaviours prevailing specially at nights by drug addicts and others, it had decided to enclose the Complex with wall (1.5 metre height) and chain link fencing on it;
- (ii) during the implementation of the project a complaint has been received from some inhabitants of the vicinity protesting against the erection of wall around the Complex on ground that it will isolate users of the Complex, increasing thus the risk of cases of attacks, rapes, robbery;
- (iii) furthermore three inhabitants of the region called at the Council on 18 November 2010 complaining about the removal of “billes plants” hedge and the erection of a concrete wall at the complex;
- (iv) in fact, the “billes plants” would have been temporarily removed and replanted after completion of the work;
- (v) the “billes plants” are not historic ones;
- (vi) a motion has been received from a Councillor for the suspension of the work being implemented at the Complex and for the revisiting of the project, and
- (vii) the motion will be considered at a special meeting scheduled on 02 December 2010.