

No. 24 of 2010



FIFTH NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

**PARLIAMENTARY
DEBATES
(HANSARD)**

**FIRST SESSION
MONDAY 06 DECEMBER 2010**

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| | |
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| 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> |
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| 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> |
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| Hon. Tassarajen Pillay Chedumbrum | <i>Minister of Information and Communication Technology</i> |
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| Hon. Ashit Kumar Gungah | <i>Minister of Civil Service Affairs and Administrative Reforms</i> |
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| Hon John Michaël Tzoun Sao Yeung Sik Yuen | <i>Minister of Business, Enterprise, Cooperatives and Consumer Protection</i> |

Members

Members

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Mr Speaker

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Roopun, Hon. Prithvirajsing

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MAURITIUS

Fifth National Assembly

FIRST SESSION

Debate No. 24 of 2010

Sitting of Monday 06 December 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)

ORAL ANSWER TO QUESTION
FIREARMS AND SECURITY EQUIPMENT

The Leader of the Opposition (Mr P. Bérenger) (*By Private Notice*), asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in regard to firearms and security equipment, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to –

- (a) the number of firearm licences held by –
 - (i) security firms, giving details thereof;
 - (ii) other organisations, and
 - (iii) individuals;
- (b) since 2007, the number of reported cases of theft of –
 - (i) firearms, federal streamers and uniforms from the Police, and
 - (ii) firearms from security firms, other organisations and individuals, indicating if all have been recovered;
- (c) the outcome of the inquiry into the recent theft of 15 firearms and 315 bullets from the headquarters of SOS Guard Ltd.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, the Firearms Act 2006 came into force on 01 September 2007, regulates the importation, sale, possession and use of firearms. It allows law enforcement agencies to effectively control the acquisition, possession and use of firearms.

Section 4 of the Act stipulates the conditions attached to the issue of a firearm licence. Thus, Regulations made under the Firearms Act as laid down in Government Notice 113 of 2007 provides that –

- (a) any firearm or ammunition shall at all times, when not in actual use, be kept in two separate secured places with a view to preventing access to them by unauthorised persons and safeguard to any loss or theft, and
- (b) the loss or theft of any firearm or ammunition shall be reported within 48 hours of its disappearance to the nearest Police Station and any loss or theft due to negligence may entail the cancellation of the licence.

As for the Private Security Service Act, it was passed on 13 April 2004, but was not proclaimed. The Act was subsequently amended in April 2008 and was proclaimed on 01 July 2008.

The Private Security Service Act entrusts the Commissioner of Police with the statutory duty of licensing and regulating both private security firms and persons employed by them. A firm can only operate as a private security firm after it has been duly licensed by the Commissioner of Police. It has to be highlighted that security guards also have to be registered with the Commissioner of Police.

It is relevant to note, Mr Speaker, Sir, that when granting a licence under section 4 of the Private Security Service Act, the Commissioner may, under section 4(7), grant the licence “subject to such conditions as he may deem fit, which may include –

- (a) a requirement for the training of security guards, and
- (b) that the licensee take out the requisite firearm licence under the Firearms Act.”

These provisions illustrate the fact that the conditions which may be imposed by the Commissioner of Police are not limited to the above, but may include other conditions which the Commissioner of Police deems fit to ensure the safekeeping of firearms.

It must be pointed out, also, Mr Speaker, Sir, that the licensee is under a statutory duty, under section 5(e) of the Private Security Service Act, to keep records as may be reasonably required by the Commissioner of Police and such records have to be readily accessible.

Further, the Commissioner of Police is empowered under section 13(1)(e) of the Act to cancel or suspend a licence or a certificate if the licensee breaches any condition attached to his licence.

The Commissioner of Police also has powers, under section 17 of the Private Security Service Act, to keep under review the provision of private security services or security guards for the purpose of protecting the public and monitoring the activities of persons providing private security services and of private security guards. The Commissioner of Police may also, under section 17, “carry out such inspections as he considers necessary, of the activities of private security services or private security guards.”

In view of the above provisions, it is clear that the legal framework provided by the Private Security Service Act, provides for an effective regulation and monitoring of the private security services.

It is also apposite to refer to the Firearms Act 2006 which provides that the Commissioner of Police “may direct any private security service provider to provide and maintain – such armouries or other storage facilities for firearms, ammunition, and other related equipment, to be kept safe”.

I have to highlight also, Mr Speaker, Sir, that the Firearms Act 2006 covers both the use of firearms and ammunition and that the definition of ammunition is wide enough to cover weapons which discharge noxious materials, as is borne out on a reading of sections 2 and 24 of the Firearms Act 2006.

In addition, the Firearms Act 2006, at section 45, empowers the Police to seek the authorisation of a Magistrate to grant a search warrant to a Police officer where there is a reasonable ground for suspecting that an offence under the Firearms Act, is about to be committed. This clearly again demonstrates that the powers provided under the Firearms Act 2006 are sufficient for the monitoring of the use of firearms and ammunition by private security firms and their employees.

The statutory powers and responsibility conferred on the Commissioner of Police by virtue of the Private Security Service Act and the Firearms Act 2006 clearly cater for the conditions attached to the safekeeping of firearms and ammunition.

I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that in regard to part (a)(i) of the question, that as at 18 November 2010, out of the 17 private security firms which are duly registered to undertake security and property protection services under the Act, only six of them hold a firearm licence.

Regarding part (a)(ii) of the question, 102 organisations hold firearm licences mainly for hunting purposes.

In regard to part (a)(iii) of the question, 5,771 individuals hold firearm licence for hunting and personal protection.

In regard to part (b)(i) of the question, I am informed that since 2007, the number of reported cases of larceny of firearms from the Police is as follows -

- | | | |
|-----|-------------------|-----|
| (a) | Firearms | : 1 |
| (b) | Federal Streamers | : 2 |
| (c) | Uniforms | : 4 |

One firearm and two federal streamers were stolen and not recovered. With regard to uniforms, there have been four cases reported. In two cases the articles have been recovered.

Regarding part (b)(ii) of the question, the number of cases of larceny reported are as follows-

- | | | |
|-----|--------------------------|-----|
| (a) | Private Security Service | : 1 |
| (b) | Other organisations | : 2 |
| (c) | Individuals | : 8 |

The firearms stolen from SOS Guards have been recovered - mainly 15 out of 17 have been recovered.

Regarding part (c) of the question, I am informed that on 08 November 2010, the larceny of the following was reported at the Headquarters of the SOS Guard situated at Remy Ollier Street Port Louis -

- (i) 15 firearms, and
- (ii) 250 rounds.

On 08 November 2010 at 13.15 hrs, following a phone call from Mr Bawon Deal, 76 yrs, residing at Dr. Ferrière Street, Rose Hill, watchman at SOS Guard, situated at Rémy Ollier Street, Port Louis, he said that he was victim of a theft of revolvers and has been assaulted by three unknown men wearing hoods and gloves. Police Officers from Pope Hennessy Police Station proceeded to the spot and found the watchman injured. He was conveyed to Dr. Jeetoo Hospital and was admitted in Ward 8.

The following arms and ammunition have been stolen from SOS Guard -

- Ten revolvers make Rossi, caliber 0.38 special;
- Five pistols make Browning caliber 6.35, and
- 250 live rounds.

Police started an inquiry into the matter immediately.

So far, nine persons have been arrested and out of whom, two are on remand and two are still in Police Cell. Five persons have been bailed out.

In addition, 19 persons were interrogated and allowed to go after inquiry.

The Police is looking for one main suspect in the case.

Firearms belonging to SOS have been recovered as follows -

On 13 November 2010 -

- (i) 3 revolvers,
- (ii) 2 pistols,
- (iii) 1 Federal Streamer
- (iv) ammunition 0.38mm special Rounds : 66, and
- (v) ammunition 6.35mm Rounds : 20

On 27 November 2010 -

- (i) 7 revolvers, and
- (ii) Ammunitions: 0.38mm Special Rounds: 134 in all were recovered.

During the search, one additional unregistered pistol 8mm and 11 rounds of 8mm have also been secured during the search.

As at now, three pistols and 30 ammunitions 6.35mm have not yet been recovered.

The Director of SOS Guard has been requested to surrender the firearm licence on 15 November 2010 and was among the persons arrested. On 15 November 2010, the Police informed the Director of SOS Guard that notwithstanding the ongoing criminal enquiry and irrespective of the outcome, the fact that an inspection of the locus has revealed a serious neglect on the part of the Company and, or on his part as a company representative, it has been decided in accordance with the conditions attached to the licence to withdraw firearm licence issued to him. The firearm licence held by SOS Guard was therefore withdrawn.

Police enquiry is still proceeding

The Act provides, Mr Speaker, Sir, for a legal framework for the regulation and monitoring of activities of firms providing security and protection. It sets out the conditions for licensing of firms offering private security services, registration of persons to be employed as security guards and the conduct, by any person of training courses for licensees and Security Guards, with the approval of the Commissioner of Police.

Section 4 of the Private Security Service Act stipulates the procedures for application from and the issue of a firearm licence to Private Security Service -

- (i) the applicant must submit his application for a certificate of registration on a prescribed form to the Commissioner of Police;
- (ii) the Police conduct an enquiry, and
- (iii) the Commissioner of Police on being satisfied that applicant meets the requirements of the law issues a Certificate of Registration and an identification Badge to the applicant.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I wish to remind the House that at the Second Reading of the Private Security Service (Amendment) Bill 2008 introducing the Bill in the House, I stressed on the role of private security services and stated that in spite of the expansion of the private security industry, the Police Force has the leading role in the maintenance of public safety and public order in the country. The private security industry can only complement the work of the Police Force in certain activities, such as the protection of premises, physical protection of important persons, escorting of cash-in-transit and so on. Such activities should, however, be undertaken within well-established parameters. We want highly skilled, trained and trustworthy persons to be employed by private security firms, so as to ensure quality in the level of service delivered.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the Firearms Act, I should remind the House, provides in respect of the offence of illegal possession of firearms for a penalty of a fine not exceeding Rs200,000 and imprisonment for a term not exceeding 15 years.

I wish to assure the House that, in no uncertain terms that *“la loi sera appliquée dans toute sa rigueur”*. No one should believe that he or she is above the law.

Mr Bérenger: I am sure that the hon. Prime Minister will agree with me that the Police Force needs to be congratulated on the progress made so far, as far as SOS guards are concerned. But still it is a month ago that this took place and we still have three firearms out there plus bullets. Can I know from the hon. Prime Minister what is going to happen in the days to come? Especially, *le troisième home* and, apparently, the Police is still looking for one of the three persons who committed *le fracas*? Has he been identified? Do the Police know who it is and is he being actively looked for?

The Prime Minister: I think the hon. Leader of the Opposition is right. The Police should be congratulated for the very detailed way they proceeded and the rapidity with which they secured most of the firearms and arrested these people.

As for the other suspect, the Police know who the suspect is. They have information and they are very confident that they will apprehend him in the very near future.

Mr Bérenger: I have asked for the number of firearms held by security firms and so on because I wanted to have an overall picture. Already it is clear that we are talking about thousands of firearms across the country, but I did not hear the hon. Prime Minister give me the number of licences held by security firms. From what I heard, he told us that six security firms hold firearm licences. How many firearm licences? I was going to ask later on, but I will do that now: are those firearms licences held by the security company or by individuals employed by the security company?

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, in fact I have the number of the six private security companies. One itself is the SOS Guard, they have permit for 15 firearms licences and for 11 employees to use those firearms. There is Brinks Mauritius Limited, which has a permit for 123 firearms with 154 employees permit; PRO Guard Ltd: four firearms licences and five employees permit; the Defence High-tech Security Services: five firearms licences and six employees permit; the Security and Property Protection Agency of Caudan: 10 firearm licences with 23 employees having permits, and Premier Security Solutions with 25 firearm licences and 25 employees having permits.

Mr Bérenger: Well, that's a lot of firearms across the country – legal ones, I mean. Can I know – the Police state that all firearms are in trained hands - what control the Police exercise over those security firms that hold firearms licences? I am given to understand that the top officials from the Police are regularly supposed to visit and do visit, if not all, but visit those companies.

The Prime Minister: In fact, that is true. The Police are supposed, as far as possible, to check. They usually come for the renewal of their licence at the end of the year. There, the Police go through a meticulous investigation on how many firearms and all those things. Otherwise, the Police, from time to time, can do - perhaps they should do it more often. In fact, the Commissioner of Police has reminded the Divisional Commander of Police of the need to do those regular checks perhaps more often.

Mr Bérenger: As I said, it is a lot of firearms legally held across the country. But I have been Prime Minister as well. Can I ask the hon. Prime Minister whether he discusses - because my information is that there is a lot of illegal firearms also, apart from the legal firearms - that issue regularly with the Commissioner of Police? Can I know whether there is an estimate of the number of illegal firearms across the country, whether any illegal firearms have been seized since the same date - 2007 - and what measures the Police are going to take to recover those illegal firearms around the country?

The Prime Minister: That problem exists, Mr Speaker, Sir. One of the problems is actually firearms made locally. This also happens, not just since yesterday, but a long time. The Police are investigating those cases. As I said in my answer, while they were investigating SOS Guard, one additional unregistered pistol was also found. That has been secured and they are looking into that. The only thing we can do, Mr Speaker, Sir, is for the Police to continue investigating. Also, as we have done, strengthening the law so that people know what are the implications if they are caught with an illegal unregistered firearm or arms.

Mr Bérenger: I did not hear the hon. Prime Minister telling me whether he just discusses that issue of illegal firearms across the country with the Commissioner of Police and what new measures are going to be taken? I take it that we have had figures which run into the thousands of legal firearms. We don't have any estimate or guesstimate, as informed as possible, from the Commissioner of Police with regard to illegal firearms.

The Prime Minister: In fact, I should have said that I discussed with the Commissioner of Police about this problem of illegal firearms, that is why, in fact, after discussing, we increased the penalties for possession of illegal firearms, whether they are made locally or not. The Police do not have any estimate, they do not think it is many, but they have no exact estimate of how many. In fact, during the end of the year, they will increase the patrols that they do for such things.

Mr Bérenger: If I can move to the SOS Guard affair, can I know whether the licence was in the name of the owner, the Chief Executive or in the name of individual employees?

The Prime Minister: From what I see here, Mr Speaker, Sir, it is in the name of the SOS Guard, represented by Mr Madhukar Ramnarain and 11 persons have permits. But, as I explained, the Police also want to know the names of those who have permit according to the law. That also they have.

Mr Bérenger: I heard the hon. Prime Minister say that the Police have already come to the conclusion that there has been serious negligence on the part of SOS Guard. Indeed, it is quite shocking when we have learnt that they were not *sécurisés*, they were not kept separately in the right places, as per the law; that there was no CCTV; that shutters were regularly *entrouverts* and that the only employee on site that night, in charge of all this, including all the firearms, was a 76-year old gentleman. Does the hon. Prime Minister feel that, in such a situation, pending the criminal inquiry and criminal charges, that SOS Guard Company should have kept its firearm licence – the firearm licence has been withdrawn from what I heard – as a security company? A security company is supposed to be there to guarantee the security of people and so on. They could not even guarantee at all the security of their firearms. Does not the hon. Prime Minister believe that their permit, as a security company, should have been withdrawn, at least for the time being?

The Prime Minister: The Police are still inquiring, Mr Speaker, Sir. But the licence for firearms has been withdrawn, as I explained. Whether they should actually lose their right to act as a security firm without firearm licences, the Police are looking into that. They will establish whether this is the case or not; it appears to be so.

Mr Bérenger: Other chief executives of other security companies have said that, yes, top officers from the Police visit them regularly to see that their firearms are kept under lock and key and so on. According to my information, this was not the case as far as SOS Security Guard is concerned, because obviously the Police would have seen in what conditions those weapons were kept. Am I right in saying, and is my information correct, that there were no more or less regular visits from the Police in the case of SOS Guard?

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, my understanding is that the Police, in the past, have seen that they were being kept properly and, at some point, obviously, this has lapsed because we have seen what has happened. But the Police tried to go to the premises and check, as far as is physically possible to do so from time to time. The same treatment is for all the rest of the private security firms.

Mr Bérenger: In that case, the hon. Prime Minister tells us that the Police informed him that the last time they checked on SOS Security Guard, everything was fine and, it was supposedly deteriorated after. Can we know the date, even if approximately, on which the Police visited SOS Security Guard to check on their firearms?

The Prime Minister: As I explained in my answer, every year, in any case, they have to visit in a detailed way. That was the last time that it was done, that is, the end of the year.

Mr Bérenger: Can I ask the hon. Prime Minister whether there has been any political interference in that SOS Security Guard affair?

The Prime Minister: I can assure the hon. Leader of the Opposition that there has been not at all interference in that case and, in any case, I would not permit it.

Mr Bérenger: Before the others join, if they want to, Mr Speaker, Sir, normally, if I put that question, you would tell me go to the Registrar of Companies, you will get the shareholding of that company, but the problem is that the shareholding changed last year, according to my information, and the required information, who are the new shareholders, what is the present shareholding structure is not available.

Now, this is a very, very serious case. Can I ask the hon. Prime Minister whether he and his services checked on what is the present shareholding of the company and provide that information to the House?

The Prime Minister: I will certainly provide the information. They did tell me, but I don't have it here. But I know that two of the accused had licences. One was Jean Daniel Marie, the other one was Steve Brasse. As for the others, I can give all the shareholders to the hon. Leader of the Opposition in due time.

Mr Baloomoody: Mr Speaker, Sir, the hon. Prime Minister mentioned that it is for the Police to monitor as far as the security of these ammunitions are concerned. Is the hon. Prime Minister aware that there is, in the Police, a specific Unit, the Firearm Index, which is supposed to look after all these ammunitions around the island, but it is manned by only three officers, one Sergeant and two Constables?

The Prime Minister: The Commissioner of Police feels that this is sufficient, because they are just looking at the procedures. They are not the actual persons who actually go and look at the things. The three people seem to be enough.

Mr Bhagwan: Can the hon. Prime Minister ask the Commissioner of Police whether his attention was drawn to and he informed the company that during the last electoral campaign, it was operating as a private *milice* with certain people with the same arms which have been stolen?

The Prime Minister: Yes, whether they were using arms during the election, we do not know. But I don't want to go into detail, but there are people who are connected with the MMM also in that.

Mr Baloomoody: The hon. Prime Minister mentioned about training....

Mr Bérenger: Why did the hon. Prime Minister have to say 'MMM also', I never said it is the Labour Party.

(Interruptions)

Mr Baloomoody: The hon. Prime Minister mentioned that those officers of the company who are allowed to use firearms are trained. May I know who effect the training and whether they get a certificate and from which authority before they are issued?

The Prime Minister: In fact, that was not the case before and it's only when we passed the Firearms Act that we insisted that these people should be trained and the Commissioner of Police is the one who ensures that those who are trained, the trainers, themselves, are adequately qualified to train.

Mr Bhagwan: Can I know from the hon. Prime Minister whether the Police have observed that, in the past months, the security companies – even that company – have started getting employees above a certain age. We see in parking hospitals – above 65-70. Is the Government contemplating to review this question of age limit because they are supposed to offer security service, especially in handling firearms, and we have seen the results? Would that problem of age limit be taken into consideration urgently by Government?

The Prime Minister: In fact, that is being taken care of by the Commissioner of Police, himself, Mr Speaker, Sir, because I think the hon. Member is right, at that age, you cannot really look at what has happened here!

Mr Baloomoody: My question is simple. Who effects the training for the users of firearms? Is it the security officers or the Police?

The Prime Minister: In fact, it is under the Commissioner of Police who ensures that they have the proper training and then they can train people.

Mr Bérenger: My last question, Mr Speaker, Sir! The inquiry is not over, but the Prime Minister informed us that the Police have already come to the conclusion that there has been serious negligence and it is clear that, for some time - how long we don't know - those firearms

had not been kept under conditions imposed by the law or by the Police. Can I know since then whether the Police have or are carrying out a complete audit of those six security companies that hold firearm licences? A total audit because we know the mood outside in the country as far as *insécurité* is concerned, now cases like that add onto that. Has a complete audit been or is being carried out by the Police as far as those six - five other - companies holding firearms licences are concerned?

The Prime Minister: In fact, that is the case, audit is being done on these six security firms - like also the five others. That is also being carried out and the Commissioner of Police has issued a new reminder to the Divisional Commanders of what they need to do.

Mr Speaker: Time is over!

MOTION

SUSPENSION OF SO 10(2)

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

The Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities (Dr. R. Beebeejaun) rose and seconded.

Question put and agreed to.

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.

(12.04 p.m.)

Ms K. R. Deerpalsing (Third Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes): M. le président, d'abord, je voudrais commencer par féliciter le Premier ministre et le vice Premier ministre, ministre des finances pour la présentation de ce budget que j'avais dit déjà le premier jour que c'était un budget équilibré et c'est un budget qui traduit la vision du Premier ministre qui nous mène depuis 1995 vers une île Maurice moderne, un pays qui célèbre sa diversité culturelle comme un atout.

M. le président, quand on a écouté les membres de l'opposition, il y a quelque chose qui m'a frappé - d'ailleurs je pense que l'honorable Hossen l'a dit - il n'y a pas eu une seule personne dans les rangs de l'opposition qui a fait mention du contexte international dans lequel on est en train d'opérer et je trouve cela un peu déplorable.

M. le président, nous savons qu'il y a une crise financière et économique qui continue à faire des dégâts. Il y a eu la Grèce, l'Irlande, maintenant peut-être le Portugal et l'Espagne, la Belgique sont à risques. J'ai dit que c'est un budget équilibré, M. le président, parce que non seulement les indicateurs macro économiques sont plus ou moins gérables, mais aussi vous avez vu, M. le président, combien d'éléments de protection sociale il y a dans ce budget. Encore une fois, M. le président, c'est important de voir relativement dans quel contexte on est en train de vivre parce que l'île Maurice appartient à ce que je sache à la planète Terre et non pas à une autre planète. J'ai devant moi, M. le président, un document produit par ILO et IMF – International Labour Organisation and IMF - et dans ce document qui vient d'être publié le mois dernier, ils disent ceci sur la protection sociale. Je cite -

‘With 80 per cent of people worldwide having no access to social protection, it is urgent for countries to develop and improve, according to their means, a basic floor of social protection for those living in poverty and vulnerable situations.’

M. le président, ce document de l’ILO et l’IMF dit aussi que depuis 2007, il y a eu plus de trente millions de chômeurs en plus dans le monde. Depuis la crise, il y a eu une augmentation dans le monde entier de plus de trente millions de chômeurs, des gens qui n’ont pas de travail. Plus de 25% sont aux Etats Unis, une puissance économique mondiale. Ici, M. le président, on est en train de créer des emplois à travers des développements comme l’aéroport, le projet Jin Fei, le projet à Les Salines. Contrairement à la situation internationale où il y a des millions de personnes qui sont sans emploi, ici à l’île Maurice, on est en train de créer des emplois.

Au niveau de la protection sociale, comme je vous ai dit, 80% de personnes dans le monde n’ont pas accès à la protection sociale. Ici, dans ce pays, non seulement, on se paie le luxe d’augmenter et d’étendre la protection sociale, mais on a augmenté les pensions ; on a étendu les visites des médecins et toute une pléthore de mesures sociales - je ne vais pas revenir là-dessus, cela a été *canvassed* pleinement – les mesures pour le *housing*, toutes ces mesures sociales, de protection sociale, alors que 80 pour cent de personnes dans le monde entier sont sans protection sociale. L’autre jour, moi-même, je dois vous dire que j’étais, je ne dirais pas choquée, mais surprise agréablement peut-être, d’entendre le ministre des sports dire que son ministère met du transport à la disposition des athlètes quand ils vont faire leur entraînement ; le transport va les prendre *door to door*. C’est incroyable, M. le président, et quand on entend tout cela, on s’amène même à se demander si on n’est pas un peu trop gâté à Maurice.

(Interruptions)

Absolument parce que quand vous regardez ce document de l’ILO et de l’IMF, cela vous donne des frissons. Je reviens là-dessus. J’insiste M. le président. 80 pour cent de la population mondiale est sans protection sociale, *without any social protection – zero*. Ici, le ministère des sports va prendre les athlètes pour leur entraînement de leur maison - aller et retour. Ici on a augmenté la pension de vieillesse. On a augmenté les services pour les handicapés. Ici on a augmenté la pension de vieillesse, les services pour les handicapés, les visites des médecins à la maison, les dialyses, le secteur de la santé, les *fees* des examens en ce qui concerne la *HSC* et le

SC, l'éducation gratuite, le transport gratuit. M. le président, quand vous pensez à cela et vous le comparez à 80% de personnes dans le monde qui sont sans aucune protection sociale, nous sommes presque si ce n'est pas dans le paradis ici.

M. le président, comme je vous ai mentionné tout à l'heure, quand nous comparons aussi les indicateurs macroéconomiques – et ce n'est pas grâce au MMM, je dois le dire – M. le président, j'ai un graphique que je vais déposer, au niveau de la dette publique. Le ministre des finances, dans le budget, a dit que la dette publique va être à 60.7%. Quand vous regardez comment on se compare avec le Japon, l'Angleterre, le Portugal, l'Espagne, toutes les grandes puissances Européennes, on est au-dessous...

Mr Speaker: These are no longer countries to be compared within view of their dire economic situation.

Ms Deerpalsing : *Yes, exactly, Mr Speaker.* Mais on peut le dire comme ça, mais ce sont des pays qui ont des ressources que nous, nous n'avons pas. Nous n'avons pas les ressources que ces pays ont. Donc, on doit être plus prudent. Quand on regarde au niveau de la gestion macroéconomique, on doit dire qu'on s'est pas mal tiré d'affaire. C'est pour cela que je dois dire que quand le Premier ministre a dit que c'est un budget de continuité, effectivement, si on a pu faire ce budget aujourd'hui, c'est parce qu'on a pu gérer les indicateurs macroéconomiques de ce pays pendant les cinq dernières années sous le *leadership* du Premier ministre. Bien sûr, il y a eu des items de budget sur lesquels on peut être d'accord ou ne pas être d'accord.

Laissez-moi vous rappeler, M. le président, c'est sous le dernier mandat - et ça aussi c'est quelque chose de *unprecedented* - le prix de l'huile, *oil prices since 1970s have stayed more or less within a band of 20 to 40 dollars per barrel, gone up and down, but within that band. You can go and see - I have the graph also here.*

(Interruptions)

They have gone up, but not over the 40 dollars per barrel. I can give you the graph, Mr Speaker, Sir, but you will see that it has not increased over the 40 dollars per barrel mark. Even with the Gulf War of 1991, it went up to about 42 dollars per barrel. So, it has been more or less within that band. Mais sous le dernier mandat, à partir de 2006 et 2007 et quand vous regardez le prix de one barrel of oil, June 2008 was the peak - 139 dollars par barrel. Le problème ce n'est pas

que cela augmente, parce que le prix a augmenté depuis 1970, *mais it is a sharp increase at one go and that's the problem*. C'est sous le gouvernement du Dr. Navin Ramgoolam qu'on a eu ce *sharp increase* et on a su le gérer, M. le président.

M. le président, laissez-moi venir maintenant sur des commentaires qui ont été faits par l'opposition et quelques petites réponses. Premièrement, M. le président, je voudrais dire que j'ai entendu – je ne sais pas si c'est vrai – que le MMM va apparemment prendre la décision de boycotter ou non le *summing-up*. On est en train de parler d'un budget, c'est une institution, M. le président. Ce Parlement n'est pas un Parlement à la carte. On ne choisit pas ce qu'on veut écouter et ne pas écouter. Ce n'est pas à la carte ici, c'est une institution sérieuse. Donc, je déplore cette attitude de boycott et *walk out*, etc. D'ailleurs il y a une phrase qui dit –

« *A real leader faces the music even if he does not like the tune.* »

But then the question arises whether there is a real leader over there.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: You should not start speaking on their leadership.

Ms Deerpalsing: I am not, they are. Mr Speaker, Sir.

L'honorable Bhagwan a dit que j'étais la personne qui avait été la plus applaudie. J'assume ! Au fait concernant le budget de 2006 *overall*, il y avait de très bonnes mesures et il fallait sortir du modèle économique qu'on avait pour aller vers un autre modèle économique. Ce modèle économique, c'était la bonne décision à prendre. Je dois vous dire, bien-sûr, que c'était moi qui avais répondu au *Leader* de Opposition d'alors qui était l'honorable Nando Bodha. Mais seulement le budget de 2006 disait que c'était la fin des privilèges et j'étais d'accord. C'est vrai qu'il faut qu'on se mette dans une position où on est plus compétitif dans le monde. Mais la fin des privilèges veut dire la fin des privilèges pour tout le monde. Ce n'est que l'année d'après quand j'ai remarqué ce qui se tramait avec l'original de *Multi-Annual Adaption Strategy* que j'ai réalisé qu'il y avait des privilèges qui étaient en train d'être gardés pour certaines personnes. C'est alors que j'ai commencé à contester certaines mesures qui avaient été prises. Mais *overall*, c'était un budget qui traçait le chemin pour sortir de l'Etat d'urgence économique qu'eux-mêmes avaient dit pour aller vers un pays qui pouvait attirer le *Foreign Direct Investment*, qui pouvait créer de l'emploi et dynamiser le pays.

M. le président, plusieurs membres de l'opposition ont fait beaucoup de remarques sarcastiques par rapport à la *NRPT* et d'autres mesures qui ont été annoncées dans ce budget. Je suppose qu'ils n'ont pas lu à la page 9 de notre manifeste électoral - laissez-moi vous citer la phrase - le troisième point dit « le remplacement de la *NRPT* en fonction d'un nouveau cadastre. » Donc, c'était déjà prévu qu'avec le nouveau cadastre – d'ailleurs, vous savez bien qu'il y a le projet *LAVIMS*, il y a un cadastre qui est en préparation - la *NRPT* devient effectivement caduque. Si je comprends bien, le cadastre est bien avancé et ce serait tout à fait juste que les gens qui ont un *property* d'une certaine valeur paient le *property tax* dessus, les grands bungalows dans l'est, l'ouest, etc. et cela sera en fonction du cadastre. Donc, il n'y a aucune surprise. Je crois que presque tous les membres de l'opposition ont commenté dessus. Il n'y a aucune surprise. La *NRPT*, les taxes sur les intérêts étaient déjà annoncées dans le manifeste électoral. D'ailleurs, je dois vous dire, M. le président, pour ceux qui ne le savent pas, c'est l'honorable Suren Dayal qui a été le premier à lancer la flèche sur la *NRPT*. Je me souviens très bien. Le 9 juin le budget avait été présenté. Le samedi 10 juin, à 9 heures, dans le *Conference Room*, on a passé une heure à écouter l'honorable Suren Dayal envoyer des flèches et c'est lui qui a commencé à parler sur la *NRPT* et de dire qu'il fallait revoir cette taxe. Effectivement, on a revu. Si vous vous souvenez, concernant la *NRPT*, il y avait la taxe sur le *bare land* aussi et cela a été revu. Donc, c'est pour vous dire bien qu'étant *backbencher* au côté de la majorité, vous pouvez aussi faire avancer vos points de vue. Il y a un gouvernement qui est à l'écoute, il y a un Premier ministre qui est à l'écoute et s'il faut ajuster, on ajuste. *C'est ça governing*. *Governing is about taking some measures and then looking at the evidence. If the evidence shows that you have to readjust, you readjust. Nothing is set in stone.*

M. le président, il y a aussi eu les commentaires de l'honorable Bhagwan et l'honorable Lesjongard sur Maurice Ile Durable. Ils disent que Monsieur Joël de Rosnay est une carte maîtresse – je suis en train de dire ce que l'honorable Bhagwan a dit. Mais il faut savoir et c'est bon de rafraichir la mémoire des membres de l'autre côté de la Chambre. C'est le même professeur Joël de Rosnay qui avait été *appointed* par le Premier ministre dans son premier mandat. Mais par fanatisme politique, en 2000, le professeur Joël de Rosnay a été remercié. Cinq ans de perdu ! C'était le Premier ministre, le Dr. Navin Ramgoolam qui avait fait venir le professeur Joël de Rosnay dans son premier mandat. Mais en 2000, cette même opposition aujourd'hui qui est en train de dire que le professeur Joël de Rosnay est une carte maîtresse, avait

remercié le professeur Joël de Rosnay. Et c'est cette même opposition, M. le président, qui aujourd'hui est en train de donner des leçons sur Maurice Ile Durable, ces mêmes personnes qui allaient *subscribe* à la destruction de la Vallée de Ferney. Le Premier ministre l'a dit l'autre jour dans son discours à l'ouverture du *workshop* pour le MID. C'est le Premier ministre, Dr. Navin Ramgoolam, qui a eu le courage, malgré le fait que tout le monde lui disait que cela ne pouvait pas se faire, d'arrêter ce désastre écologique qui allait être la destruction de la Vallée de Ferney et la biodiversité que cela contenait. On peut dire ce qu'on veut de l'autre côté de la chambre, dans l'opposition, mais *as the hon. Prime Minister said the other day, a long journey starts with the first step and it will go down in history. History will recognise that it was hon. Dr. Navin Ramgoolam who started this long journey to Maurice Ile Durable.*

Mr Speaker, Sir, I heard hon. Navarre-Marie talk about her constituency and said that it is being penalised and all that. Mr Speaker, Sir, when we are here, we are here to defend our constituencies. I would say that if there are things that are happening in your constituency that is not to your liking, then the hon. Member comes here and fights for her constituency. But, it is not right, Mr Speaker, Sir, to instil doubts in the minds of people. Because what do you do then? And I have said it before, Mr Speaker, Sir, empowerment is not only monetary and physical infrastructure, it is also psychological. If you keep ramming down the throat of people that their case is hopeless, they will interiorise it. What do you have to do as a Member of Parliament? If there are things that are going wrong, you come here and you fight for them. You give them hope, you do not give them cynicism because you push them down more. You do not empower them, you disempower them. This, I think, was important to say, Mr Speaker, Sir.

On the issue of the fight against poverty, there have been a number of orators on the other side of the House including hon. Lesjongard and others. The fight against poverty, Mr Speaker, Sir, I have to confess that I always get a little bit irritated when people stand up, even on this side of the House, and I have to say - the previous Minister of Finance used to say it - that "no Government has done so much to fight against poverty". I get irritated when I hear this. Do you know why, Mr Speaker, Sir? Because you were there, what was this country like at independence, in 1968? Hon. Bodha said that the per capita income in 1968 was the \$100 per capita income, Mr Speaker, Sir and today it is \$8,000. It is 80 times. What are we talking about? Fight against poverty! When did it start? Now? Previous mandate? We are talking about since independence, Mr Speaker, Sir. To come from \$100 per capita income to \$8,000

today! The fight against poverty is in these figures, Mr Speaker, Sir, going from \$100 per capita to \$8,000 today. The fight against poverty started then with Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam, with the Labour Party, with you there, Mr Speaker, Sir, taking thousands of policy measures to get people out of poverty. I have to say that we have to be a bit humble. We must have humility. Yes, the fight against poverty continues and it has to go on, and it keeps going on everywhere in the world. But, please, let us not come and beat our stomach and say, this Government or that Government has done the most about the fight against poverty. Let's pay homage to what this country was as V. S. Naipaul said: the overcrowded barracoon in 1968, where it started and where we are today. That is fight against poverty. It has been an ongoing fight and it continues. Today, with hon. Duval at the helm of the Ministry for Social Integration, it is a signal – I have said it – that it is a front bench Member and it is not, as hon. Lesjongard has said, that it is *un constat, un aveu d'échec*. No. On the contrary, it is a signal that this Government is serious and has recognised that any development comes with people who are the most vulnerable and who are the most likely to be forgotten or to be left on the wayside. This is what development is all about across the world. This is the capitalist system, the free market economy, whatever flavour of free market you are talking about, this is what happens. *Le capitalisme, l'économie des marchés fait qu'il y a certaines personnes qui ne sont pas assez armées pour être dans le mainstream et it's a recognition by this Government that we have, as we create growth, en même temps il faut accompagner ceux qui sont les plus vulnérables. Quel signal le plus fort qu'il y a qu'un vice-Premier ministre, le no. 3 du gouvernement pour chapeauter ce dossier, M. le président ? Je pense que ce que les honorables membres de l'opposition ont dit n'est pas sérieux du tout.*

M. le président, laissez-moi venir à la compensation salariale. Je vois que l'honorable Ribot n'est pas là. Dans son discours, elle a fait tout un état sur ce qu'on peut acheter avec R 190. Elle a demandé si on peut acheter des boîtes de 'kraft' etc. Elle a donné plusieurs exemples. M. le président, je pense qu'il faut qu'on regarde ce sujet d'une façon sérieuse et moins naïve et il faut le situer. C'est la base même de l'économie. La compensation salariale, M. le président est une équation, est égale à l'inflation plus le *increase in productivity*. Pour un exemple concret, quand on parle de l'inflation, c'est du coût de la vie. Si l'année dernière quelqu'un pouvait acheter trois *loaves of bread* avec R 10, avec l'inflation, c'est-à-dire pour ajuster au coût de la vie, il faut que cette année on donne la compensation pour le coût de la vie.

Il faut donner assez pour que cette personne puisse acheter les trois *loaves of bread*. Si l'année dernière il pouvait acheter trois *loaves of bread* avec R 10 et que si cette année il lui manque 10 ou 15 sous pour acheter ces trois *loaves of bread*, il faut lui donner cette différence là. Je suis en train de parler du *cost of living* seulement. Maintenant, vous ajoutez dessus la productivité du pays. Je suis sûre que l'honorable Li Kwong Wing sait exactement ce que je suis en train de dire, et j'espère qu'il pourra éclairer les autres membres de l'autre côté de la Chambre. Parce que le paradoxe c'est quoi, M. le président ? Vous le savez ainsi que le ministre des finances et tout le monde. Le paradoxe c'est que si vous donnez plus que cela, à chaque fois que vous injectez une masse monétaire dans le système, *it will fuel inflation. It is a paradox. If you give way more than the compensation, the cost of inflation as well as the productivity rise call for, it will create inflation which means that* quand l'inflation augmente, les prix augmentent et, paradoxalement, c'est au détriment de ceux qui sont au plus bas de l'échelle. C'est cela le paradoxe. On ne peut pas donner ou injecter une masse d'argent dans le système plus que cette équation que j'ai mentionnée, parce que cela crée l'inflation. L'inflation est la taxe la plus *nasty* sur ceux qui sont au bas de l'échelle.

Je vais vous donner un exemple et j'espère que l'opposition ne va pas faire de commentaires. J'ai trouvé les chiffres dans le rapport annuel de la Banque de Maurice. En 2005, qui était une année électorale, l'inflation était à 3.9% - *year on year inflation rate*. Mais, la compensation qui avait été donnée en 2005 était beaucoup plus que le coût de la vie et la productivité demandée. *And, guess what, M. le président ?* L'inflation sort de 3.9% en 2005 pour venir à 11.9% en 2006! C'est la preuve qu'il ne faut pas donner plus que le *cost of living adjustment* et la productivité, parce que cela a un effet sur l'inflation et, quand l'inflation augmente, cela a un effet sur les prix qui augmentent pour ceux qui sont au plus bas de l'échelle. C'est la pire des choses à faire, parce que la spirale de l'inflation *comes with a tail that hits you. This is what should not be done.* C'est pour cela que la compensation salariale n'est pas une compensation pour acheter trois boîtes de fromage 'Kraft' ou je ne sais quoi. Ce n'est pas cela du tout. C'est pour pouvoir ajuster à ce qu'on pouvait acheter avant et la partie de la productivité. Au moins, si le peuple ne peut pas comprendre cette équation, il est important que les honorables membres de cette Chambre comprennent cette équation de base de l'économie. Si vous voulez faire du bien pour le peuple, vous ne pouvez pas injecter de l'argent au-delà de cette équation,

parce que la preuve - je vous ai donné la preuve - est que *it fuels inflation, and inflation is the worst curse for the people at the bottom* de l'échelle.

Voilà, M. le président, ce que j'avais à dire par rapport aux commentaires qui avaient été faits de l'autre côté de la Chambre. Je voudrais maintenant parler d'un ou de deux points sur la gestion des ressources. Je vois que, dans le budget, on a mis pas mal de mesures. On a dit qu'on va fusionner les *water resources*, et j'ai entendu le *Deputy Prime Minister*, dans son discours sur le *Government Programme*, parler de l'eau. Ici même, M. le président, des deux côtés de la Chambre, les honorables membres se lèvent et se plaignent de la problématique de l'eau.

Dans son discours, le Deputy Prime Minister avait dit "70% of our potable water is dependent on seasonal variability of rainfall." It is scary, M. le président, because we are in climate change, and we do not know when the rains will come. On top of that, we have 40 to 50 per cent loss in the pipes. At the MID workshop that was launched last Wednesday, Mr Mahomed's presentation showed that the rate of growth in demand for water has gone up almost threefold. What do we do, Mr Speaker, Sir? Of course, there is what has been announced; there is the team from Singapore, which is reviewing the management of water. All this will take time - replacing the pipes.

Mr Speaker, Sir, there are other possibilities - and I am putting it on the table here - and there are new technologies available for desalination.

Mr Speaker, Sir, when I went to the ACP/EU Parliament, there had been presentations on climate change, on sustainability and on environment. Ambassador Gunessee was with me, and we saw the presentation that some experts had shown. There is a new technology that uses wind power - *éolienne* - because to desalinate we need energy. There is a technology available now that combines *éolienne*, which produces the energy to desalinate. Of course, what has been the problem with desalination is that chemicals have always been used and so on. This one does not use any chemical. They are taking care of the problem of brine, the output which is heavily concentrated in salt. We can adapt it to our country, because in Mauritius, Mr Speaker, Sir, we even import salt sometimes. Brine is heavily concentrated in salt. They even have solar salt pans, and you can produce your salt. In the tuna manufacturing, they use brine in order to hold the tuna for export. You can use all these by-products efficiently, like we do for *bagasse*.

I would make an appeal to the hon. Minister of Environment and Sustainable Development, to the vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, to the Prime Minister and everybody else, to take a serious look because, as I said, we have an ambassador in Brussels who is very dynamic and very serious. He has even talked to the Commissioners there, and we are able to get help under the EU energy facility. Guess what, Mr Speaker, Sir? Some hon. Members on the other side of the House *étaient en train de parler du coût*. Mr Speaker, Sir, the cost to produce 4 to 20 meter cube of distilled water per hour is about - the whole installation cost - €2.5 m., out of which we are eligible for help under the EU Energy Facility. The German Government has also said that they are interested in helping us to implement this. As I said, they do not use any chemicals; the brine, which is the output, is treated elsewhere. So, it takes away all the objections that were there in the original old technology.

Mr Speaker, Sir, if we were to install only three or four on the east coast for the hotels, it would significantly lower the strain on local water consumption. This can be done before November next year. So, if we are serious, we can get it done and, next November, we could have three or four already installed, and the local water demand would be eased up.

There is another thing that I noted from the Deputy Prime Minister's speech, and I am very happy that he is now excited about solar photovoltaic after his trip in New Delhi. Mr Speaker, Sir, this is another thing that we have been canvassing, myself and ambassador Gunessee, at the level of the European Parliament and the European Commission. In this country, we are drenched with the sun, and we even have a party which represents the sun with us!

We have always said that solar photovoltaic is too expensive compared to coal and heavy fuel oil; it is four, five or seven times more expensive. But, my submission, Mr Speaker, Sir, is that the analysis is flawed. When we are looking at how much more expensive, we are looking at how much it costs to produce 1 kilowatt hour with coal and heavy fuel oil and we are saying how much it costs to produce 1 kilowatt hour with solar photovoltaic. We have to deduct what you would not import in terms of oil and coal. That is the real analysis. If you just look at what it costs 1 kilowatt hour for coal and heavy fuel oil and what it costs for solar photovoltaic, then you are not making the right comparison because you are not deducting what the country has to

import in terms of heavy fuel oil and *charbon*. *Le charbon et le prix de l'huile, M. le président, ce n'est pas* predictable.

Again in that report that I was mentioning, they were saying that OPEC will not be able to produce; the level of production of the OPEC countries today, which is at the level of 1970's. Production is drying up, Mr Speaker, Sir. What does that mean? Looking forward, the price of oil will go up - by a lot. When the price of oil will go up, immediately the price of coal will go up. So when we are making this analysis of what it costs for 1 kilowatt hour of photovoltaic energy, we have to factor in not only the forecast of costs, but what we will not have to import if we produce more of solar photovoltaic energy. We are talking about *Maurice Ile durable*, I think it is time now for us to go seriously with photovoltaic, like Réunion Island, Mr Speaker, Sir. Réunion Island, next to us, has done a marvellous job – a success. So there is no reason why we should look at all these figures, which are flawed in their analysis.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the Budget speaks about resource mobilisation and increase in productivity in the public sector. There is one thing that I will like to propose that I know exists in Canada, Mr Speaker, Sir, and that is a system of sabbatical in the Canadian Federal Government. Hon. Dr. Jeetah has been talking about the idea of having one graduate per family. If you work with the Canadian Federal Government, you can choose to plan for a sabbatical, three, four or five years down the road, and you adapt a programme for yourself, where for the three, four or five years preceding your sabbatical, you take 2/3 or 50% or 60% of your salary. The rest of your salary goes into a fund, which gets interests and so on. When you come to the year that you take your sabbatical, you get paid that money, which was put aside in the fund. When you go to do that sabbatical, you can go and do a Master's in something, you may want to go and learn to paint, be an artist, you want to go and learn to play an instrument - I heard the hon. Minister of Social Security talking, last Friday, about *volontariat* - you want to go and spend your time in doing one year of *volontariat*, but you are not without a salary. You are given your salary, which had been withheld, but it is a system which makes sure that you are not without an income at the end of the month, that you can pay your bills and you can still do something to fulfil yourself. That could be something that Government; the hon. Minister for Education, the hon. Minister for Tertiary Education and hon. Minister of Finance can look at, if we want to upgrade the level of our human capital.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I am going to speak very briefly about the democratisation of the economy and food security. Mr Speaker, Sir, when we look at *la démocratisation de l'économie*, il y a beaucoup qui a été fait et il y a beaucoup qui reste à faire. Lindsay Rivière, dans son éditorial de la semaine dernière, donne les résultats de son point de vue et ce n'est pas quelqu'un *who necessarily believes in the democratisation of the economy*, je cite: « ce déplacement d'emphase de l'occident vers l'Asie correspond à deux objectifs prioritaires - prendre les vagues internationales actuelles, mais aussi rééquilibrer le secteur privé traditionnel. »

Et plus tard dans ce même éditorial, il le dit: « déjà on voit se multiplier, se diversifier rapidement les *players* dans la communauté locale des affaires. A ce rythme, d'ici à dix ans, le visage du monde mauricien des affaires aura été radicalement transformé comme en témoigne déjà la publication de *the top 100* compagnies de *Business Mag.* » C'est Lindsay Rivière qui le dit- ce qui veut dire qu'il reconnaît que pendant les cinq dernières années, le visage du monde des affaires mauriciens est en transformation. Si ce n'est pas là le certificat que la démocratisation de l'économie est en marche, je ne sais pas ce qui l'est, M. le président.

Avec le ministre de l'agriculture et la démocratisation de l'économie, on a travaillé plusieurs plans, surtout pour les femmes – comme vous le savez, le chômage pour les femmes est plus élevé à Maurice que pour les hommes. Pour les hommes, c'est le *frictional unemployment*, mais pour les femmes c'est à peu près à 12%, si je ne me trompe pas. On a travaillé avec le ministre de l'agro-industrie, avec l'honorable Cader Sayed-Hossen et moi-même, pour un plan où les femmes pourront cultiver plusieurs choses et leur donner de l'emploi et de venir des agro-entrepreneurs, M. le président. Je ne vais pas rentrer dans les détails, mais je dois dire que c'est un plan qui est très prometteur *and we look forward to working on these, Mr Speaker, Sir.*

Mr Speaker, Sir, I will now just move to projects in my Constituency and I will not talk lengthily, but I will concentrate on one or two items.

Mr Speaker, Sir, l'honorable Quirin parlait de la délocalisation du stade de Candos et il a fait tout un bruit dessus. Peut être qu'il aurait dû consulter son voisin, l'honorable Ramano, qui a été très favorable à la décision. Oui, je l'ai écouté à la radio - je ne sais pas, peut être il a changé. Quand le conseil municipal a pris la décision de bouger le marché au stade de Candos, l'honorable Ramano a été sur la radio pour dire que c'est une bonne décision. Je dois dire, pour l'information de l'honorable Quirin - parce que ce n'est pas comme si le football est en train

d'être massacré à Quatre-Bornes, M. le président - vous savez combien de terrains de foot il y a dans la circonscription numéro 18 ? Je ne compte pas la partie de la circonscription numéro 14 où il y a trois. Il y a un stade de standard international qui est en train d'être construit près de l'école Chooromoney et c'est celui là qui va remplacer le stade de Candos. Dans la circonscription numéro 14, il y a deux autres. Il y a un terrain de foot à la Résidence Kennedy et un autre à Palma. Je ne compte pas ces trois là. Vous savez combien de terrain de foot il y a dans la circonscription numéro 18 ? Quatorze terrains de foot ! Et je vais vous les dire: un à Ebène, un à la Résidence St Jean, un à la Résidence Père Laval, un à l'école Sir Virahsawmy Ringadoo, un à Emilienne Rochecouste, un à l'école Baichoo Madhoo, un à l'école Beau Séjour, un à Pavillon, un au centre communautaire La Source. On a même agréé, avec le ministre de l'éducation, pour le terrain de foot de SSS boys à Ebène, a être ouvert pour le public et il y a quatre terrains de foot à Sodnac, où il y avait le SMF qui faisait leur exercice de tir. Je dois remercier le Premier ministre suite à une question parlementaire que j'avais posée ici pour faire bouger la SMF. Le Premier ministre a agi et la SMF a transféré le terrain de tir et aujourd'hui à la place même où il y avait ce terrain de tir, où il y a quatre terrains de football, il y a un merveilleux *'health track'* qui est en construction pour les habitants de la circonscription dont quatre terrains de foot, plus trois dans la circonscription no. 14 qui sont *adjacent* à la circonscription no. 18. Cela vous fait 17 terrains de foot pour les gens qui votent dans la municipalité de Quatre Bornes. Ce ne sont pas les terrains de foot qui manquent, ce ne sont pas les infrastructures qui manquent, bien sûr, c'est l'engouement, c'est amener les gens à jouer au football. Et puis aussi M. le président, excusez moi de le dire, c'est dommage, c'est comme cela mais le football à Maurice ce sont les hommes, 14 terrains de football et les femmes n'ont pas droit a des terrains d'entraînement. It is *'gender bias'*, donc pourquoi je dis cela, je vais venir à pourquoi je dis cela. Je le dis parce que..

(Interruptions)

Moi j'ai joué au football, j'étais pionnier à jouer au football féminin au QEC, donc j'ai joué au football, j'aime le football, mais il n'y a pas beaucoup de femmes qui jouent au football à Maurice. Ce que veux dire, pourquoi je suis en train de dire cela parce que c'est le projet de marché qu'on est en train d'envisager, je dis bien « envisager » au stade de Candos. Pourquoi le stade de Candos ? Ce n'est pas idéal, je suis d'accord mais là où il y a le marché de Quatre Bornes, il y a 4,000 mètres carrés qui sont *available*, qui appartiennent à la municipalité et aussi

qu'on loue avec Tinkler etc., 4,000 mètres carrés. Au stade de Candos, il y a 20,000 mètres carrés qui appartiennent à la municipalité. Le problème à Quatre Bornes est un problème de *availability of space*. Je n'ai aucun problème si on a un autre terrain mais il n'y a pas de terrain disponible à Quatre Bornes pour pouvoir faire un nouveau marché, le problème c'est que là où on est avec 4,000 mètres carrés, l'honorable Bachoo va le dire, il y aura le *transit* système, le métro léger ou le *rapid transit system* qui va venir bouffer la moitié de cet espace. Cela veut dire 2,000 mètres carrés *gone*.

On ne peut pas faire '*underground*', le projet qu'on veut faire, le métro léger, on va déjà fouiller, cela va être trop petit surtout avec le problème de parking. Vous le savez, si vous allez à Quatre Bornes un samedi, c'est un cauchemar, donc comment allez-vous mettre sur 2,000 milles mètres carrés le marché, la foire, le parking et tout cela ? C'est impossible. Donc s'il y a eu une alternative où il y a de la place, je veux bien mais le problème c'est qu'on ne peut pas maintenant aller faire l'acquisition d'un terrain, cela va prendre trop de temps. Je voudrais que le ministre des finances puisse voir avec le ministre de l'infrastructure publique, ce qu'on veut faire à Candos, ce n'est pas juste un marché. Ce qu'on a envisagé avec les conseillers de la municipalité, ce n'est pas un marché seulement et c'est là que certaines personnes sont en train de faire fausse route.

Ce qu'on veut faire c'est un *cross between Covent Garden and Granville Island Market in Vancouver* et ce qu'on veut faire c'est un *Project for Public Space, for community living*. C'est ce qu'on veut faire, ici. Aujourd'hui au marché de Quatre Bornes vous avez 552 étals; 552 étals le Samedi où on vend les légumes et puis ils doivent déménager, le lendemain c'est la foire avec 552 étals. Ce qu'on veut faire c'est *one floor* à Candos où ailleurs *one floor* de 600 étals pour les marchands de légumes, de poisson et de viande.

Second floor avec 600 étals pour la foire, *third floor* avec le *food court* et les *citizen service, one stop shop citizen service*. CWA, CEB, *Post Office, Civil Status Office*, les banques etc. et quatrième étage - c'est pour cela que j'avais dit le football pour les hommes - un espace pour les femmes, pour le yoga, pour la méditation, pour les exercices, pour l'aérobic, pour les jeunes aussi, un cyber café.

We can envisage a lot of things et en plus de cela, un *parking tower* parce que le *parking* sera très important et en sus de cela, il y a déjà un terrain de volleyball et de basket ball qu'on

peut redynamiser, où on peut organiser des tournois tous les samedis et tous les dimanches. Ce sera un espace vivant, en sus de cela, ce qu'on a conçu dans ce projet, c'est un espace pour les arts et pour la culture. C'est-à-dire you have an arts dome where you can have exhibits, you can have performances, you can have street art, you can have a children activity area, this whole place would become a model of community space living. It is not just a 'bazar' project, it is a project for public space. And for my friends, hon. Mrs Hanoomanjee, hon. Hervé Aimée and hon. Ganoo who represent constituency no. 14 and hon. Radegonde, it is a project which would revitalise that whole neighbourhood of Résidence Kennedy, Résidence Candos, Mgr Leen and that whole area which we have to say has been a bit neglected because we always concentrate dans la circonscription no. 18, on se concentre toujours dans les développements de ce côté là.

Mais ici l'espace au stade Candos, c'est entre la circonscription no.18 et la circonscription no. 14 et c'est un projet qui va revitaliser le *neighbourhood* de Résidence Kennedy, Résidence Candos, Mgr Leen. It is a dream Mr Speaker, Sir, whether it will be realised, I don't know, but it is a dream and it is really a model. If people are willing to listen to what we want to do, it is really a model of community living, community activities because on any one day citizens of constituency no. 14, constituency no. 18 and other people can come there and engage in several types of activity. They can come and watch a *tournoi de volley ou de basket*. And we are also thinking about a jogging track at the back where they can jog. They can come and see a performance of music, they can come and just enjoy some street art, they can come and go for yoga classes upstairs. They can come and buy their vegetables; they can go and buy their things at '*La Foire*'. There is a multitude of activities and this is what happens in several other markets like the market in Granville Island in Vancouver. It is a beautiful project Mr Speaker, Sir, what we need is the space, wherever we do it, but we need to have the space to do it.

I know my time is fast running out, I am almost done, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Speaker: If you can wind up in three minutes.

Ms Deerpalsing Yes I am winding up. Mr Speaker, Sir, I would like to conclude by saying that this is a budget, *comme je l'ai dit qui traduit la vision du Premier ministre* and Mr Speaker, Sir, as you know the Labour Party is about to celebrate its 75th anniversary and I am proud that we are still the drivers of progressive politics in this country. I am proud that this

party today is being led by the *incontestable rassembleur*, le Dr. Navin Ramgoolam, un visionnaire qui avait prédit la fin du protocole sucre, qui avait commencé le programme de modernisation de ce pays en 1995, de démocratisation de l'économie, d'arrêter la destruction de la Vallée de Ferney, Maurice Ile Durable, sa diplomatie économique, il n'y a personne d'autre, il n'y a aucun leader politique dans ce pays qui a le carnet d'adresse, la diplomatie économique du Premier ministre le Dr. Navin Ramgoolam. Il n'y a personne d'autre qui a cette dimension de leadership.

Labour Party stalwarts like yourself and other people, Mr Speaker, Sir, have done a lot. We have done nothing, the young one. We have done nothing for that legacy, but what we can do is live up to the principles of the Labour Party, defend this Labour Party, *corps et âme et c'est ce qu'on doit faire* and the way to do it Mr Speaker, Sir, is what I call the CDEF formula, Conviction + Devotion + Energy = Fulfillment.

To end, let me use a quote that resonates at a personal level, but what resonates also with what I believe to be a core Labour Party principle. It is about social duty, commitment, detachment and freedom. I quote from Vandana Shiva, who is a physicist, an eco-feminist, an environmental activist and an author. She is based in New Delhi, and has authored hundreds of papers in leading scientific and technical journals -

“The context is not in your control, but your commitment is yours to make, and you can make the deepest commitment with a total detachment about where it will take you. You want it to lead to a better world and you shape your actions and take full responsibility for them, but then you also have detachment. And that combination of deep passion and deep detachment allows me to take on the next challenge, because I don't cripple myself, I don't tie myself in knots. I function like a free being. I think getting that freedom is a social duty, because I think we owe it to each other not to burden each other with prescription and demands.”

So, take the context, do your commitment, do it with deep passion and detachment about where it will take you.

Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Speaker: I will suspend for one hour and fifteen minutes.

At 1.00 p.m. the sitting was suspended.

On resuming at 2.19 p.m with the Deputy Speaker in the Chair.

Mr V. Baloomoody (Third Member for GRNW & Port Louis West): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as this is my first speech, since the last General Election, let me take this opportunity to congratulate you for your election as Deputy Speaker and, of course, congratulate Mr Speaker for his election in this House.

I also congratulate all Members of the House who have been elected and a special congratulation to those newcomers in this House and to my learned friend, hon. Yatin Varma, who has been appointed Attorney General.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, on Friday 19 November, the hon. Prime Minister and Minister of Finance presented his Budget and he qualified same as a Mauritian Dream. There have been many reactions from all sectors of the community with regard to his Budget. Having listened to hon. Ms Deerpalsing, who I must say has been very calm today with her speech, it confirms my belief that the Labour Party wants to take all the credits of this Budget. I had some doubts before, but having listened to hon. Lormus Bundhoo and my dear friend, hon. Ms Deerpalsing, it confirms my belief that the Labour Party wants to take all the credit for this Budget.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order!

Mr Baloomoody: To come and say, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that the removal of the NRPT is the doing of hon. Dayal...

(Interruptions)

Four years after it has been passed - in 2006 - and removing it in 2010 is the doing of hon. Dayal! Coming to this House to say that the increase in salary we gave in 2005 was an insult, harm to the economy when, in fact, it was hon. Pravind Jugnauth who did that in 2005 when he was Minister of Finance! There is a limit. Either we agree that it is a *budget de continuité* but, at least, we give the devil his due.

The MSM, hon. Pravind Jugnauth, has campaigned in the last four years, together with the MMM, for the introduction of subsidy, for the removal of NRPT and we fought together and at the first opportunity he has had, he has done it. It is clear that it is a *budget de continuité*. Just remember the date of the presentation of the Budget! When we all left here, where did the Prime Minister go? He rushed to his office to give a press conference in solo, explaining his Budget, which his Minister of Finance has presented to the House. What is worst, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, his man at the MBC - how do we call him? Hitler! - made sure that the press conference would be the first item of the 7.30 p.m news; then came the presentation of the Budget by hon. Pravind Jugnauth. That's not fair! It is not honest, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Yes, please.

Dr. Jeetah: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the hon. Member is suggesting that on this side of the House, we have employed some person by the name of Hitler. I think if the hon. Member understands

(Interruptions)

Let me finish, please.

The Deputy Speaker: Let me know the point of order. I don't get the point of order.

Dr. Jeetah: The hon. Member is casting aspersion as if something awful is being done on this side of the House.

(Interruptions)

He is casting aspersion as to the behaviour of the Members from this side of the House, with regard to using the term 'Hitler'. We all know what Hitler stands for.

The Deputy Speaker: No, it was not meant to any Member of this House; but, in any event, even to some other person we should have some respect.

Mr Baloomoody: The so-called Hitler, not named by me, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, but one of his staff, who has worked under him, has been a victim of his politics.

(Interruptions)

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, let me quote two extracts from the press at least, one from Dr. Vishal Ragoobur, Senior Economist of the MEF, talking about the Mauritian Dream. He says clearly :

‘This is a *budget de continuité* and the Minister has kept all the fundamental paradigm of the Budget since 2006 onwards. There is no change whatsoever.’

Let me quote from another newspaper -

‘*Alors qu’un budget Sithanen mobilisait l’opinion publique pendant des semaines ou même des mois, le budget de Pravind Jugnauth a attiré l’attention de la population pendant seulement un weekend. Si je me base sur les commentaires, etc., nous avons droit à un budget de continuité. Le Premier ministre a donné le cap, il y a un peu plus de cinq ans. Son nouveau ministre des finances se contente de mener le bateau à bon port. Economie, pilotage automatique (...).*’

It is from the ‘Mauritius Times’ of Thursday 02 December 2010. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, *c’est une politique de continuité, un faux divorce comme disait ‘L’Express’ du 15 août 2010.* The pilot or co-pilot is now hon. Pravind Jugnauth and the captain remains the hon. Prime Minister.

It is clear, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this is a Budget which carries out the path traced by the *Alliance Sociale*, and where today we have another pilot, who is hon. Pravind Jugnauth in the same economic plane, on *pilotage automatique*.

But what is more revealing, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, all these vigorous campaigns led by hon. Pravind Jugnauth when he was outside Parliament, and when he joined Parliament against the then Minister of Finance, today confirms that he had nothing to do whatsoever with the economic policy carried out by the then Minister of Finance. *C’est un budget de continuité!* So, all his criticisms were not about the economic policy of the then Minister of Finance, Rama Sithanen, but it had to serve another purpose. But, for whose interest, for whose party? *L’avenir nous le dira*, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we all note that the Budget is one of Government, and that no Minister of Finance can present one without the full cooperation and battle of the Prime Minister. This is why it was shocking, *pour ne pas dire* ‘shameful’ to find that the same people who

approved the NRPT, who approved the removal of subsidies on HSC and SC exams, who approved the removal of bread from the ZEP school, a free meal for the ZEP school; *tape la table* when the subsidy was reintroduced, *tape la table* when the NRPT was reintroduced! Members of the Labour Party and the PMSD Party should have, at least, the decency to leave that episode of *tape la table* only to the MSM MPs, especially when we know how hon. Miss Deerpalsing, on each and every occasion, when hon. Sithanen presented the Budget, she was the first one to stand up and congratulate him and support him for all decisions taken, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

(Interruptions)

Let me quote what she had to say on the first Budget of hon. Sithanen as he was then –

« M. le président, avant d’aborder mon discours, permettez moi de féliciter le ministre des finances pour ce budget de renouveau, d’indépendance économique, un budget qui nous oriente bravement vers de nouvelles perspectives, vers la résilience et l’égalité. La résilience et l’égalité sont deux mots clefs que ces gens doivent comprendre. Non seulement, M. le président, je félicite le ministre des finances mais je remercie aussi le Premier ministre et le ministre des finances pour ce budget audacieux. »

This is the budget which removes the bread from the ZEP schools. This is the budget which removes the subsidy on HSC and SC. This is the budget which has been introduced by the Labour Party –

« budget audacieux pour avoir eu le courage de prendre des décisions audacieuses parce que ce budget, M. le président, est une suite logique de notre manifeste électoral et je vais le démontrer. »

And, today, they come to ‘*tape*’ the table when hon. Pravind Jugnauth removes same. What do we hear today from hon. Deerpalsing? Going as far as 1968, when hon. Bodha was speaking on this budget, he was quoting 82 she was on her side – ‘ya ya’. He was talking about 68-82. When hon. Bodha was in the Opposition here, replying to the first budget of Sithanen, what did hon. Deerpalsing had to say when hon. Bodha was talking about 82? I quote -

‘And indeed, Mr Speaker, Sir, the Leader of the Opposition has spent (...)

The Leader of the Opposition was then hon. Nando Bodha.

“ (..) I don’t know how many long minutes talking about the past, about 1982 and 1983, Mr Speaker, Sir. Let me tell the Leader of the Opposition that my peer group, *les jeunes loups du Parti Travailleiste*, that my good friend here Mr Yatin Varma who is the youngest in this House and the generation who are outside did not give a hoot about what happened in 1982/83. We are interested in the future. We are interested in what happen now. This is what...”

(Interruptions)

When she is on this side, she has another language; for the same period, when somebody on the same side, they would have come back to 1968, go back to 1935. We are talking of the 75 years of the Labour Party. It is not Labour Party that we are celebrating today; we are talking about a budget for the people of this country, Mr Speaker, Sir.

(Interruptions)

Listen! I have been very quiet whilst the hon. Member was speaking.

Mr Speaker, Sir, many members, especially those from the MSM, have quoted what the then Prime Minister, hon. Bérenger, said on the Budget presented by the MMM/MSM Government with hon. Pravind Jugnauth as Minister of Finance. Of course, hon. Bérenger had to congratulate his Minister of Finance. The Prime Minister today is congratulating his Minister of Finance because he is the captain; he is the one who leads the Government, that is, the budget of the Government. *C’est normal que le Premier ministre félicite son ministre des finances*. Everybody has been quoting what hon. Bérenger said. But then let we quote what hon. Jugnauth said about hon. Bérenger in his summing up. It was Debate 21 of 23 June 2004. Thanking all those who have intervened in the Budget speech -

“This is what I have to say. I should like to express my sincere gratitude to the Prime Minister (...)”

that is, hon. Paul Bérenger

“..and to all my colleagues in Government for their staunch support throughout. I am particularly thankful to the Prime Minister for the latitude he has given me in preparing the Budget and his subsequent full support of budgetary measures.

Je voudrais dire que le Premier ministre m'a donné l'entière liberté pour travailler, pour préparer le budget. J'ai eu des discussions avec le Premier ministre sur les mesures à être prises, et cela me fait grand plaisir que, tout au long, le Premier ministre, m'a non seulement donné tout son support, mais aussi tout l'encouragement nécessaire.

Il serait peut être bon aussi de souligner ce que cela démontre. *It shows the degree of trust that exists between the Prime Minister and myself.* »

Voilà ce qui a été dit. So it is normal.

(Interruptions)

What is important is that whenever the Minister of Finance presents a Budget, it is the Budget of the Prime Minister, of the Government of the day, and it is normal that the Prime Minister should congratulate his Minister of Finance because he is presenting the budget of his Government.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: No cross talking, please!

Mr Baloomoody: Mr Speaker, Sir, let me now turn to the Budget Speech. I have made a few remarks at the beginning. Let me come to the Budget Speech and the estimates in general.

I would like to look at certain institutions which are either under our Constitution or which form part of our democratic State, namely the prison service, the Police, law and order issue, the judiciary and, of course, I will address my last chapter on the office of the hon. Attorney-General.

Mr Speaker, Sir, but before going to that, I will look at one important issue which has completely been missed in the Budget Speech, hidden under the carpet by Government, by the Minister of Finance in his Budget Speech. We see, Mr Speaker, Sir, that we have changed the presentation of estimates compared to what it was before. Now, we have what they call a Programme-Based Budget Estimate which gives you a description of the office for which we are going to vote a budget and then we go about the economic figures attached to that office. But it is shocking, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that when we come to an institution as important as that of the President, the office of the President, the Head of State, look how the Budget describes the

office of the President. I am referring you, Mr Speaker, Sir, to page 2 of the Estimates. The main constitutional function of the President Office of the President includes -

- Presentation of Credential by Ambassadors/High Commissioners;
- Presentation of Insignia and Medals to National Day Awardees;
- Other functions include Reception for Head of States and High Dignitaries;
- Courtesy Calls on the President and visits to the State House.
- The Office also holds activities for the Promotion of National Unity in collaboration with Ministries.

As if we have the office of the President of *recevoir* and *décevoir* and *coupe ruban*. Is that how we describe the office of the President which is such an important institution? We know what the constitutional powers the MMM and sometimes, together with the MSM, we have given to the President of our Republic. I sincerely hope that for next year's budget, we will have a better and more realistic description of the Office of President than presenting him as somebody who just *recevoir* and *décevoir* and *coupe ruban*. It is an important office. We should give that office the credit it deserves as per our Constitution.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, let me now turn to one important issue which has been completely left out in this Budget Speech, the issue of dangerous drugs. Mr Speaker, Sir, when we come to dangerous drugs, there are some undisputed facts, unchallengeable facts, that I would like to state and start my speech with. In the years 1983 onwards ..

(Interruptions)

Listen, hon. Ms Deerpalsing, it might be of interest. At least we know that this country witnessed a boom in the sale of hard drugs namely brown sugar and there was that direct links at that time between certain politicians in power and the *barons de la drogue*. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, you are aware how Members of the Government of the day, backbenchers of the Government of the day were arrested in Amsterdam with drugs in their luggage. This is one episode. Since 2005 onwards, we have graduated another step. Since 2005 onwards, we have graduated another step. Subutex has become a household name. Subutex has infiltrated each and every corner of this country. And what we know as a fact which is confirmed is that luggage containing Subutex has passed through VIP Lounge with the complicity of Members of this House who were then in Government as PPS. VIP Lounge, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, has been

used as a *transit* platform for the entrance of drug and Police officers have been made to salute these...

Mr Varma: This has not been proved in court. I am sorry, but the hon. Third Member for Constituency No. 1 should not impute motives on a Member who is not here now. I am sorry, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

The Deputy Speaker: I may just remind Members that discussions regarding Budget Speech are generally regarding Government policy and you have got latitude in your debate, but you should not try to make allegations.

Mr Baloomoody: It is a reply to a Parliamentary Question. That lady came through the VIP Lounge and she had that luggage which was confiscated and produced in court containing subutex. It is an answer to a Parliamentary Question.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order, please!

Mr Baloomoody: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, many Members, on the Government side, in their speech have cited the BO Ibrahim Index of 2010. The BO Ibrahim Index classified Mauritius as No. 1, No. 2, No. 3 economics, etc. But what report which they refuse to quote, either because they are ashamed to or feel a bit guilty, is the country report of the United Nations Office on drugs and crime of 2010. That report, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, classifies Mauritius as the fourth country in the world for dangerous drug consumption and first in Africa for dangerous drug consumption. This is the report, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. Mauritius is fourth opiate drug consumption country ranking, "Source, United Nations Office on drugs and crime 2010" Mauritius fourth in the world and first in Africa. That's where we are with drugs. This is such an important issue, both internationally for Mauritius and nationally in our country when we know how many people are victims of this drug, yet this year's Budget mentions the word 'drug' only once.

Let me pause here to say, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that I have not burnt any night oil to run the budget. It has been searched on the computer with the word 'find' to look for the word 'drug', we got it only once, but, of course, I have reserved my right to plead guilty by letter if ever I have been found wrong. I reserve this right and I will do it if I have been found wrong.

There is only one time. And where is it used? Not only for rehabilitation or see how we can treat these people. It is in chapter 295 of '*Maurice Ile Durable*'. I quote –

“At the same time, Government is promoting the production of environmentally clean paper carry bags. The Ministry of Social Integration in collaboration with the Ministry of Environment is putting up a project whereby former convicts and drug addicts will be engaged in the production of paper bags as part of a reintegration programme. The project will be run by NGOs.”

That's the only mention of drug in this Budget and it comes fourth we are dealing only with paper bags. *Quelle irresponsabilité, M. le président !* Let me quote what the ONG has to say in Centre Idrice Goumany –

“aucune mesure contre le trafic de drogue dans ce budget. »

Jean Augustave : “*Etoile Espérance*”, I am quoting from *Samedi l'Express du 20 novembre* – unlike some other friends here I will quote my source – I will produce all my documents –

“Pas de vraie politique multi-sectorielle (...)”

Et Ms Jocelyne Minerve, travailleur social –

« un discours anti-....

Nothing on drug, nothing on rehabilitation, nothing to fight this *fléau* which is destroying our next generation.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, on this side of the House, we, in the MMM, take this issue very seriously. We are concerned about the *ravage* that drug is doing to our youngsters, to our professionals, to all *couches de la société*.

Let me pause here again to make it clear, people who do not know, probably they should learn. Drug today is not a problem of *cités*. There have been two PQs by the backbenchers of Government on drugs, they only refer to *cités*: Cité la Chaux, Cité Hardy or another *cité*. No, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir! Drug today has infiltrated each and every sector of the population. If there has been a true *démocratisation*, as my friend is saying, *démocratisation* is in the drug business. Today, wherever you go, among the rich, among the poor, the rich, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, can

afford to get out of the net, they have the means – but the *petit cité* people, the poor are trapped. This is why we get a tendency that drug affects only the *cités*. No, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir! It affects each and every *couche sociale de la population*.

Today, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, if we look at the official statistics, at page 13 –

“Gandia and psychotropic drugs represent 51% and 40% of total drug offences respectively.”

So, psychotropic drugs include Subutex and syrup. Here, I must congratulate my good friend, hon. Mahen Jhugroo, who is a *pharmacien*, who sells *sirop*, but in public did say that we must have a control of the sale of *sirop*. I congratulate him for that. He is aware that there is a *sirop* business in certain pharmacies and he is aware that there is a need for that control and it is on record to have said that publicly. Well done! We have to re-visit the Pharmacy Act again and I will come to that later. So, what I say here, Mr Speaker, Sir, in the MMM we take this problem seriously and we have had a Commission set up. Not only we have criticised, made a *constat*, but we have also made proposals. Our proposal is not acceptable hundred percent by each and every person working in the sector, but, of course, at least, one thing, when Government wants to hide the issue of drugs *sous le tapis*, we have put it back on the agenda. In two days, since our report has been out, every day we are hearing debate by all those concerned, be it on radio, TV, newspaper. Every day the drug issue, the rehabilitation of drug addicts is back on the agenda *grâce à la Commission du MMM sur la drogue*. We have made proposals briefly. I don't want to go in the five pages document. We have made five important proposals and let me enumerate them.

First, we say that there should be a scientific study. Up to now we are working au *petit bonheur*. We do not have a scientific study to tell us how many *toxicomanes* there are in this country. There is a need for database and this can be done easily in collaboration with the ONG and the University of Mauritius where they have the appropriate equipment, *expertise* and know-how to do that work. We have to sensitise the young at schools, make drugs an academic issue, explain them what drug is and how far it is *néfaste* and harmful. We have to redefine our *cadre légal* because, up to now, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, all those who are arrested at the airport are victims. *Ce sont des passeurs*. They are paid to carry millions and millions of rupees of drugs. But from where do they get the money? Who give them that money? For whom are they

bringing this? Up to now, no *requin* has been caught. Why? Because we don't encourage these people to come and denounce those who are behind them. This is why we propose that the DPP must, in certain cases, give immunity to those *passeurs*, on condition that they come and depone in court. For this, we must have a fast track trial, because we know that their silence can be bought or even their life might be in danger. We have to give them protection if need be; have a fast track trial; get them to come and depone in court and give them immunity. There is no point for the *passeur* to spend 35 years in prison when the *baron* is outside, enjoying himself and getting another *passeur* to do another drug trip. We have to think seriously in that line. We have to give them immunity, and revise the Pharmacy Act, as hon. Mahen Jhugroo has suggested. Let's have a tighter control on our pharmacy. Let's have the right man in the right place to go and do the control in our pharmacy.

Concerning the Commissioner of Drugs, when one sees him in his big limousine, one will think that it is the hon. vice-Prime Minister who is going around. Up to now, not a single drug traffickers' assets have been seized and, yet, we have a Drug Commissioner. There are some problems here as well. We are for abolishing and reviewing the system. We have to change the burden of proof, confiscate their assets once they are found guilty, and freeze them when they are arrested. Let them come forward and say that this property does not come from drugs, instead of the authority having to prove that this property comes from drugs. Then, we will get to these people.

Rehabilitation is another issue. Here, we are proposing an alternative to drugs. We are proposing that, instead of giving methadone, we should go for suboxone, which is cheaper, easier to control *et plus facile à dispenser*. But, apparently, this is creating a debate. We are only proposing. We go even further to say that we should have a National Committee set up to look into the matter.

Our last proposition, as drug is an issue, which affects not only the police or the Minister of Social Security or the prison - it is a national issue - is that we should have a National Board for drugs, as we have a National Committee on HIV/AIDS, which I understand is not functioning very well. I used to sit on that committee, when I was a backbencher, with hon. Dr. Boolell who was there as a Member of the Opposition. We should have one similar to this, comprising of the Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Health, National Defence, Finance, Labour, social workers, the

Ministry of Foreign Affairs which can look for cooperation between countries to look into the matter and, of course, somebody from the Youth Commission.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the issue of drug is very urgent and serious. We don't intend to do any politics out of it. But we want it to be raised as a national issue in our agenda, so that each and every party and people who want to assist should be able to do so.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, let me come to the issue of law and order. Law and order was and is still the main concern of the public. There is no day which passes by where we do not hear of rape, assault, murder, and many drug related offences.

People are living in fear and there is, today, low public confidence in the police. Its ability to provide a professional service and protect the inhabitants is doubted. I can refer you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, to the question I put to the hon. vice-Prime Minister, who was Ag. Prime Minister, regarding the death of that young man at La Tour Koenig, to show that the police are not equipped. One young father of 28 years old lost his life on that day, leaving behind a child of eight months. That is his reply, and I quote -

“On reaching the spot, the police saw a crowd of 35 persons, among whom four men and women were quarrelling. They tried to arrest the instigator of the disturbance, but the crowd prevented them from doing so and he managed to escape. The police talked to the crowd which then dispersed.”

The police could not control a crowd of 30 people in an incident, which was so cruel on that day, and they had to go. The police went to look for *renfort*, and when they came back, that boy was already dead. There is a problem in the police.

Today, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the public concerns regarding the image of efficiency of the Mauritius Police Force has reached a serious level, due to public perception that the police is one arm of the Government. It is a perception. I am not saying that the police is an arm, but it is a perception. We have seen in the past - he is not in this House, and I don't want to dwell too long on him - what the occupier of the Office of Attorney General has done to *démoralise la police*.

We have seen, of course, the way the police have acted recently regarding the arrest of a journalist of “Le Militant”, our good friend Ananda Rajoo. He was arrested, handcuffed, brought

to prison and, after two days, no case to answer. It was the same thing with our ex-Minister of Finance. He was arrested, handcuffed, put in car; *bel tam tam*. Then, after a few days, the charge is reduced to a non-arrestable offence, and he has been found not guilty by a court of law. There is the perception outside that the police is an arm of the Executive, and this is a very, very bad perception. We have seen, in the case of '*Paradis An Dey*', our good friend, Jamil Peerally, who was arrested, handcuffed, taken to court; his house was searched as well as his family. There was no case! Where are we going? I know they do that in Singapore! This is the practice in Singapore. You are presumed to be guilty until found innocent. Is this what we want to import to Mauritius?

What is worse is the economic and social policies of the Government since 2005, which are continuing - *la continuité* - and which have contributed to increase social problems, where crime is becoming today a means of living. People have to kill to live, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. People are killing for a cigarette; people are killing for bread; people are being raped for food, and grandmothers are being attacked for money to buy drugs. For a *paquet de cotomili*, one old man lost his life. This is the society that hon. Ms Deerpalsing wants us to believe as the Mauritian dream, Mauritius *c'est un plaisir*. But we should not blame the police all throughout. They are working under serious constraints. The Police is undermanned and *démoralisé*. All the seniors are leaving and for five years there has been no recruit.

(Interruptions)

You cannot replace somebody like Mr Bruneau as a senior ...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order!

Mr Baloomoody: ...this recently, since 2005 onwards. It is only before the general elections, when 700 officers

(Interruptions)

They sent 5,000 forms to recruit 700! We know they did it before the elections. Only one batch, that is, on the last term of the year of the last Government!

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order, order, please!

Mr Baloomoody: What is worse, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, is that people have taken exams for two years! We have alerted the authorities. You can see the number of parliamentary questions put by my friends, namely the hon. Ganoo, Lesjongard, Obeegadoo and Rajesh Bhagwan. And what we hear is: “promotion is coming very soon”, “we are vetting”, “it will be done soon”. I was not in the House when the first question was put; it goes as long as 2009.

(Interruptions)

“It is coming very soon”, “nearly finished”, “nearly over”, “the Police Commissioner is looking into it”, “we are vetting to see”! I do not know what they were vetting for. These people have passed their exams since two years and many of them have already left as they have retired; some have even passed away. And you want this Police to perform? Even in today’s paper you can see what they have to say about the Police, I quote -

“Nous avons un problème au niveau des agglomérations. Ils y a beaucoup de VVIPs et de ministres. Une grande partie de notre force policière se consacre à leur sécurité, ce qui diminue le nombre d’officiers (...).”

Police Officers are being asked to do other duties than protecting the public, ensuring law and order. It is in today’s paper, ‘*Le Quotidien*’ - Mr Rajen Chedumbrum Pillay. This is the Police Force, *demoralisé!* What about Mr Bruneau who is now the adviser, somebody who was not fit for this Government to be a Commissioner of Police! He has been chosen now to be the Adviser of Prisons for this Government! I wish him good luck because he is a very intelligent man and I sincerely hope that he will be given all the latitude to practise. He is an honest man; I know him personally, he is sincere to his job, honourable. I sincerely hope that he will be given all the latitude and will have the support of the officers of the prisons to carry out his job. Look what he had to say in ‘*L’Express*’ du 15 août, after his retirement: “*Le nombre de policiers par habitant est déjà très élevé et le gouvernement s’engage à recruter 500,000 d’ici (...).*”

Mr Varma: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am sorry to interrupt the hon. Third Member for Constituency No. 1, but he cannot quote from a newspaper as per Standing Orders.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Member, you may make reference without quoting as such.

Mr Baloomoody: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I will read what Mr Bruneau said. I am not intelligent enough to remember all the words of Mr Bruneau, but I can only read what he said without quoting him. Il dit que *ce n'est pas le nombre qui est important*, that you can put 5,000 Police officers back in the Police Force, but it is the quality which is important, the training given to them and that you cannot replace one Mr Bruneau by another young officer to be recruited.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, today we are recruiting, but we have a big middle management problem in the Police. We have that gap in the middle which cannot be filled and which will take years and years. This is what Mr Bruneau, the ex-Deputy Commissioner of Police had to say: "The Police have much power, but they leave themselves to be manipulated by people in power." This is his last phrase. He is talking from experience, personal knowledge and know-how.

After having said that the public doubts the capacity of our Police Force in containing crime and maintenance, the public confidence in the Police has also declined due to the incidence of violent crime and the growing audacity of criminal elements.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, one of the serious concerns of the members of the public is – this is an official document, can I quote?

(Interruptions)

This is an official Government document. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I refer to page 10 of this document about *Police brutalité*. I quote paragraph 1.73 –

“(...) 65% of people interviewed said Police brutality was a very serious or serious issue in Mauritius. The corresponding percentage was 67% for urban areas and 64% for rural areas.”

This is serious. 65% of this population - those who were interviewed - come and say that their concern is Police brutality. What are we doing to address this issue? It is not only the members of the public who felt like that, but one of the most respectable judge of the Supreme Court also. Can I quote him, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir?

(Interruptions)

This is what hon. Eddy Balancy said –

«C'est malheureusement une pratique déplorable de la Police mauricienne. Les autorités responsables devraient s'atteler à la formation des policiers en ce qui concerne le pouvoir d'arrestation. Elles doivent expliquer ce pouvoir, (...)».

The title of that article is *«La Police abuse souvent de son pouvoir d'arrestation»*. Abuse of authority, Police brutality! What has this Government been doing with regard to our institutions when it comes to this issue? Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, regarding the Human Rights Commission, we set it up and have it operational. The Human Rights Commission is a Commission under the law of this country, but it has not been functioning for more than five years because there is no Board. The human rights issue has been degraded. According to the law, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Human Rights Commission must submit a report every year to the Minister responsible for Human Rights. Every morning we come here, we find a list of all the Ministers present. Look at this list, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir! Who is the Minister of Human Rights today? *Ce n'est même pas mentionné sur la liste qui se trouve sur la Table de l'Assemblée, où on y trouve tous les noms des ministres présents chaque matin. Parmi, il y a le nom du Premier ministre, vice-premier ministre, ministre des finances, etc.* None of these Ministers is titled to the issue of human rights! This is how the issue of human rights is being treated by the authorities! It is not the concern of the authorities! *Inexistent!* Yet, the Commissioner, in his report, year in year out, asks for more people, more power, and more financial support! But when you look at the estimate, it is 12.5 last year, 12.7 this year and 12.8 next year only the increment for salaries. This is how human rights are being treated in this country, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

We better don't talk about the Police Complaint Board. Up to now, there has been no charge, no conviction of a Police officer, for a complaint lodged at the Police Complaint Board. You want people to trust this institution. You want people to trust the Police, when 68% of them believe that there is Police brutality and we do not have any independent and reliable institution to look into the matter.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, having spoken about the human rights issue, the hon. Prime Minister, in a PQ1B/588, asked by my good friend, hon. Lesjongard, said that we are going to review and reorganise the Human Rights Commission because we decided that it is a part of the Equal Opportunity Division yet, again, no allowance is made in the Budget for the Human

Rights Commission, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. What in a change of name, from Police Force to Police Service, when there is no Police, no moral, no equipment, no formation, and no institution to look after the Police. Just a change of name will not enforce our law and order enforcement situation, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we have a Police, which don't have any method of investigation. We are detaining people in order to investigate instead of investigating first the detainee. We detained people, and then we decide to investigate.

(Interruptions)

When they have good lawyers, they get good service because there is an abuse. Thanks God, we still have lawyers and court, otherwise God knows what they, people like them, in power would have done.

(Interruptions)

Mr Deputy Speaker: Order!

Mr Baloomoody: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have a lot to say on Police and there are another two institutions, which are deep to my heart, I have to close here I have only 10 minutes.

So, let me come to the prisons. The prisons today, again is on *pilotage*. No Commissioner for the last two months. We have to be careful not to repeat what happened to our Police Force when we had Shattock here. We tried to run the Police from the office of the Prime Minister. We cannot run the prisons from the office of the Prime Minister. Good, Mr Bruneau is an adviser! But we need a Prisons Commissioner. The prisons must have its Commissioner. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we have heard many things which have been proposed, following the mutiny. In a PNQ by the hon. Leader of the Opposition on 29 June 2010, many inquiries were supposed to be held. Lots of reforms were supposed to be effected but, we know, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, following a question put by me in this House on 06 July 2010, the last time we had equipment bought for the Prison service was in March 2003. My information is that old dogs, which are retired in the Police, are sent at the prisons for security. There is no equipment. We have eight institutions and all the transport is based in Beau Bassin. In this Budget, 37 posts have been eliminated and they are all crying for more men at the prison. We know that the prison today is functioning in illegality. Section 53 says that we should have a Board of visitors

and there has been no Board of visitors for the last five years. Section 51 talks about a Parole Board, but there has been no Parole Board for the last five years. No Board of visitors for the last five years! No remission for the last five years! Don't we expect unrest in the prison?

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order please!

Mr Baloomoody: No Board of visitors, no Board of Directors and we have drawn the attention of the House many times! Mr Jackie Kamana, Secretary of the Prison service, has drawn the attention of the Police officers to the hon. Prime Minister. On the day of the mutiny, the hon. Prime Minister comes and tells us that there is a ratio in the Police of 1:2, I am looking at the reply regarding the alleged understaffing of our prisons, which says: "I wish to point out, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that the staff to inmates ratio is at present one officer to two inmates". He is joking. When we know on the day of the mutiny, at Borstal Prison, Grande Rivière, there were 16 prison officers on duty for 361 detainees and you call that 1:2 ratio. But what they did not tell the Prime Minister is that we have three shifts one third of the prison officers are off when you looked at a day. One third is on leave and one third is turned into three shifts. So, at the end of the day, if you have 900 prison officers, there were only 300 working on a day and 100 in each shift. We cannot talk about the ratio 1:2. They have misled the Prime Minister and it is unfortunate that the Prime Minister has given such a reply.

Le trafic de la drogue and mobile phone is still going every day in the prisons and one cannot control it. There is no equipment, no manpower. I am not the one who says it, Mr Jackie Kamana said it. Everybody who goes to the prison knows about it: you get the best drug and the modern mobile phone. Have you ever heard, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, a lady prisoner talking on the radio through mobile phone - live and direct - complaining about her condition in prison? I have heard on the radio. Here again, we have a lot to do and we have some propositions. We first need a Prisons Commissioner, a proper Parole Board and inquiry. Again, if we are to give amnesty to certain prisoners, tell them to return the drug *en retour de quelques jours de rémission*.

Tell them to come and depone, say "who is that *haut gradé*?" Who is that Prison Officer? Who are the officers who are facilitating drug entry and ammunition entry in prison? And you give them remission *en retour*? This is one way to clean up the matter. Review the rehabilitation

of our prisoners when we know from our statistics again that more than 75% of prisoners who go back are repeaters. So this is empirical evidence to confirm that our rehabilitation system is not working at all. We have to review all these.

Now, let me come to last point - the Judiciary. I will brief on the Judiciary, but I think I have to make some important points.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, when I made my maiden speech in the House in 1996 I have said one thing –

“That our Constitution guaranteed an independent judiciary and we have three wings of Government, the Executive, the Legislative and the Judiciary and they must be independent from each other. We have to have the concept of separation of power”

But I said on that occasion that –

“As long as the check book of the Judiciary will be with the Executive, we will never have an independent Judiciary. Our Judiciary will not be independent”.

It is not possible, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that at today, for an institution like ICAC, we give them an independent budget and ICAC you know, *‘li pa guet figir’* but we learnt when on the radio in the case of Veerasamy – it is public knowledge that there was a discussion - that there were two questions asked – *‘Pa pu guet figir, mais qui so communauté? Et ene tamoule sa non, bossé ek Sithanen?’*

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Baloomoody we’ve got a special Select Committee of the House dealing with ICAC.

Mr Baloomoody: We can always have a special Select Committee for the Judiciary ...

The Deputy Speaker: I mean that you should not make reference to it here since we’ve got a special Select Committee on ICAC.

Mr Baloomoody: I am not making any reference to ICAC. I said that we know, as a fact, that in this particular case, we asked about his community and about his political allegiance and the conclusion was that he was not a Labour – *‘li ene zomme Rama Sithanen’*. It is a fact. So ICAC *‘li pa guet figir’*,

So, if for an institution like ICAC there is a one line budget, why can't the judges have their own Budget? Do you find it normal, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that a Chief Justice or a Judge of this country who has to attend certain important conference must have the green line from the Minister of Finance and the Prime Minister? Is that financial independence? Judges are human beings after all. So, we should give them their own budget for them to decide what is important for that institution. Of course, there is the issue of accountability; this is where probably we have to see again whether we should have a Committee for the Judiciary like we have for ICAC and be given an annual report speaking about their performance and what they have done and what they intend to do with their budget. What I am saying is that this tradition is condemned in Commonwealth countries like Trinidad and Tobago. They have done away with these principles because in their opinion this practice and procedure is likely to erode the independence of the Judiciary.

However, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we have gone even further now. With our programme based we have targeted that case has to be terminated in hundred days.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order!

Mr Baloomoody: But what about judgment?

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order! Hon. Labelle, please!

Mr Baloomoody: It is not a question of you finish the case. We have to look at the judgment as well. Because not only justice delayed is justice denied. Judgment delayed as well. You know, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, what I am talking about. It is not possible for us to have judgment which turned out to be academic.

Now concerning the question of arbitration, it is a question which I would like to ask, but I am just putting the question for debate and I hope the hon. Prime Minister, who is responsible for the Judiciary in our Constitution, in our law, will reply.

It is good that we are having arbitration. Already we are saying that our Judges are overcrowded with work. They don't have time to listen to cases and cases in Supreme Court are taking three to four years. We have increased the number of Judges, but no provision for

supporting staff or office or what. You know what is happening today, you practise at the Supreme Court like me..

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Baloomoody, I must tell you that you are already five minutes.

Mr Baloomoody: Yes, my hon. friend will give me five minutes from his quota. We have made arrangements, do not worry.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we are talking about arbitration. Is arbitration going to be another term of justice for the rich? This is the question we have to ask. If you have money and you want quick justice, you go for arbitration because this costs a lot. I have done arbitration and you have done and I am sure you must have approached arbitrators in the Judiciary. Now the other question: is it correct for staff of the Judiciary to do arbitration?

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Whips on both sides, if you have any issue to discuss, do it outside, please. Please, continue hon. Baloomoody.

Mr Baloomoody: Are Judges the proper and right persons to take arbitration? They are already overbooked at the Supreme Court. So, we have to look at this issue of arbitration to ensure that it does not come to a parallel justice for the rich and the poor has to go on the other track.

Now, let me come briefly to the office of the Attorney General. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, our Constitution when it comes to Cabinet, there are only three posts which are mentioned in our Constitution. The posts of Prime Minister, then we amended it to have the post of the Deputy Prime Minister in our Constitution and the post of Attorney General. Who is an Attorney General? Why does the Constitution ask for an Attorney General? It says clearly that: ‘An Attorney General in this House is only the legal adviser of the Government’ - *un point, c’est tout!* He wears his gown, goes to Court and protects the interests of Government. He is not here to do politics. He is not here to give instructions to Judges. He should keep away from the administration of the Judiciary. This is the role of an Attorney General and it is well defined in our Estimates - “The Attorney General - main achievement, major service, policy and management of legal drafting, legal adviser with representation and all these. So, he is the legal

adviser and it was made clear in the case of ‘Beeharry’. The case of Beeharry by the Supreme Court said clearly –

“Where an Attorney General is not elected (..)”

I am precise and this is why I welcome him personally on my opening speech. I welcome all Members elected and the Attorney General. He has been nominated to be the legal adviser and may I quote from the judgment –

“Moreover the combined effect of the provision of section 59-62 and 69 of our Constitution is that although a person who is not a Member of the National Assembly (..)”.

The hon. Member is not a Member. He has not been nominated by the Electoral Commission to be here and he has been appointed by the Prime Minister.

I congratulate him, of course. There is nothing personal and he is a good fellow.

“Such person, provided he is entitled to practise Barrister in Mauritius and he is not for a cause disqualified from Membership of the Chamber, such persons are only to be appointed as Attorney General and cannot, in terms of the Constitution be assigned any of the Ministerial responsibility.”

So, he should not have any ministerial responsibility. He is here only to give advice to Government and in some cases and in some countries – unfortunately, I can’t go into details – it is stated that the Attorney-General should keep aloof of politics and in some countries, they resign temporarily from their political party. They stay in Cabinet and advise Cabinet and if their advice is not being followed in some countries, some have even resigned and we know what happened to Lord Goldsmith, the Attorney-General of UK, when it comes to the Iraq War. Just to please the Government of the day, he changed his first opinion – ‘No, you can’t go. We have to go through UN resolution.’ then he changed his opinion and he had to resign, subsequently.

So, my advice to my good friend, the hon. Attorney-General : don’t take the ex-Attorney-General as his guru. He has done much harm to our institution. My advice is to do with the legal adviser...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order! Order, please!

Mr Baloomoody: You have been voted as the legal adviser and up to now, I must say, he has done his work very well.

(Interruptions)

Please, keep it up and be aloof of politics. Leave the judiciary to the hon. Prime Minister who is responsible and please advise Government on legal issues and keep on. You can rest assured you will have our collaboration all throughout if you keep on that path.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have a lot to say, but let me conclude on one thing only. I have heard many hon. Members on the other side...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order! Hon. Assirvaden, please!

Mr Baloomoody: I have heard many hon. Members on the other side say that they have their majority and we are the minority, and that the majority will have their way. Let me give a sign of warning...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order! Please, conclude!

Mr Baloomoody: On this side of the House, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, you may have your way, but on this side of the House we will be on their way if ever they intend to use that majority to discriminate against the minority who has voted for us since the last generation.

Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. I am done.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Give your way, now! Yes, hon. Varma!

(3.33 p. m.)

The Attorney-General (Mr Y. Varma): Let me, at the outset, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, thank you, and the Speaker for presiding over the budgetary debates with tact, wisdom and dexterity. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I had originally planned a very sober address, but having heard the hon. Third Member for Constituency No. 1, I have to rebut to a couple of points that he has made. But, before coming to that I'll speak briefly on the Budget.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, amidst the Euro zone crisis and a fragile world economy, this Government of *Alliance de l'Avenir*, has been able to present a responsible budget which reconciles social justice and economic development. Mauritius is one of the rare countries, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in the world to have resisted the world economic crisis due to the measures taken by the Government led by the hon. Prime Minister the Rt. hon. Navinchandra Ramgoolam. I am thankful to the hon. Minister of Finance and Economic Development for having listened and taken on board several representations made from different quarters. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Government is re-engineering, re-enacting the economy through bold and innovative measures which will, no doubt, place our country on a modern development path and build a better future for one and all.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the hon. gentleman who spoke just before me, said in no uncertain terms, that the Mauritius Labour Party is trying to take credit of the Budget. Made reference about the hon. Prime Minister, addressing a press conference *en solo*, quoting from newspaper articles '*le faux divorce*' and saying that the captain remains the Prime Minister.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we are in an Alliance - the Labour Party, the PMSD and the MSM. The Budget which has been represented to this House, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, is a Budget of the Government, led by the hon. Prime Minister. We went to the polls, the population voted for this Government to be in power and, of course, it is the Budget of all the political parties represented in that Alliance. At no point in time, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, has there been any question of either this or that political party taking credit out of this Budget because, as I said, this is a Budget of the Government. This is the language that we are using everywhere. The hon. gentleman who spoke before me, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, said that it is his first intervention after the general elections. Of course, he has been a hon. Member of this House for quite a while, then he was re-elected at the last general elections, but I got somewhat confused. Was he intervening on the debates on the Presidential Address or was he intervening on the budgetary debates? I guess he has tried to mix both of them because of the stand taken by the Opposition.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as far as the NRPT, the payment of examination fees and the tax on interest are concerned, the hon. gentleman made reference to hon. Ms Deerpalsing giving the credit to hon. Dayal. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, what the Opposition does not know; I was a backbencher at that time together with other friends and this shows the freedom that we had as

backbenchers. Hon. Ms Deerpalsing has been able to tell you the hard time that we all had after the Budget of 2006 and then, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, Government decided to review the NRPT. The NRPT was on bare land as well and this was removed. To whom does the credit go, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir?

I heard the hon. gentleman speaking about the Office of the President and making reference to the estimates; description as to the duties of the President. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the post of President is a constitutional one and if we want to do the duties and responsibilities of the President of the Republic of Mauritius, we have to open the Constitution of Mauritius and have a look. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, at the beginning of this Parliamentary session, a copy of the Constitution was distributed and if hon. Members of the Opposition don't have a copy, my Office is distributing copies freely.

(Interruptions)

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, about dangerous drugs, mention not being made in the Budget about dangerous drugs. I am referring to the Oxford dictionary meaning of Budget - amount of money needed or available, annual estimate of national revenue and expenditure.

If we have to take each and every item in this country, how long will the Budget Speech take? Already, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it took over two hours for the hon. Minister of Finance to present the Budget to the population of this country. Do you know how much time they take in the UK? 40 minutes, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir! We can't, in a Budget Speech, take item by item, and elaborate lengthily on that.

Reference was made to direct links between Government MPs and drugs in the 80s, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. But that did not prevent the MMM to contract an alliance with the parties in power! Didn't they do that? They did that, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir! We don't say that whatever happened was good. But, at that time, there was no question of principle! No! Only to get power, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

With regard to the post of the Commissioner for Drugs, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the hon. gentleman said earlier on that not one drug trafficker's assets have been seized. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the hon. Second Member of Constituency No. 2 knows very well that we are working on an Asset Recovery Bill. It is in our programme. In fact, I invited hon. Members of the Opposition to come to my office to discuss about the whole legislation, and credit goes to

them, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, because they came over and we discussed about the whole issue. This Government is fully committed to lead a relentless fight against drug traffickers and drugs in general in this country.

About law and order, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it is not good to say *que le moral de la police a été cassé*. It is not good to doubt the competence of the police. We know that police officers all around the country are doing a good job.

The hon. Prime Minister is the Minister of Defence and Home Affairs, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. How many cases have been elucidated compared to the time when they were in power? When they were in power, there was the Vanessa Lagesse case, the murder in the MCB vault, the child Ackmez Aumeer who disappeared, the Bassin Blanc case. Now, there is the murder in Tombeau Bay, and the firearms case, as has been stated by the hon. Prime Minister this morning, that have been elucidated. There was also the blasting of the building in Grand' Baie. All these were not elucidated, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

The hon. gentleman has talked about the perception that the police is an arm of the Executive. It is not right to say that, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. The hon. gentleman is a barrister like me. We have practised at the Bar for so many years. We interact with these police officers. It is not correct to say that they are subservient to the Executive. It is not correct, because these people out there; are doing a good job, and we have a strong competent police force that is ready to meet the challenges, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

The hon. gentleman said that we have not invested in expert equipment. The restructuring of the forensic science laboratory, the modern equipment which was bought as far as finger printing is concerned, the law, which is now in force about DNA, are all babies of the Government led by hon. Dr. Navin Ramgoolam.

The Human Rights Commission, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, was set up when the hon. Member was a backbencher of the Labour and MMM Government! Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, at that time, my learned friend, Razack Peeroo, was the Attorney General and Minister of Human Rights!

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: No crosstalking, please!

Mr Varma: With regard to the Judiciary, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the hon. gentleman stated - he did not say it in so many words, but what he wanted to imply is that we don't have an independent Judiciary, because the check book of the Judiciary is with the Executive. Again, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it is not correct. We have got an independent Judiciary in this country. The judges and the magistrates who are out there working in all our District Courts or Intermediate Court, the Supreme Court, in our tribunals are all independent people. You can't use parliamentary immunity to just throw mud at people. You can't do that, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir!

Mr Baloomoody: On a point of order. I don't know why the gentleman is excited. I never threw mud on any member of the Judiciary. I said that our Judiciary will not be fully independent until they have their own budget.

The Deputy Speaker: I think that hon. Baloomoody, in fact, stated that there is a perception. In fact, he did not pinpoint anybody; he just made mention how things are in other jurisdiction, and he made a suggestion.

Mr Varma: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that is why I said that he did not say it in so many words, and that he wanted to imply. That is what I said.

Concerning arbitration being for the rich, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I don't know where that comes from. I'll come to that point during my intervention on the Budget itself, but we are planning to have a permanent seat for arbitration in Mauritius for commercial disputes. What the Judiciary is doing now, is to set up a Mediation Division, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that is, there will be compulsory mediation before going to trial. I think that the population has to get it right that, at no point in time, it has been or it is the intention of the legislator to have a two-tier system, that is, one for the rich and one for the poor. On the contrary, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we are doing our level best to have justice accessible to one and all.

With regard to the Office of Attorney General, I do thank the hon. gentleman for the comments that he made. Rest assured that I don't give any instructions to any Judges. Of course, as per our own Constitution, it is said that the Office of the Attorney General shall be the Office of a Minister. There is the judgement of Beeharry, which I am fully aware of, and which the Government has, of course, accepted, and there was a reshuffle at that time. We do agree that is why I am only Attorney General and not Minister for Justice and Human Rights.

One last rebuttal point, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, about the Judiciary. The hon. gentleman stated that the check book of the Judiciary is with the Executive. What they forget is that they had absolute majority at three instances, namely in 1982, 1991 and 2000. Nothing was done, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. Nothing was done! Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I took the pain to go through the PQs put by the hon. gentleman to the Attorney General. I don't know whether he put questions to the then Prime Minister about the Mackay reforms. Not a single question from 2000 to 2005 when he was a Government backbencher on the reforms in the Judiciary!

(Interruptions)

Let us be serious, my hon. friend!

The Deputy Speaker: Order!

Mr Varma: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, now I'll come back to the Budget. *Gouverner, M. le président, c'est prévoir.* We have a plan that will transform the Mauritian Dream into a Mauritian reality. In 2005, when Dr. the hon. Navin Ramgoolam was returned to power, he pledged to create a better Mauritius where the fruits of economic development would be for the many, not for the few. We walked the talk, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, and we were returned to power. For us, being in power is divine. As it is said: '*Vox populi, vox dei*'. (*La voix du peuple, c'est la voix de Dieu*).

Let us have a look, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as to how the landscape of our country would change in the years to come. Only to mention some of the major projects to come, there is the new terminal at the SSR International Airport, Les Salines, the Jin Fei project, the Bagatelle project, the ring road around Port Louis, the Terre Rouge/Verdun/Ebène Road, the Land-based Oceanic Industry. All these projects, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, are under way. These will transform the country.

This Government firmly believes in economic diplomacy to open new markets to facilitate joint ventures and strategic alliances. In this Budget, the Government has given a commitment to further this pursuit whereby the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Finance would work together to build economic diplomacy capacity in our embassies. This Government is fully committed to attract more visitors from the non-euro zone countries like India, China and Russia and to make of Mauritius a shopping paradise.

Poverty, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as Amartya Sen puts it, is essentially the deprivation of capabilities, the deprivation of a capability to access to such things as education, health, justice, land, community support, financial resources or a voice in institutions and access to opportunities.

With the number of measures already implemented, and those announced in the Budget, the Government is aiming to tackle the problem of poverty, especially through the newly created Ministry for Social Integration.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we govern for the people and are not insensitive to their voices out there. This explains, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the abolition of the NRPT (National Residential Property Tax), tax on interest, reintroduction of the tax exemption on the first sixty tonnes of sugar and duty-free facilities for small planters, coupled with the increase in the number of students, will benefit from non-payment of examination fees. We should understand in what context certain decisions were taken. This shows clearly that there is no *droit acquis*. When the going was rough and the times uncertain, we requested the population to make sacrifice together with us and they voluntarily did so. Now, when the equilibrium has been reached, it is obvious that we should return to Caesar what belongs to Caesar.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, today, many of the ills of society are associated with drinking, gambling and smoking. Many facilities were there to promote these, but with this Budget, Government has taken the firm commitment to prevent families from being ruined and destroyed. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the hon. gentleman who spoke before me, spoke about the office of the Attorney-General. Of course, as this National Assembly votes a budget for my office, it is my duty to elaborate on the work undertaken by my office.

I have a vision, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, to develop the Attorney General's Office into a centre of excellence. The core values of my office are: the rule of law and public interest; integrity and impartiality; quality and professionalism; independence and competence; solidarity; team work and cooperation. The major achievements, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, for 2010: 60 Bills have been published; 170 Government Notices have been published; 4,972 requests for legal advice, legal opinion have been dealt with. 2,905 requests for representations before Courts have been dealt with.

The Attorney General's Office provides services free to the public, amongst are: application for change of name; rectification of civil status acts; work undertaken by the Curator of Vacant Estates; remission of bail; complaints against law practitioners and *ministère public*. Change of name, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as provided under section 55 of the Civil Status Act 1981 –

‘Any Mauritian Citizen may petition to the Attorney General for leave to make any change to his names.’

The Deputy Speaker: Can I just have an indication as to how many minutes the hon. Minister will take?

Mr Varma: Around half an hour, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

The Deputy Speaker: Carry on!

Mr Varma: Any Mauritian citizen, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, may petition the Attorney General for leave to make any change to his names. The Police is immediately requested to inquire and the applicant is required to make the necessary publications. The law allows four months delay for possible objections. After expiry of the delay, and depending on the outcome of the Police inquiry, the Attorney General decides on the application within the least possible delay. This service is provided free of charge, except that the applicant bears the cost of publication and of stamps to be used on the certificate.

Rectifications of civil status documents - Section 50 of the Civil Status Act provides for a mechanism whereby civil status documents may be rectified.

Applications - in any approved form - are made before the District Magistrate which then refers them to the *Ministère Public* at the Attorney General's Office for its conclusions. Upon receiving favourable conclusions from the *Ministère Public*, the Magistrate may issue an order authorising the Registrar of Civil Status to amend the relevant civil status act. It is to be noted that no charge is levied for the services of the *Ministère Public* in relation to such an application. Once the Police report is received, the application is processed at my office within the least possible delay.

The Curator of Vacant Estates administers all vacant estates in accordance with the provisions of the Curatelle Act. The instances, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, where there can be vacant estates are: vacant successions; unclaimed property; absences, *inter alia*.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as per the Bail Act, the Attorney General may, on good cause shown, remit in whole or in part the amount of recognizance estreated by the Court. The decision of the Attorney General is convened at the earliest available opportunity after a Police report on the application is received. The Attorney General may also enquire into complaints against law practitioners, and may institute disciplinary proceedings, if he is of the view that this course of action is warranted.

The *Ministère Public* intervenes in cases specifically provided for by law or when so requested by the Courts. The areas of intervention of the *Ministère Public* are: Change of Name; Rectification of Birth, Death and Marriage Certificate; Nullity of Marriage; Loss of Parental Authority; Action for Affiliation; Adoption; Protection of Rights of Minors; Absence and Disappearance; Succession and Division in kind; Curatelle; Dispensation of Age; Guardianship ; Tardy declaration of birth.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, at page 40 of the Budget Speech, Government has reiterated its commitment to develop Mauritius as an International Arbitration Centre. Arbitration is a voluntary process which has been used to resolve disputes for many years. Unlike what was earlier stated by the hon. gentleman, it is largely developed to meet the demands of the business community. The object of our arbitration is to achieve a fair resolution of disputes by impartial tribunal without unnecessary delay and expense. International Commercial Arbitration, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, has today become the standard method of resolution of international commercial disputes around the world. It is in that perspective that Government passed the International Arbitration Act with a view to promote Mauritius as a centre for international commercial conciliation and arbitration. Mauritius is breaking new ground as it intends to become the first country in the world to have a permanent seat of the Permanent Court of Arbitration.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, moreover, Government amended the Law Practitioners Act and in line with an overall *politique d'ouverture économique* to allow the coming of foreign law firms to Mauritius. These law firms are expected to bring along their know-how and expertise in

arbitration and other Alternative Dispute Resolution techniques. This fits perfectly into Government's plan for the internationalisation of the Mauritian economy. In fact, a development of International Commercial Arbitration will bring a significant amount of new work and expertise to Mauritian lawyers as foreign clients and lawyers will use Mauritian lawyers either as co-counsel on all issues of Mauritian laws or as sole representatives before tribunals in Mauritius. The Presidential Address elaborating the Government Programme 2010-15 states at paragraph 95 –

“Government will establish an International Arbitration Centre and take necessary action to promote legal process outsourcing.”

Our aim is to send the strongest possible message to the international business community that these facilities and conditions exist in Mauritius and that our Government is committed to build further on the existing framework to modernise and overhaul the judicial system and further develop Mauritius as an International Arbitration Centre. Alongside, a mediation division will be set up in the Supreme Court where all commercial cases will be dealt with before going to full trial. Mauritius will be hosting a major event this December, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, bringing to our country eminent international arbitration institutions and eminent arbitration specialists such as the London Court of International Arbitration and the International Chamber of Commerce to discuss of the development of the international arbitration in Mauritius.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it has been announced in this Budget that the law will be amended to expand the scope for corporations holding Category 1 business licences to extend their operations to the domestic company. As a result, they will be allowed to conduct business both inside and outside Mauritius instead of outside Mauritius only. They should invigorate even further our global business sector and domestic economy. This would also encourage regional headquarters activities in Mauritius and strengthen the economic diplomacy initiative to position Mauritius as the preferred gateway for investment into Africa, particularly from India and China.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as mentioned at paragraph 228 of our programme 2010-2015, Government is committed to pursue reforms in the Judiciary and complete the implementation and recommendations of the Mackay Report. With a view to improving the efficiency of our

courts and more generally our judicial and legal system, the Mackay Report recommended the setting up of a separate Court of Appeal section of the Supreme Court to hear all appeals from subordinate courts and of a high court section as Judges who sit on appeals are themselves Judges of the Supreme Court. The Constitution (Amendment) Bill and the Judicial and Legal Provisions Bill provide for amendments to be brought to a series of enactments to give effect to the proposed changes in the Constitution. The Bills have already been circulated for public consultation, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. I must say that representations have indeed been received from various stakeholders. I even sent a covering letter and the Bills to the hon. Leader of the Opposition for comments and proposals. I have spoken to the hon. gentlemen on the other side of the House and we hope that we will receive the comments as soon as possible to be able to finalise the Bills which we intend to do during the course of next year and will then be introduced in the National Assembly as soon as Government's approval is obtained.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the House will be pleased to note that at page 9 of the Estimates under programme 021: Administration of Justice, mention is made for the creation of a New Court of Appeal and a Supreme Court (High Court) to reorganise timely dispatch of court business and this has a vote in the Appropriation (2011) Bill and the Estimates of Expenditure by Programmes. Coupled with that, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, at page 55 of the Budget Speech, provision is being made for eight more Judges. This shows clearly the commitment of the Government in the setting up of the Court of Appeal.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, over the past few years, there has been an outcry as regards courses being run by the Council of Legal Education. In answer to a Parliamentary Question, I gave a commitment to the House that –

- (i) the functioning of the Council of Legal Education would be reviewed;
- (ii) the method of pupillage would be revisited;
- (iii) compulsory Continuous Professional Development programmes be introduced for all law practitioners;
- (iv) induction courses be made compulsory for all prospective judicial officers.

To give effect to these commitments, my office, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, is in the process of finalising the Law Practitioners (Amendment) Bill.

As stated at paragraph 290 of the Government Programme, Government is committed to the setting up of a full-fledged institute for the continuous training of Judges, Magistrates and Law Officers. As recently announced by the Minister of Finance at page 56 of his Budget Speech, Government is indeed true to its word making provision for the setting up of an Institute for Judicial and Legal Studies to enhance the capacity of the Judiciary to carry out its responsibilities and to bring significant improvement in the provision of legal education in the country.

At page 9 of the Estimates, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, under programme 021: Administration of Justice, mention is made for the creation of a Judicial and Legal Training Institute.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Institute for Judicial and Legal Studies Bill will be finalised shortly and introduced in the National Assembly after Government approval is obtained in relation thereto.

Lord Mackay in his report also made recommendations as regards reform in legal aid and the profession of Court Ushers. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as the House is aware that the green paper on legal aid is being circulated for public consultation and is on the website of the Attorney General's Office and we are doing the needful. Some copies of the green paper have already been sent and we are in the process of sending to other stakeholders.

I am pleased to inform the House, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that we have also started work in relation to the reorganisation of the profession of Court Ushers. Government is committed to the modernisation of the Judiciary. We are committed to the completion of the e-filing and electronic case lodging and management system and a digital recording system will be installed in the hearing rooms of the Employment Relations Tribunal to ensure timely delivery of awards, orders and rulings.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Law Reform Commission is doing a marvellous job with limited resources. We have as Chairperson, a highly respected Barrister, Mr Guy Ollivry and a very competent and able Chief Executive Officer. During the financial year, 2010, the commission has submitted eight final report papers on various legal issues. Issue paper on evidence of reluctant, intimidated witness in criminal proceedings; issue paper on Criminal Investigation Reform of Police procedures and practices; reform of aspects of consumer laws;

report on prevention of vexatious litigation; background paper on reform of the codes; issue paper on Constitutional Protection of Fundamental Rights; report on Mediation and Conciliation in commercial matters and, lastly, report on review of law as publicity for appointment and revocation of agent and proxy. The Commission has also submitted numerous preliminary review papers.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, our system of administration, as rightly pointed out by the hon. Member who spoke before me, is based on the separation of powers, that is, the Executive, Parliament and Judiciary. This Budget, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, shows the concern and respect the Government has for this concept. For the Executive, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, provision has been made for the recruitments of personnel in the Civil Service, there is the project of a school for the Civil Service.

As far as Parliament is concerned, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we are going to continue with the project of e-Parliament. The current renovation of the Parliament House is under way. As far as the Judiciary is concerned, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as I stated earlier on, provision has been made for eight more Judges, the Court of Appeal, the institute for judicial and legal studies and completion of the e-Judiciary Project.

In conclusion, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the 2011 Budget is another landmark in the strategic path of Mauritius in its quest to assume a credible footprint in the regional and international economic scene. It shows the vision of Government for a better future for everyone, based on the rule of law.

M. le président, comme un peuple uni, œuvrons ensemble pour la réalisation de notre rêve pour une île Maurice moderne et meilleure.

Thank you.

At 4.11 p.m, the sitting was suspended.

On resuming at 4.49 p.m. with Mr Speaker in the Chair.

Mr S. Obeegadoo (Third Member for Curepipe & Midlands): M. le président, l'opposition ayant refusé de participer à la mascarade que fut la reprise des débats autour du discours-programme six mois après les élections, fait sans précédent dans les annales parlementaires, c'est en conséquence la première fois que j'eus l'honneur de m'adresser à

l'hémicycle en plus de cinq ans. Un de mes collègues me faisait remarquer que j'avais, en conséquence, non seulement droit mais un devoir de rattrapage, le ministre des finances qui s'y connaît très bien n'y verra pas d'objection car je risque d'aller au-delà d'une demi-heure.

M. le président, avant tout, en guise de préambule, je voudrais lancer aux honorables députés de la Chambre un appel solennel. Ayant écouté la quasi totalité des allocutions prononcées à l'occasion de ces débats budgétaires, j'étais profondément bouleversé par la teneur de certaines interventions. Je vais vous expliquer pourquoi. Il y a trois cas de figure, il y a d'abord ceux qui cherchent à vilipender leurs adversaires du jour par rapport à des actes ou à des dires datant d'un temps où ils étaient en alliance avec ceux là. C'est le premier cas de figure. J'ai entendu ici des propos qui frisent l'indécence. Certains représentants de la majorité parlementaire, qui se sont attaqués aux dires et aux faits du MMM alors que nous étions en alliance de 2000-2005 par rapport à des faits ayant eu lieu à cette époque. Des propos qui frisent l'indécence et qui expliquent les critiques acerbes en dehors de l'hémicycle auquel nous sommes sujets. Lorsqu'on nous accuse de brûler ce que hier nous adorions et d'encenser ceux qui étaient honnis dans la minute qui précède. Pourtant, M. le président, toute l'histoire gouvernementale post-indépendance est faite de coalitions qui se font et qui se défont. Il y a les triomphes électoraux de la période post-indépendance, le fait d'alliances ou de mésalliances entre partis. La nature de notre système électoral et les pesanteurs de notre société, oh combien plurielles, la marge de manœuvre en terme de stratégie de développement économique en sont autant de facteurs explicatifs. Alors, de grâce, assumons cette réalité et renonçons à cette fâcheuse manie de venir faire le bilan de nos alliés d'hier par rapport à des faits et des gestes auxquels nous avons collaboré quand nous étions en alliance.

Deuxième cas de figure, d'autres qui se croient obligés de dénoncer des faits ou les dires de leurs collègues d'hier après qu'ils aient, à la toute dernière minute, changé de parti. Ceux-là se reconnaîtront dans mes propos.

(Interruptions)

Tant de hargne, tant de haine, M. le président, témoignent d'une mauvaise conscience, ni plus ni moins. Ceux qui font défection pour des raisons de conviction, M. le ministre des finances, n'ont nul besoin de se justifier en injuriant ces amis d'hier. Nullement. Il faudrait réaliser que dans cette Chambre ils sont près de 20% qui appartenaient à un autre parti que celui

qu'ils représentent aujourd'hui. Sur le *front bench* du gouvernement, ils en sont au moins trois sur huit. Et alors, si cela est fait sur la base de conviction, ainsi soit-il. Mais, de grâce, cette statistique éloquente ne dicte-t-elle pas une certaine mesure, voire, une certaine réserve lorsqu'il s'agit d'attaque personnelle contre ceux et celles qui étaient avec nous, hier même, et dont nous avons, malheureusement, témoigner qu'ils ne font pas honneur à cette Chambre.

Troisième cas de figure, ceux et celles qui par fanatisme de parti - j'ai entendu plusieurs de cela ici - voudraient à l'occasion de ces débats attribuer à leur parti tout ce que représente la République de Maurice moderne. Non seulement de nouveaux députés, mais aussi comme un député qui a parlé en début de séance aujourd'hui et qui voudrait nous faire croire que tout ce qu'est la République de Maurice aujourd'hui est le fait du Parti Travailleiste. Mais le Mauricien moyen vous dira tout de suite que la République de Maurice de 2010 est le fait du Parti Travailleiste certes, mais aussi du MMM, du MSM, du PSMD et des partis de Rodrigues. Donc, pourquoi s'évertuer par fanatisme de parti à tenir de tels propos? Respectons l'intelligence des Mauriciens. Le peuple Mauricien est de plus en plus instruit et il faudrait que maintenant que nous sommes entrés de plain-pied dans le 21ème siècle, que nous apprenions à débattre autrement en politique, que nous apprenions à nous comporter différemment en politique pour mériter ce rôle qui nous est attribué d'être de dignes représentants du peuple en 2010 et bientôt en 2011.

M. le président, venons en donc au budget. Au-delà du simple exercice comptable, plus qu'un récapitulatif des recettes et des dépenses à réaliser au cours de l'année 2011, le budget de l'Etat - par le biais du choix des dotations budgétaires anticipées qu'a fait le ministre des finances et le gouvernement - énonce les priorités de l'action gouvernementale. En cela le présent budget est le moyen par excellence de la mise en œuvre du projet de l'alliance Parti Travailleiste-MSM-PMSD, d'ici fin 2011 quand il aura accompli le tiers de son mandat.

Premier fait à constater c'est que ce budget, et donc le fait, mis à part le PMSD, de deux partis distincts : le MSM et le Parti Travailleiste alliés pour la première fois depuis 20 ans et représentants deux courants importants mais très différents de notre histoire politique. Le travailleiste *Ramgoolamien* dira-t-on et l'autre le *Bissoondoyalisme*. Deux tendances très différentes qui ont chacun joué le rôle dans notre histoire politique mais deux parcours différents et souvent contradictoires. J'en veux pour preuve ce budget qui, à mon sens, témoigne d'un

double désaveu. Je m'explique. Le Parti Travailleiste renie, à travers ce budget, non seulement l'ancien vice-Premier ministre travailleiste s'entend, M. Sithanen, mais aussi toute une série de mesures fondamentales par rapport à la gestion économique et sociale du Parti Travailleiste de 2005 à 2010, des mesures auxquelles et je répéterais ce que disait tout à l'heure mon collègue l'honorable Baloomoody, mesures qui avaient suscité l'adhésion totale et le soutien indéfectible à la fois du Premier ministre et du Parti Travailleiste/PMMSD, cinq ans durant. Face aux critiques acerbes de l'opposition MSM et MMM, l'abolition du NRPT que les méchantes langues appelaient non pas la loi Sithanen mais le *Navin Ramgoolam Property Tax*; détaxation des intérêts perçus sur les dépôts bancaires, détaxation, en apparence, des revenus sur les premières soixante tonnes de sucre pour les petits planteurs, rétablissement des subsides pour les frais examens, et j'en passe. Réalise-t-on l'énormité de la chose ? Un revirement politique sans précédent, et je mesure bien mes mots, M. le président ; sans précédent dans l'histoire politique du pays, et ce sera amusant sans doute, d'ici 50 ans, de lire le jugement que porteront les historiens sur ce changement dramatique ayant lieu à la veille des dernières élections générales. Mais, nous, de ce côté de la Chambre, ne pouvons que nous en réjouir, parce que nous avons, dans cet hémicycle et au-delà, opposé la dérive ultralibérale de la politique économique de l'ancien régime. Les dirigeants et députés MSM furent tout aussi virulents dans leur opposition à cette politique, et aussi virulents dans leur opposition, que le furent les dirigeants du Parti travailleiste dans leur rejet des arguments du MSM. Donc, désaveu clair, catégorique, indéniable du Parti travailleiste à travers ce budget, et revanche sur l'histoire du MSM. Cela est on ne peut plus clair.

Mais, qu'en est-il de la population qui, elle, aura subi des années durant les conséquences de ces mesures ? Aura-elle droit à une quelconque réparation, à un quelconque dédommagement, comme le réclamait naguère le MSM, version opposition ? Malheureusement, il est évident que non. Et, dans la manière que ce revirement s'opère, c'est aussi un désaveu du MSM, qui s'était fait le centre, n'est-ce pas, du rattrapage. Mon collègue, l'honorable Keechong Li Kwong Wing, reviendra demain, avant la clôture des débats, sur les mesures strictement financières de ce budget et de leurs implications, en particulier sur la vie chère et l'emploi.

Toutefois, à mon sens, M. le président, le désaveu majeur pour le MSM, cette fois imposé semble-t-il par le Parti travailleiste, se situe ailleurs, dans le domaine de l'éducation. Domaine aux enjeux économiques décisifs, rappelons-le, car c'est à l'école que se déterminent les inégalités de

revenus futurs, c'est à l'école où se forment les risques de précarité, voire le chômage. Pourquoi, dis-je désaveu du MSM ? Je m'explique. Vous n'en êtes peut-être pas conscient, M. le président, mais, lors d'un sondage réalisé début 2005, la réforme de l'éducation - celle entreprise de 2001 à 2005 - fut identifiée comme la plus grande réalisation gouvernementale, avec un taux de satisfaction de 71%. Nous parlons de la plus grande réforme de l'éducation nationale en 42 ans d'indépendance. Une réforme que s'attela à briser le goulot d'étranglement à la sortie du primaire, et qui n'a eu de cesse de se resserrer depuis 42 ans.

Souvenez-vous, M. le président, qu'en l'espace de quatre ans et demi, R 25 milliards furent investis dans le secteur éducatif, entre autres par le présent ministre des finances, qui fût aussi ministre des finances de 2003 à 2005. Cette réforme, qui avait pour objectif de doubler le nombre de collèges d'États, de mettre fin au *ranking*, de régionaliser les admissions, afin d'amener tous les jeunes à être scolarisés jusqu'à l'âge de 16 ans, fut le fait d'un gouvernement MSM/MMM. Je dis bien, MSM/MMM, parce que, trop souvent, ces jours-ci, on prend l'habitude de dire un gouvernement MMM de 2000 à 2005. Un gouvernement MSM/MMM, dont Sir Anerood Jugnauth fut Premier ministre pendant trois ans, Paul Bérenger fut Premier ministre pendant un peu moins de deux ans et, mon collègue, le ministre des finances, fut ministre des finances pendant un peu moins de deux ans aussi, durant la même période.

Cette avancée historique, saluée par les organisations internationales suivant l'éducation, fut soutenue avec enthousiasme et défendue. Enthousiasme, je pense au ministre Bachoo, qui fut d'un apport essentiel pour la construction des collèges. Un soutien enthousiaste et indéfectible et défendu unanimement par le MSM comme par le MMM. Pourquoi ? Tout simplement, parce qu'elle allait dans le sens du progrès social et économique, en affirmant, dans les faits, le droit à un cycle complet d'éducation de base comme droit humain fondamental pour tous les enfants mauriciens au-delà des préjugés de race ou de classe. Sans le MSM, cette réforme n'aurait jamais été possible. Faut-il qu'il l'ait voulue et qu'il l'ait soutenue. Cette réforme, pendant les cinq années passées dans l'opposition, le MSM l'a défendue, et a demandé qu'on la reprenne. Je ne citerai pas des noms, mais combien éloquents étaient nos collègues de l'opposition de cette époque, dans la défense de la grande réforme de l'éducation.

Voilà donc, le MSM revenu au gouvernement, et présentant le budget national. Quid, donc, de cette grande réforme de l'éducation, de cette grande œuvre qui était à reprendre, selon

le MSM dans l'opposition. Plusieurs mesures positives, disons le d'emblée - et je l'ai déjà dit à l'extérieur de l'hémicycle - le rétablissement des subsides pour les examens du *School Certificate* et *Higher School Certificate* ; l'augmentation des bourses d'état dans l'enseignement supérieur, suite à un rapport déposé déjà en 2005 ; - Malheureusement, on a perdu cinq ans, mais tant mieux si cela fait désormais - la révision à la baisse des taux d'intérêts pour les emprunts servant à financer les études ; mesures qui nous ramènent au budget MSM/MMM de 2005. N'est-ce pas M. le ministre ? Bravo, donc, pour toutes ces mesures qui inciteront, espérons-le, un plus grand nombre à aller poursuivre des études supérieures. Mais, comment prétendre, si vous vous imaginez l'éducation comme une pyramide, où tout le monde entre en première année, mais un nombre moindre entreprend des études supérieures, et dont vous voulez élargir le sommet, que vous voulez pousser plus haut, si les fondements ne sont pas solides, si la base n'est pas élargie ?

Vous savez, M. le président, en étant généreux, l'on pourrait estimer à 22% le pourcentage - écoutez-moi bien - d'enfants se joignant en Standard I, en première année du primaire, qui iront à l'université. Je n'invente rien ; je cite le plan stratégique du ministère de l'éducation, produit par l'ancien ministre, et présenté par le présent ministre, qui nous dit que moins de 20% des jeunes mauriciens réussissent aux examens du HSC à leur première tentative et, donc, en étant généreux, on pourrait dire 20%, 21%, 22%, 23% à tout casser, iront vers l'enseignement supérieur. Alors, comment prétendre, comme le fait le présent ministre de l'enseignement supérieur, qu'il y aura un diplômé universitaire par famille, si seuls 20% des enfants vont à l'université ?

Non ! La démocratisation de l'éducation ne peut commencer par l'enseignement supérieur. Tout le monde dans l'éducation vous le dira, on commence par la base de la pyramide et ce n'est pas le ministre des finances qui me contredira. En ce qui concerne le budget national, je crois que le *Leader* de l'Opposition a déjà cité cet extrait. Voilà ce que dit le ministre des finances au paragraphe 95 –

“We cannot go on measuring the productivity of that system (*parlant du système éducatif*) only from the perspective of those who succeed in it”.

Il a parfaitement raison.

“We must also put a far greater focus on stopping the haemorrhage caused by a 30 percent failure rate at the CPE”.

Il a encore plus raison.

« This is where our efforts to increase tertiary enrolment should start ».

Il a mille fois raison.

« This is where the bottleneck is tightest ».

On ne peut être plus exact dans le diagnostic du mal. Enfin, la voix de la raison qui se fait entendre ! Après cinq ans, on a escamoté - je ne parle pas du ministre Bunwaree qui vient d'arriver à l'éducation - totalement le goulot d'étranglement à la fin du primaire. Savez-vous, M. le président que le manifeste électorale de l'Alliance, Parti Travailleuse/MSM/PMSD, ne parle pas du *CPE* ?

Savez-vous, M. le président, que le discours-programme ne parle pas du *CPE* ? Donc, félicitations au ministre des finances qui, enfin, fait entendre la voix de la raison ! J'ai été donc très enthousiaste à lire son budget en me disant : que propose donc ce budget pour s'attaquer à l'hémorragie d'enfant victime de la sélection par l'échec pour briser le *tightest bottleneck* ? Rien, M. le président ! Le MSM peut, contrairement au Parti Travailleuse, diagnostiquer le mal, mais n'ose prescrire le remède, alors même qu'il a défendu ce remède, la grande réforme de l'éducation que nous avons fait ensemble, bec et ongles, entre 2000 et 2005 et au-delà ! Voilà l'autre désaveu majeur de ce budget ! Cette fois, désaveu du MSM, d'où ma référence à un budget du double désaveu ! L'éducation, M. le président, venons-en puisque cela fait une dizaine d'années que j'y consacre ma vie.

Tentons un état des lieux. Après cinq ans, le gouvernement Travailleuse a tout fait pour défaire ce qui furent réalisés de 2000-2005, par conviction, ou par fanatisme de parti, ou à cause de pression occulte d'une certaine élite. Mais, voyons les faits aujourd'hui. Je ne parlerai pas des échecs. Tout le monde le sait.

Laissez-moi vous raconter la triste histoire des enfants mauriciens. Si nous prenons une centaine d'enfants mauriciens qui entrent en première année du primaire et, là aussi, je me base, sur les statistiques officielles du ministère de l'éducation ou sur les statistiques de l'UNESCO qui sont puisées des chiffres fournis par le *CSO* ou des *Household Budget Surveys*. Ils sont 98%

à terminer le cycle primaire. Deux pourcents de déperdition, pourquoi? Parce qu'il n'y a pas eu de suivi ! Quand nous avons voté, le MSM et nous, la scolarité obligatoire jusqu'à seize, l'idée n'était pas d'emprisonner, de pénaliser les parents. L'idée était de faire obligation à l'Etat de s'assurer que tous les enfants - qui n'appartiennent ni à l'Etat ni à leurs parents mais à l'avenir - puissent compléter le cycle d'éducation de base. Pourtant il y a quelques milliers d'enfants qui se perdent dans la nature sans avoir complété le cycle primaire, avec pour résultat que, Maurice est classifiée par L'UNESCO comme un pays à risque de ne pas atteindre l'objectif du millénaire, de la scolarisation primaire universelle d'ici 2015. Donc, 98 enfants arrivent en sixième. Et combien obtiennent le CPE ? Si je compte ceux qui redoublent, et donc 40% vont réussir, ils sont au grand maximum 82%. 82% sur cette centaine d'enfants, dont je vous parlais, vont obtenir le CPE. Je ne parle pas du *pass mark* du taux de réussite d'un tiers dans les écoles ZEP, les 9% qui vont réussir à l'école de Barkly, 82% au total. Ce qui nous fait chaque année 18% de nos enfants. Ce qui équivaut à plus de 3,000 jeunes enfants qui ne vont jamais obtenir le CPE. Pourtant ce CPE c'est le passeport obligé pour accéder à un emploi valorisant ; c'est le passeport obligé pour accéder à la fonction publique. Ce sont les *Essential Learning Competencies* selon les sommités pédagogiques du *MIE*. 18% qui vont échouer ! A qui la faute ? A ces enfants ? Plus de 3,000 jeunes enfants qui, chaque année, vont être éjectés - mais certains vont être récupérés dans le préprofessionnel - du *mainstream* de l'éducation. Quel gâchis ! Cela est immoral ; socialement, c'est dangereux. Allez voir à la prison de Beau Bassin qui s'y trouve ! Economiquement, c'est une catastrophe ! Ne venez pas me parler de gain de productivité, ne me parlez pas de juger du développement du succès économique de notre pays à l'onde de la mondialisation quand vous faites plus de 3,000 petits enfants échouer chaque année à l'examen du CPE !

Voilà notre système éducatif, donc de cette centaine d'enfants, disais-je, 82% obtiennent le CPE ; la majeure partie des 18%, grâce aux réformes, entre 2000-2005, sont désormais récupérés dans le préprofessionnel. Que se passe-t-il dans le préprofessionnel, personne n'en sait rien ! On ne s'en soucie guère, parce que ces 18% ce sont les plus pauvres parmi les pauvres. Y-a-t-il un député, ici, dans cet hémicycle, dont l'enfant échouera aux examens du CPE, dont l'enfant ira dans la filière préprofessionnelle ? Certainement pas ! Et qui parlera en leur nom, qui va défendre ces enfants ? Ils ne sont pas représentés à l'Assemblée. C'est pour, cela M. le président, qu'au-delà d'une sélection par

l'échec, notre système éducatif institutionnalise une domination de classe au-delà des questions de race et de communauté dont se gargarise trop de politique dans notre pays. Je parle de la pauvreté, de l'exclusion qui touche tout le monde, toutes les races et toutes les communautés. C'est une discrimination de classe, rien de moins. Mais l'histoire ne se termine pas là. 82% arrivent au secondaire, et savez-vous combien obtiendront le *School Certificate*? À peine 40 selon les statistiques officielles du ministère! De cette centaine d'enfants s'étant joints au *Standard I* au système éducatif, à peine quarante obtiendront le *School Certificate* et à peine une vingtaine obtiendront le *Higher School Certificate*. Tout le reste, les déchets du système, 42 ans durant, M. le président. Voilà, l'état des lieux.

Cette histoire en elle-même résume l'état des lieux de notre système éducatif. Il y a un problème principal, comme le disait le ministre des finances: le CPE. C'est le problème immédiat et c'est l'obstacle principal à toute démocratisation du système éducatif. Malgré tout son bon vouloir, le ministre Jeetah pourra se démener comme un beau diable pour démocratiser le supérieur, mais que faites-vous si seulement 20% de nos enfants arrivent à terminer le cycle secondaire? Le problème c'est le CPE qui est un véritable cancer, M. le président. Dès la première année du primaire, que dis-je la première année du primaire, dès le préscolaire, les parents ont en tête les 120 places au Collège Royal de Curepipe ou les 120 places au QEC.

L'éducation - le rôle de l'école est dénaturé. Ce n'est plus pour offrir à nos enfants les connaissances, les compétences dont ils auraient besoin pour être des citoyens responsables et actifs demain, mais c'est la préparation au CPE. Malgré tous les efforts louables du ministre Bunwaree, qui est très bien intentionné - qui dira le contraire - le problème demeure le CPE. La compétition intense qu'il dénonçait, les leçons particulières qu'il s'évertue à combattre, mais vous vous attaquez au symptôme du mal. La racine du mal c'est le CPE, les enfants stressés, les programmes surchargés parce qu'il faut ce dixième de point. J'ai été voir les statistiques quand j'étais ministre de l'éducation. Moins d'un dixième de point pour distinguer entre la dernière qui entrera au QEC et l'autre qu'on enverra à Maurice Curé ou ailleurs. Il faut bien surcharger les programmes, avoir des questions auxquelles une toute petite minorité - après tout nous parlons de 240 places sur 20,000 enfants qui vont aller au CPE. Des résultats en forme de U, nulle part ailleurs dans le monde n'a-t-on des résultats en forme de U. C'est-à-dire qu'il y a un grand nombre qui échoue et un grand nombre qui obtient les meilleurs résultats et puis rien entre les deux.

Les organisations internationales parlent de notre système comme un système éducatif à double visage, dénonçant l'inéquité même par rapport aux pays du continent africain; l'inéquité flagrant du système éducatif mauricien. Le fameux *ranking*, avoué ou déguisé du A+, que dénonçaient nos amis du MSM et le traitement inégal et discriminatoire des enfants au secondaire. Dès l'âge de douze ans, les enfants sont divisés en trois catégories; ceux qui réussissent et réussissent bien - collèges nationaux, je crois que les collèges nationaux offrent 1200 places sur 20000 candidats; la deuxième division - collèges régionaux ou collèges privés, et la troisième catégorie - ceux qui échouent, donc, on s'en lave les mains.

M. le président, pour nous, au MMM, nous disons que sans s'attaquer à l'aberration du CPE, aucun progrès réel n'est possible. Ni l'abolition de leçon particulière, ni l'introduction de nouvelles matières si elles ne sont pas comptabilisées pour le CPE, ni le *continuous assessment*, si cela ne compte pas pour le CPE, aucune réforme pédagogique, tous les rapports, les rapports Bissoondoyal du début des années 80, le rapport de M. Kadress Pillay qui fut un visionnaire dans le domaine de l'éducation, le rapport qu'a produit le ministre Gokool en 2006 et, finalement, le dernier rapport de 2009. Le CPE sous sa forme actuelle est dépassé et même caduc. La sélection par le *ranking* et l'échec n'est plus justifié et le *rat race* n'est pas une fatalité.

M. le président, le temps presse, j'aurai voulu dénoncer le scandale du préprofessionnel qui concerne 15% à 17% de nos enfants, n'est-ce pas, et dont personne ne parle. Le Parti Travailleuse naguère dénonçait le préprofessionnel comme étant une garderie où l'on ne faisait rien de bon, on ne faisait que parquer nos enfants. Et, aujourd'hui, je dirais qu'ils avaient en partie raison parce que c'était une nouvelle expérience et cela prend du temps pour bien asseoir une telle réforme. Mais, cinq ans plus tard, avez-vous, M. le président, entendu parler d'une quelconque réforme dans le secteur du préprofessionnel? Le scandale du préprofessionnel, disais-je; l'absence de suivi par rapport à la scolarité obligatoire, je l'ai dit; l'éducation est censée être obligatoire jusqu'à l'âge de 16 ans. Mais selon les chiffres même du ministère de l'éducation, *the net enrolment ratio*, c'est-à-dire, le pourcentage des enfants ayant entre 12 ans et 15 ans comparé à la totalité de la population mauricienne des 12 ans à 15 ans, est de 64%. Donc, seulement les deux tiers des enfants qui devraient être aux collèges selon les dispositions de l'éducation obligatoire; l'Etat ne respecte pas la loi.

La catastrophe de la gestion des établissements secondaires d'Etat, M. le président. En ce début d'année, si mes statistiques sont fiables, 20 des 60 *Rectors* ont été transférés. Vous savez ce que c'est le transfert d'un chef d'établissement en début d'année scolaire? Je connais des collèges d'Etat où, en cinq ans, il y eu cinq chefs d'établissements. Quelle continuité? Comment stabiliser ce collège? L'absentéisme des élèves, depuis des années on en parle, en Forme V, Upper VI, dès le deuxième trimestre les élèves ne vont plus aux collèges, aux lycées, tolérés et encouragés par certains et pourtant vous et moi, payons nos impôts, M. le président. A quoi servent nos impôts si ces collèges non seulement demeurent vides durant les vacances scolaires mais, en plus, même durant la période où la scolarisation doit se faire, les élèves n'y sont pas. Et, les années passent, à l'époque nous songions à nous assurer que tous les chefs d'établissements seraient formés, bénéficieraient d'une formation, mais cela n'a toujours pas été le cas. Je ne parlais pas de la paralysie de la PSSA, mais tous les jours, il y a des articles dans les journaux nous parlant des difficultés, des frustrations du conseil d'administration de la PSSA qui est censé réguler le prix.

A l'état des lieux du système, c'est aussi l'obsession des examens. On a maintenant le MES, tout est centralisé; le MES prépare des examens en quatrième, cinquième et sixième, et maintenant en Forme III. A quoi ça sert, M. le président? Des examens, c'est pour diagnostiquer le résultat, diagnostiquer la capacité des enfants à maîtriser un programme; l'efficacité du système à transmettre les connaissances. Mais nos enfants aujourd'hui sont accablés par le nombre d'examens alors qu'il faudrait dédramatiser, déstresser ce qui se fait en terme d'éducation.

Et, finalement, en dernier mot, en termes d'état des lieux, c'est le supérieur. Une chose très positive qu'avait faite le Premier ministre, le docteur Ramgoolam en 2005, c'était d'instituer un seul et unique ministère de l'éducation qui comprenait toute l'éducation, du préscolaire au supérieur, et en incluant la formation professionnelle. Cela permettait une conception globale, holistique, coordonnée, intégrée, des systèmes d'éducation et de formation. Malheureusement, en 2010, je ne sais pas ce qui s'est passé, mais nous nous sommes africanisés. Nous avons suivi la mauvaise habitude de nombre de pays africains, en particulier, l'Afrique francophone qui fait la risée des experts en éducation d'avoir de nombreux ministères de l'éducation. Dites-moi, M. le président, si les Etats Unis d'Amérique, l'Angleterre, la France et la République Indienne peuvent se permettre d'avoir un seul ministre de l'éducation, quitte à ce qu'il soit soutenu par

des vice-ministres, pourquoi fallait-il qu'à Maurice - et je ne nie pas toutes les qualités du ministre Jeetah ; je ne parle pas de la personne, je parle de l'institution - nous ayons soudainement un ministère séparé pour l'enseignement supérieur ? C'est ce qu'il ne fallait pas faire c'est suivre la voie des pays beaucoup moins développés que nous, alors que plus un pays avance, plus il réalise la nécessité de coordonner, d'avoir un tout, de voir l'éducation comme un tout. Mais que se passe-t-il au supérieur, bien avant vous, M. Jeetah ? Dès 2005, le MSM/MMM avait adopté l'approche Singapourienne ; voilà un domaine où il faut bien suivre l'exemple singapourien - c'est l'éducation nationale; l'approche singapourienne qui était très sélective par rapport au choix d'institution de l'enseignement supérieur qui pourrait opérer dans l'île. C'est ainsi que nous étions partis chercher et essayer d'attirer l'université de Manipal en Inde, la principale université privée offrant des cours de médecine - *La Birla Institute of Technology and Science*, qui est la meilleure université privée pour ce qui est des sciences naturelles. C'est pour cela que nous avons donc suivi cette approche d'aller choisir et d'opter pour la qualité. Et que s'est-il passé en 2005 ? En 2005, on a décidé la politique ultralibérale que je dénonçais tantôt - le laisser-faire. On laisserait tout le monde venir, tout le monde s'implanter à Maurice et la loi du marché déciderait qui survivrait, qui ne survivrait pas. Résultat, dans le discours du budget, j'ai été choqué, M. le président, d'apprendre que nous avions était-ce 61 institutions du tertiaire ? M. le président, il y a quelque chose qui va très mal. Nous sommes un pays d'à peine plus d'un million d'habitants. Il s'agit de privilégier la qualité dans l'enseignement supérieur. Oui, il nous faut démocratiser ; oui, notre taux d'inscription supérieure étant deçà de la moyenne pour les pays en voie de développement, de la moyenne au niveau mondial, mais la qualité avant tout, surtout pour ce qui est de l'enseignement supérieur et ce fut là l'erreur capitale.

M. le président, un dernier mot pour ce qui est de l'état des lieux qui m'inquiète beaucoup, ce sont les dépenses publiques en éducation. J'inviterai le ministre de finances à nous dire ce qu'est l'investissement du gouvernement en matière d'éducation. J'ai noté, avec beaucoup d'inquiétude, qu'en terme de pourcentage du PIB, nous étions passés de 3.8% en 2005 - votre dernier budget - à 3.2 % la moyenne de 2007 à 2009. Tout à l'heure, j'en discutais avec mon collègue, l'honorable Li Kwong Wing. Il s'emblerait que nous sommes toujours aux alentours des 3% et que nous ayons la part des dépenses publiques allant à l'éducation auraient

diminué entre 2010 et 2011. Cela est très grave à la vue de ce que dépensent nos compétiteurs au pays à notre niveau de développement en matière d'éducation, mais nous y reviendrons.

Les priorités, M. le président - nous proposons six priorités pour l'éducation. D'abord, placer l'équité et le combat pour la réelle égalité de chances et contre l'exclusion au cœur du dispositif de l'éducation nationale. Le préscolaire autant du *National Empowerment Fund* de M. de l'Estrac. A l'époque où il y était, il y avait des choses intéressantes qui s'étaient faites pour prioriser le préscolaire. Il est encore temps, d'autant plus que le taux brut de scolarisation pour les trois à cinq ans aurait régressé depuis 2006. Priorité à voir. Il y a aussi les ZEPs tant décriés à l'époque comme étant du communalisme malgré qu'il y avait Terre Rouge, malgré qu'il y avait Vallée Pitot, malgré que les ZEPs étaient un concept hérité du ministre Parsuramen, du ministre Pillay que nous avons relancé en nous basant sur les statistiques officielles les régions du pays les plus pauvres, les écoles les moins performantes. Après 2005, on allait tout aborder. Les partenaires étrangers ont insisté. Le projet des ZEPs a été, semble-t-il, relancé, mais j'ai comme l'impression que le cœur n'y est pas. Les ZEPs – langue d'enseignement, c'est l'équité au cœur du dispositif de l'éducation nationale, c'est aussi les langues d'enseignement. Il y a un pas positif. L'idée d'offrir au choix le créole mauricien comme langue enseignée ; demain, le Bhojpuri comme langue enseignée, c'est positif. Ce sont les langues maternelles de la quasi totalité de nos enfants ; un certain nombre pour qui le français est la langue maternelle, mais les langues maternelles ce sont surtout le créole, le bhojpuri. Un pas positif. Mais si on veut vraiment démocratiser le système, si on veut vraiment améliorer les perspectives de réussite scolaire, il faudra considérer la langue maternelle comme médium d'enseignement et on peut avancer. Je prendrai l'exemple de Rodrigues où les susceptibilités sont moindres ou le choix des parents pourrait effectivement expérimenter - comme nous l'avons fait en 2005, mais qui après a été abandonné - le créole comme langue maternelle et pourquoi pas le bhojpuri demain comme langue d'enseignement.

Deuxième priorité, placer la santé au cœur du dispositif de l'éducation nationale. Je parle de la nutrition, je parle de la culture du sport. Je ne dirais pas pourquoi, nous sommes tous d'accord là-dessus. Savez-vous, M. le président, qu'avant 2005, nous avons introduit une nouvelle matière qui s'appelait le *Health and Physical Education*, qui avait comme objectif de former à une nutrition, à des pratiques alimentaires correctes, pour que tous les enfants connaissent les maladies courantes à Maurice et que tous les enfants quittent l'éducation

obligatoire en maîtrisant les premiers soins. M. le ministre de l'éducation semble être tout à fait en accord et dit même que cela se fait. Tant mieux ! Mais alors, parlons en, oublions le fanatisme de parti. Vous ne voulez pas l'appeler *Health and Physical Education* parce que c'était le MSM/MMM, appelez le comme vous voulez. L'essentiel, c'est que nos enfants puissent en bénéficier.

Règlementation des cantines – c'était très bien, mais il va falloir aller au-delà vers des repas équilibrés, pourquoi pas des repas chauds en commençant par les écoles dans les régions les plus pauvres. Infrastructures sportives – quand on nous a accusé, M. le président, de dépenser des milliards pour construire des collèges - le ministre Bachoo n'est pas là, il sait combien je me suis battu pour que chaque nouveau collège d'État ait cinq arpents de terrain et pour les filles au moins trois arpents et demi - c'était aussi pour avoir dans tous ces collèges un terrain de foot et des facilités pour la construction d'un gymnase et, qu'en dehors des heures de scolarité, ces facilités soient mises à la disposition du quartier, de la communauté. Cela ne se fait pas de manière générale et même le droit au recteur ne suffit pas parce qu'il faut faire un travail d'explication vis-à-vis des associations des parents d'élèves qui sont très réticents. Et les bâtiments scolaires, nous parlions, tout à l'heure, M. le président, qui restent fermés des mois durant pourraient justement participer, jouer un rôle fondamental dans le développement d'une culture du sport pour nos jeunes.

Savez vous que dans les collèges d'État le *physical education* est parfois enseigné comme matière théorique où les élèves font très peu de sport, mais en fin d'année vont prendre un examen théorique où ils sont appelés à décrire des instruments qu'ils n'ont jamais vus, qu'ils n'ont jamais tenus dans leurs mains. Cela se fait, M. le président, dans les collèges d'Etat. Troisième priorité : placer la qualité au cœur du dispositif. Saluons la participation annoncée par le ministre Bunwaree de Maurice au programme du PISA qui va nous permettre de comparer les compétences - non pas les résultats aux examens mais les compétences acquises par nos jeunes avec ce qui se fait à l'étranger. La qualité c'est d'abord le résultat des apprentissages et j'ai parlé du problème d'échec scolaire mais c'est aussi la pertinence des programmes. Pertinence de programmes, deux secondes, M. le président, pour vous parler de l'éducation à la citoyenneté. Nous avons introduit un programme d'éducation à la citoyenneté qui visait à préparer les enfants à vivre dans une société culturellement plurielle, à connaître les droits humains, à connaître les enjeux de l'écologie. Tout cela fût mis de côté en 2005. Souvenez-vous encore une

fois il y avait eu des accusations de communalisme par rapport au manuel qui avait été produit - l'éducation à la citoyenneté qui est plus importante que jamais et un autre scandale ce qu'on appelle les *Alternative to Practicals*. M. le président, je ne sais pas si vous avez étudié les sciences naturelles au collège mais, si c'est le cas, vous vous souviendrez des laboratoires qui existaient à l'époque. Aujourd'hui, nos jeunes, en forme V, dans les collèges d'État, font ce qu'on appelle *Alternative to Practicals*, ne mettent jamais les pieds dans un laboratoire et vont obtenir un *School Certificate* - oui, Madame Dookun, vous le savez - en biologie, en chimie, en physique. Quel scandale en 2010 alors qu'il faut relever le défi du développement.

M. le président, la qualité c'est l'efficacité dans l'utilisation des ressources et M. le ministre des finances, j'espère s'intéressera à une évaluation du rapport co-efficacité de tous ces investissements dans le secteur éducatif. Quatrième priorité : offrir une éducation de base à tous jusqu'à l'âge de 16 ans. Prenons l'exemple de Singapour, il n'y a pas de préprofessionnel, il n'y a pas d'examen de CPE. Tout le monde va jusqu'à l'âge de seize ans au collège. Singapour tout le monde progresse jusqu'à l'âge de seize ans.

Mr Speaker: A l'âge de treize ans vous avez un examen qu'on appelle le *Primary Leaving School Certificate*.

Mr Obeegadoo: Absolument l'examen existe mais pas un examen de sélection par les chefs. Tous les élèves passent le secondaire, il n'y a pas de préprofessionnel mais il y a différents rythmes. Certains feront les *end-levels* de quatre ans, d'autres feront les *O-level* en cinq ans mais c'est un seul tronc. Il y a un socle commun de connaissance et de compétence que tous les jeunes doivent maîtriser et voilà la voie de l'avenir, M. le président.

Donc cinquième priorité: inciter le plus grand nombre à aller au-delà puisque vous connaissez si bien l'exemple singapourien, je vais m'y référer encore. Au lieu de mener tous nos enfants vers le HSC académique pré-universitaire, l'abattoir; trois quarts vont réussir, un quart vont perdre deux à trois ans de leur vie, nous avons proposé des années de cela la formule Singapourienne de polytechnique préparant les jeunes à devenir des *paraprofessionals*, à aller vers le marché du travail et à Singapour la majorité des jeunes après les *O-levels* vont vers la polytechnique et non pas vers le HSC. D'ailleurs tout ce concept de *School Certificate* et de *Higher School Certificate* ce qu'on appelle le *group certificate*, il faut réussir dans cinq matières

at one and the same sitting c'est totalement dépassé, M. le président, où autrement qu'à Maurice....

(Interruptions)

M. le ministre, vous qui dites que l'opposition ne fait que critiquer, voilà des propositions qui vous sont faites, des suggestions et nous sommes à votre disposition pour vous soutenir si vous allez dans ce sens, ne voilà-t-il pas que vous choisissiez de m'interrompre tout simplement parce que mes propos ne vous plaisent pas. Soyez bon élève M. le ministre. Alors je disais donc...

Mr Speaker: Vous savez c'est là le problème, le ministre a fini de parler, il ne pourra pas répondre.

M. Obeegadoo: Non mais son collègue a été placé – je ne dirai en embuscade - stratégiquement juste derrière moi pour pouvoir répondre à tous ces arguments, n'est-ce pas? Parfait. Sixième proposition: inciter le nombre à aller au-delà du secondaire vers le supérieur et nous sommes tout à fait en faveur de la démocratisation du supérieur.

M. le président, je vais quitter l'éducation, je vais prendre les dernières cinq/dix minutes qui me sont allouées pour parler de deux domaines qui me semblent très importants. Premièrement l'unité nationale – rien ne pourra se faire dans ce pays en terme de progrès sans l'unité nationale. C'est la condition *sine qua non* de notre vivre ensemble mauricien. Cette unité nationale a été mise à rude épreuve depuis six mois. Il y a eu la déclaration incendiaire attribuée au ministre des arts et de la culture *of all people* qui a blessé profondément tout patriote mauricien.

M. le président, je pense qu'il est grand temps que le gouvernement avec le soutien de l'opposition si c'était le cas, choisissait d'affirmer dans les faits le caractère séculier de l'État. Que l'on sépare l'État des religions! Que les membres du gouvernement fassent le choix de ne pas s'impliquer dans des activités religieuses qu'inévitablement donnent lieu à une surenchère! Il faut une séparation claire et nette entre l'État et le religieux, entre la politique et la religion. J'ai été choqué d'entendre un de mes collègues nous montrer l'autre jour une affiche que fait placarder un ministre du gouvernement dans des lieux sacrés pour parler de ce qu'il va faire. Cela est inacceptable quelque soit le lieu sacré, quelque soit la religion, quelque soit le ministre. Il faut faire la séparation claire et nette. Le gouvernement serait-il disposé à s'engager à ce que

les hommes politiques, les femmes politiques, les politiques en général ne prennent plus la parole à l'occasion des fêtes religieuses. Si c'était le cas à nous de donner l'exemple. Si c'était le cas nous serions les premiers à applaudir et à soutenir que de faire le choix de ne plus aller prononcer des allocutions au cours de cérémonies religieuses. Le MMM a fait des propositions à la Commission Électorale pour que dans le cadre d'organisation des élections il y ait des règles très claires empêchant le mélange déjà mais la balle est dans le camp du gouvernement, je fais la proposition solennellement, formellement aujourd'hui et l'opposition sera disposée à suivre.

Deuxième question, M. le président, la démocratie. Rien ne se fera sans la bonne gouvernance qui présuppose la démocratie et j'aurai tant de choses à dire mais le temps fait défaut : les réformes constitutionnelles. Le MMM a fait ses propositions. Nous en avons parlé ici même à l'Assemblée. Je ne souhaite pas entrer dans les détails mais la réforme du système électoral, les dispositions constitutionnelles pour la liberté d'expression et la liberté de la presse, création d'un sénat pour donner plus de voix à la société civile, la garantie de la démocratie régionale, l'abolition de la déclaration obligatoire de son appartenance communale pour être candidat aux élections, une charte des droits économiques, socio-culturels et environnementaux. Tant de propositions. Le Premier ministre nous dit : le gouvernement vient d'être élu mais déjà un dixième du mandat est terminé. Cela fera bientôt sept mois depuis les élections. Il faut avancer et avancer vite et là aussi l'opposition s'il y a des mesures concrètes nous serons là pour soutenir.

Concernant Rodrigues et les îles, M. le président, je faillerais à mon devoir si je ne les mentionnais pas, alors qu'il y a un climat très malsain, un climat très inquiétant par rapport à la désaffection chez les rodriguais vis-à-vis de Maurice, et ce n'est pas le ministre Von-Mally qui me contredira. Il faut agir, et il faut agir vite, avant qu'il ne soit trop tard. Je lance un appel au ministre des finances, en toute sincérité, en toute honnêteté, de faire très attention au langage utilisé. Je l'ai entendu l'autre jour, répondant à une question à la Chambre, dire -

“My first trip outside Mauritius was to Rodrigues.”

Rodrigues is not outside Mauritius, Mr Speaker, Sir. Je l'ai entendu l'autre jour à télévision, et la remarque est faite, M. le président.

(Interruptions)

M. le président, en toute amitié, ce n'est pas une critique; c'est une suggestion. L'autre jour, à la MBC, parlant du budget, parlant de ' *ce qui nous fine faire pou zotte.*' Rodrigues n'est pas 'zotte'; Rodrigues c'est nous, M. le président. Entendez-moi bien, M. le président. Etre mauriciens, ça veut dire que nous sommes tous ici présents rodriguais; être mauriciens, ça veut dire que nous sommes tous ici présents agaléens; être mauriciens, ça veut dire que nous sommes tous ici présents chagossiens. Donc, faisons très attention, M. le président, aux écarts de langage, non pas délibérés, mais faisons très attention. Il faut faire un effort d'urgence pour rétablir les ponts, pour rétablir la relation de confiance entre Rodrigues et Maurice.

Démocratie c'est aussi le financement des partis politiques, où la loi urge. Il n'y aura pas de démocratie réelle sans une régulation de financement des partis politiques. La MBC, un scandale national qui fausse le jeu démocratique. La libération de l'audiovisuel; avec le MSM, nous avons fait la libéralisation des radios. Est-ce que le MSM et le Parti travailliste pourraient faire la libéralisation de l'audiovisuel? La distinction entre l'Etat et le gouvernement, M. le président...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order, now!

Mr Obeegadoo: Je m'excuse si je vais bousculer les habitudes, mais prenons un exemple: les photos du Premier ministre qui se trouvent dans les bâtiments publics. Logiquement, dans une démocratie, c'est la photo du chef de l'Etat qui devrait y être; celui qui ne fait pas de politique partisane.

Mr Speaker: Cela a été une politique depuis 45 ans.

Mr Obeegadoo: Tout à fait! Mais, ne serait-il pas temps - c'est ça le progrès historique - de reconsidérer ces pratiques, quel que soit le Premier ministre, quel que soit le parti au pouvoir? L'utilisation des *Citizens Advice Bureaux* qui demeure le monopole du gouvernement; les salles du *Sugar Industry Labour Welfare Fund* à des fins politiques, qui demeure le monopole du gouvernement; les députés qui accompagnent les ministres lors des sorties officielles, qui sont toujours les députés du gouvernement, quel que soit le gouvernement au pouvoir! Cette pratique doit changer, M. le président! L'autre jour, ma collègue s'est fait prise à partie, parce qu'elle a évoqué le fait que des habitants de sa circonscription se soient sentis lésés, se soient

sentis victimes d'une discrimination. M. le président, c'est un sentiment courant à Maurice. Allez demander aux habitants de Curepipe, M. le président ! Ils vous diront « *nous orphelins, parce que nous pas dans gouvernement.* » Et cela nourrit cette perception : quand on est au gouvernement, on s'occupe des nôtres. Et, donc, cela remet en cause la légitimité de l'exercice démocratique du droit de voter l'opposition.

Sur la démocratie, quelques points, M. le président, qui vous concernent directement.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Vous êtes en train d'utiliser le temps alloué à l'opposition !

Mr Obeegadoo: J'ai parlé une heure, et j'en ai pour cinq minutes, M. le président, avant de terminer.

Mr Speaker: Vos collègues qui vont parler après auront moins de temps.

Mr Obeegadoo: J'en ai pour cinq minutes. Je voudrais faire la suggestion, M. le président, qu'au retour de toute mission à l'étranger, les parlementaires aient le devoir de faire rapport à la Chambre de leur mission, puisque c'est l'argent public qui finance ces missions. Je voudrais aussi faire la suggestion que des facilités soient offertes aux députés pour leur travail ici même à l'Assemblée.

Mr Speaker: Now I think I will have to stop the hon. Member. It is provided in the Standing Orders that, insofar as the comfort of Members of Parliament is concerned, there is a House Committee. I hope the hon. Member will talk to the Deputy Speaker, and voice out the problems. There is no need to refer to this here. This is provided in our Standing Orders.

Mr Obeegadoo: Vous avez absolument raison! Le *House Committee* aura l'occasion d'en débattre, mais je voulais en faire mention, vu les difficultés auxquelles nous faisons face.

Mr Speaker: Vous savez très bien que le bâtiment est en train d'être rénové, et cela forme partie du bâtiment. Aussitôt que le bâtiment sera rénové, on va faire le nécessaire pour le confort des membres, afin qu'ils puissent pratiquer leur travail et leur devoir vis-à-vis de leurs mandants correctement.

Mr Obeegadoo: L'attente se fait longue, M. le président. Vous comprendrez donc !

M. le président, aussi longtemps que toutes ces questions que j'ai évoquées ne seront pas traitées, la République ne pourra se proclamer un pays réellement démocratique. Sinon, ce sera une démocratie politique très incomplète, au mieux une démocratie partielle.

Je vais, donc, conclure, face à ce discours du budget que nous venons d'écouter, et préciser ce qui, à notre avis, sera le rôle de l'opposition. M. le président, nous avons choisi de jouer le jeu de l'opposition parlementaire en démocratie. Quelles que soient les critiques que nous avons formulées concernant le déroulement de la dernière campagne électorale, nous n'irons pas aussi loin, comme certains, jusqu'à accuser le gouvernement d'avoir truqué les élections, comme ce fut le cas entre 1991 et 1995. Mais, nous allons, avec la marge de manœuvre étroite qui est la nôtre, jouer pleinement notre rôle d'opposition. Une opposition d'abord responsable et patriotique, et sur le dossier des Chagos, sur le dossier de Tromelin, nous l'avons prouvé, et nous continuerons, nous l'opposition, à être à l'avant-garde du combat pour la défense de notre intégrité territoriale ; une opposition qui sera une force de propositions, et nous l'avons prouvé il y a quelques mois sur le logement, et il y a quelques jours sur la drogue ; les propositions de réforme constitutionnelle exprimées par le *leader* de l'opposition ; des propositions, par rapport au budget, pour défendre, par exemple, les petits planteurs qui sont lésés par ce budget ; une force de propositions, M. le président ; une opposition vigilante ; vigilante, par rapport aux engagements pris par les partis au gouvernement, aujourd'hui, par rapport à la défense des intérêts de la population, qu'il s'agisse de la vie chère ou de la corruption. Nous serons aussi, M. le président, une opposition inflexible quant à nos convictions profondes - unité nationale, démocratie, justice sociale et développement durable. Nous serons intraitables sur le principe d'intégrité dans l'action publique. Nous le serons, M. le président, face au budget du double désaveu. Que notre message soit clair. Chaque fois que ce gouvernement entreprendra une action allant dans le sens du progrès social et du développement vert, nous soutiendrons l'action vers le progrès social sans même que l'on soit sollicité. Par contre, à chaque injustice commise - et il y en a eu tant déjà dans ces six premiers mois - quelle qu'elle soit, quel qu'en soit le lieu, quel qu'en soit le moment, quelle qu'en soit l'identité des victimes, le gouvernement nous trouvera, comme le disait tout à l'heure le député Baloomoody, sur son chemin. Que cela soit très clair.

M. le ministre des finances a lu son discours du budget. Il a fait ce qu'il croit être son devoir. Nous avons fait le nôtre, en exprimant fort et clair, les graves appréhensions que nous

avons quant aux conséquences de ce budget sur la population, et nous continuerons à le faire, à remplir pleinement notre rôle d'opposition face au gouvernement.

J'en ai terminé. Merci, M. le président.

(6.00 p.m.)

The Minister of Tertiary Education, Science, Research and Technology (Dr. R. Jeetah): Mr Speaker, Sir, it is my privilege and pleasure to contribute as the first Minister in charge of Tertiary Education, Science, Research and Technology in a new Government under the very able leadership of hon. Dr. Ramgoolam.

In May, 2010, Mr Speaker, Sir, people of this country renewed their trust in the leadership of hon. Dr. Ramgoolam and gave a clear mandate which he so richly deserved. People have renewed their trust in the Prime Minister because they want a man of vision at the helm of the country, a man who has shown his capability to steer this country through the greatest depression of modern times, a man who has delivered on his promises and who is committed to bring economic growth with social justice.

Allow me, Mr Speaker, Sir, to congratulate our hon. vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Finance to have joined the winning team and for the first Budget for this new Government. In 2005, Mr Speaker, Sir, the Government, under the leadership of hon. Dr. Ramgoolam, gave free transportation to students, restored Royal Colleges and Queen Elizabeth college and transport all State colleges into Form I to VI colleges. Form VI colleges, establishing 2000 to 2005 was the recipe for disaster. Today, it is acknowledged by all that it is the Form I to VI colleges which have increased access to Tertiary Education because our policy has put in the minds of all students that they should all aim to reach HSC and today we want them to go even further.

Mr Speaker, Sir, if I was to summarise the action of this Government, it is about chance, be it in business, health or in education, one graduate per family, independent of caste, creed and geography. We would also like to be able to offer a new platform for economic growth and a new service, that is, tertiary education.

Before I talk about my sector, Mr Speaker, Sir, allow me to respond to hon. Dr. Satish Boolell, who is in the Opposition, who had his contribution. I have noted four points while reading his speech. First of all, he seems at least to be - I hope not confused - going totally

against high-tech medicine when he very well knows that in this country there is a 50% chance of one being pre-diabetic or diabetic and cancer is on the rise. I do not know of technology that has to go backwards. It has to be high-tech medicine given also that our life expectancy is going higher and higher. He also seems to be against the number of Doctors. Let me quote from what he said. Hon. Dr. S. Boolell is probably a very good Doctor because I had a chance to work with him. But here, he really surprised me. He said that -

“There is now an excess of Doctors in Mauritius and an excess of Doctors coming in and that we will have to start importing to SADC or other countries”

I presume he meant exporting.

Maybe, I will enlighten the hon. Member of the state of affairs. In this country, we have 11 Doctors per 10,000 inhabitants compared to 8 for South Africa and 15 for Singapore and the average globally being 13. Of course, in Africa, it is much lower, it is about 2 and in Europe it is 32. Just to give some more information, in Australia, it is 25, in Germany it is 34, in Japan it is 21, in U.K it is 23 and in the United States it is 26. I think he was wrong or maybe misguided in his reference there with regard to the number of Doctors. We are forging ahead; my colleague in charge of health and the Tertiary Education Ministry is working towards creating more medical schools. In fact, there will be a public medical school that is going to be built that would hopefully be able to start next year and which would be working with the Universities of Bordeaux and Geneva.

Students entering the university would be able to finish with a full degree in Mauritius itself with the Universities of Bordeaux and Geneva.

Hon. Dr. S. Boolell also made reference to the University of Mauritius to substitute itself for TEC. Let me read this. He mentioned that somewhere along the line, and I quote -

“The University of Mauritius will have to be called upon to maintain discipline and order.”

But the hon. Member needs to understand the system. Here, in Mauritius, the regulator is Tertiary Education Commission. Even the University of Mauritius falls under the scrutiny of Tertiary Education Commission. This is wrong. I found that very strange, he seemed to suggest that he was against the increase in the price of alcohol and cigarettes because he argued that the

price of cigarette went up, people would be drinking *lambic* or would be going for cheaper cigarettes. Here also, I think he is wrong. If we look at all experts, in WHO especially, - which I happened to learn by being the past Minister of Health – they all suggest that if one is to curb consumption of alcohol or cigarette, one of the most efficient manner to do so is to increase the price. It is not just a question of cashing in on the subject. This is what the experts, the Doctors would recognise. I am glad to have been part of the Government where we banned consumption of alcohol and cigarettes from all public places - including here, if I might add.

Let me now come to the former orator, hon. Steven Obeegadoo. I must say what a performance! The hon. Member is very well-gifted in the ...

(Interruptions)

Yes! He has got it I must say. He is a bit difficult to follow, but we will go through what he had to say. First of all, he said that he could not be present because of the *mascarade* and he needed some time for *rattrapage*. Sorry, Sir! I was here to speak last when he chose to be away from here because it was too late for him. I think that this shows signs of irresponsible failure. He lacks seriousness, as usual. He has this primitive instinct to just run away.

(Interruptions)

There is this primitive instinct on the part of the MMM to just run away and disappear when it gets late.

(Interruptions)

Yes! I sincerely hope so. The hon. Member has to be here, to sit and listen. He has to respect the institutions. This is the democracy that we have. We listened to you and you have to listen to us. I hope that the MMM will be present here. “*Fanatisme de parti, respectons l’intelligence du Mauricien* as to each party’s contribution, Labour, MMM and so on! ». Mr Speaker, Sir, what he called *fanatisme de parti* - I want to ask a question. Actually, I must admit that my good friend, hon. J. Seetaram and hon. Cader Sayed-Hossen and myself, we went through a campaign and I asked some questions. I played a game if I may say so. I said let me ask you ten questions. Give me ten ideas that have been developed by each of the two fronts, the MMM and this Alliance, that is, *l’Alliance de l’Avenir*. First of all, I said, give us ten from each side and then I said let me cheat, let me ask you for ten actions that have been brought by the

Labour Party in this Alliance. Just name me one from the MMM. I have got answers: independence from the Labour side, free education, free health care, old age pension, free bus fare. When I used to say that, people would say: ‘kozé!’ The next one was UM and the UTM, they went on saying ‘kozé!’. Again, Open University, motorway, airport, sugar protocol and so on and so forth. Many of them actually were quite impressed by the achievements.

(Interruptions)

You just have to look for it and you will find the footprint, the fingerprint, the presence of the Labour Party and its leaders and other members in this Alliance. When I had to ask about the MMM, what he calls ‘*fanatisme de parti*’, what is it that can relate to the MMM? Tell me, Sir! I want to know. “*Difé dans carreau canne, la grève transport, transformateur éclaté, world strike, petit crétin, la queue chatte*”

(Interruptions)

I would not say what they told you!

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: I will not allow the hon. Minister to continue on this path.

Dr. Jeetah: Yes, you are right, Mr Speaker, Sir, *parce que* the hon. Member talked of ‘*fanatisme de parti*’, but I am speaking the truth.

Mr Speaker: Talk about policy!

Dr. Jeetah: This is what you would be known for! This will go down in history, my hon. friend. I was quite amazed to hear my friend, hon. Obeegadoo, speak of his reform as ‘*la plus grande réalisation gouvernementale*’. *J’étais là*. I have to quote all the terms in French: ‘*brisait le goulot d’étranglement au niveau du CPE*’, ‘*c’était une avancée historique*’, ‘*c’était une base élargie*’ that was required for higher enrolment rate, ‘*pendant cinq ans on a escamoté le goulot d’étranglement au niveau du CPE*’. I must say that I took the liberty to go and have a look at the performance of the MMM Government in the education sector.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the hon. Member asked a question: how many of us would here agree to the fact that our child would fail the CPE? I think that every Member here would agree that this is a terrible thing. I think that all of us try at least to change something that would bring about a

positive change. When my friend, hon. Obeegadoo, got in I must say that I read all his speeches - he had very noble views and things in his mind. But let us see how good they were at achieving anything. In 2000 the percentage pass in CPE, out of 28,058 students who were examined, was 66.4 percent. *Qu'est ce qu'il avait dit* in his speech of 2001-2002, when he was the new Minister of Education? "*Notre système d'éducation éjecte chaque année des milliers d'enfants Mauriciens qui ne possèdent même pas le CPE*". Quite a lot of those! I must say that it was very good French. In 2001, guess what was the result? Was it better or worse? It was 65.3 percent. From 66.4, it went to 65.3. A little arithmetic test to you, Sir: is it better or worse? In 2002, from 66.4 percent pass rate - now he got used and *il est en train de prendre la vitesse de croisière comme si on est en train de nous débrouiller avec la réforme historique* and all the stuff that he normally talks about - it went down to 64.9 percent, Sir.

(Interruptions)

In 2003, *question pour un champion! Alors si on était à 66,4% en 2000 quand l'honorable membre était là - new Minister, période de rodage, learning the job, learning to cope with the situation - en 2003 qu'est-ce que c'était?*

(Interruptions)

62.6 percent, Sir! When I look over a period of ten years from 2000 to 2009, he presided over the worse results in CPE ever!

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order, please!

Dr. Jeetah: I listened to you and I was quiet.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order now!

Dr. Jeetah: Between 2000 and 2004, the plain fact that remains is that he failed, Sir. He failed our children. He failed from 64.4 percent to 63.0 percent. Humbly I would like to suggest that arithmetically it is a reduction. Let us see what happened when we had this sudden change in Government from 2005 to 2009! *Alors qu'est ce qu'ils vont dire*, did I make up these figures? I did not make these figures, I just picked the figures from whoever the authority is. I do not

decide on the examination, I just requested my Permanent Secretary to go and find these figures and this is what I got. Between 2005 and 2009, Mr Speaker, Sir, in 2005 we had 64.9 percent pass, in 2009 it went up to 68.13 percent.

(Interruptions)

Do you know why? It is not totally his fault, Sir, here on this side, we had a Prime Minister who meant business and I made a list of characteristics that he showed over this period, *parce que* I was relatively new in politics. We had a Prime Minister who asked questions and who was a doer. He made sure that his Ministers worked and delivered. We had a Prime Minister who did not only work hard and set the example, but he was a good strategist. He knew what to do and where to do and put the efforts. He was result-oriented. He had the capacity to keep cool in difficult times. I know that *parce que* I was there during the period of H1N1 and I saw how he managed. Hon. Dr. Bunwaree and myself, when we went to see the Prime Minister, we saw the way he handled the situation with calm and in a very efficient manner. He was able to work under pressure. He was a good listener, he was able to lead and motivate and he had the emotional intelligence that it took, not just making wonderful speeches and try to impress *la galerie*. Today, we have what we have, Mr Speaker, Sir, and it can only improve. So much for his '*avancée historique*' and so on and so forth.

I heard the hon. Member mention 22 percent; I do not know where he got his figures from, Mr Speaker, Sir. To assess the number of students that there are in the tertiary sector there is a term that I did not invent, that is, the Gross Tertiary Enrolment Rate which today stands just under 47 percent, it is 46.4 or something. This figure used to be 15 percent in 2000. This figure is the one used by UNESCO, I am given to understand, and by all agencies and this is what I propose to use. In 2000 it used to be 15 percent, this year it has reached 47 percent and in January it is going to be 50 percent. There has been 300 percent growth.

I took note of something else; it is good that I had asked my Permanent Secretary to keep these figures. *Qu'est ce qu'il a dit? 'Le Labour Government a défait ce qu'on a fait'*, he meant that we undid what he had done between 2000 and 2005.

(Interruptions)

I happen, by some chance, to have the Higher School Certificate performance of school candidates between 2003 and 2009 results. If we had undone the good work that he had done, of course, we would have messed up with the kids and we would have had much more failure. We do not decide on the exam paper, it is Cambridge. We got a system, the MES and so on. These are not all Labour members, I think that they have done a job for quite a while and we must agree that the system that we have is independent of Government. When he was Minister in 2005, the passed rate of boys were 73.61%. It is fair; it is an honourable achievement. *Si on avait défait ce qu'il avait fait*, you would expect it *arithmétiquement* to go down by a lot. Let us see what was the result in 2009 for the boys. From 73.61%, it went to 74.26%, what does that show? It is a slight improvement; it is not a big improvement, but it still shows that there has been an increase. Let us see for the girls.

(Interruptions)

Bien sûr, this is the bad habit that they have! Not only be economical with the truth, but looking quiet far that. I would not say that he was lying, I would not say that.

(Interruptions)

No, I know. I am not allowed to say that he was lying, but then probably he was mistaken or may be misguided. For the girls, Mr Speaker, Sir, in 2005, we have 81.95% who passed, a very good grade. *C'est bien pour la HSC*. In 2009, we had from 81.95 to 82.13%; so what does that show? There has been a certain amount of good work. *Qu'est-ce qu'il a dit encore là?* « *Discrimination de classe, racine du mal et la CPE* » I have already negotiated that.

There is one item that he talked of. He talked of going very high on the moral side. *C'est très bien. Il a dit: "On va être intraitable sur la mauvaise gestion etc"* and I am tempted to bring out this paper, with your permission, Mr Speaker, Sir. I was not going to talk about it, but since he raised the issue.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I have here an Audit Report 2003/2004. Allow me some indulgence, because he had the pretence to show as if they are above doing bad things to put it simply, especially where kids are concerned and he had a lot of concerns for ZEP schools etc. Let us see what they came up with. They came up with a Food Supplement Programme and they had a standard menu. What do you think they said? "On Mondays, the non-vegetarian students would

get *poulet, salade laitue and tomate*” and the vegetarian kids would get “*sauté soya and tomato.*” They have very high ambitions. We wanted to give “*salade thon, mayonnaise, cresson*” and I am only reading from an Audit Report and you can stop me, Mr Speaker, Sir. What actually happened? These are the comments of the Director of Audit: “some Rs9.3 m. were paid for the supply of *pains fourrés* and yoghurt to help all ZEP schools during that period 2003 to June 2004. Does anybody know any child in this country who got *salade poisson, tomates, sauté soya*?”

(Interruptions)

Avec ene verre di lait!

I will show you what kind of milk you gave. I’ll show you. You know what they did? Mr Speaker, Sir, there is a saying in Bhojpuri “*bisagne.*” If you take a piece of bread and you pass on a little piece of fish on it, it gets the smell of fish and they give that to kids. Let me read what they did: “soon after the implementation of the Food Supplement Programme, complaints were received to the poor quality of the *pains fourrés* supplied with insufficient or decayed stuffing. Even worse! They supplied the kids that went to ZEP schools with decayed stuffing.

In October 2003, two major alleged cases of collective food poisoning were reported at two schools. Guess what? There was only one supplier that supplied bread throughout the island!

(Interruptions)

Look what the Director of Audit said: ‘this contractor supplied *pains fourrés* from Bois des Amourettes to Pointe Aux Piments’. Look at what I found very interesting. They normally had a certain amount that was left over. Do you know what they would do? 10% of pupils were absent on each school day in those ZEP schools. *Alors qu’est-ce qu’ils ont fait avec les excess pains fourrés?* That was redistributed to the pupils on a roster basis. I would not like to go on and on. I have made my point. Mr Speaker, Sir, you will be shocked. There were even green bananas that were served to kids. This is what the Audit Report said. Now to come and give lessons on moralities, I don’t think that my good friend is well placed.

With regard to what is being done to make sure that we have an increase in results of the HSC, my good friend, hon. Dr. Bunwaree, has given me a list of actions that he is bringing out in

matters such as empowering the students, new methods, new pedagogies, new framework, and new curriculum etc. and I think he has canvassed the point fairly well.

Mr Speaker, Sir, he mentioned that he had a number of ideas that he wanted to share equity, but then in 2003, is he not aware that when Dr. Ramgoolam went to panchavati, there were kids that could not go to schools everyday? Where was he? Who actually decide to offer free transportation, if not Dr. Ramgoolam? If it had not been for Dr. Ramgoolam, what would have happened today to all these kids?

He mentioned ZEP. You see what they have done to ZEP students, the way they treated them. He has mentioned “*langue enseignement*”, let me quote what Mr Dev Virahsawmy has to say about hon. Obeegadoo: “*Obeegadoo n’a pas introduit le créole comme medium d’enseignement*”. I am a bit appalled that the hon. Member seems to be living in the past. He seems to be living around the period 2000/2005. We brought about these new laws where schools can’t sell whatever they want. There is a Minister of Health in charge of this legislation where we control what is being sold at schools. This is what we have already done.

Concerning infrastructure – I give it to him, that he has built some schools, but he has also built some fictitious schools. I also know of some students who went supposedly to a school, but never went to the school because the school did not exist. I find it a bit difficult to explain. I could not understand that myself. I know cases in Quatre-Bornes and Nouvelle France. There was a school that was supposed to be existing, for example, in Quatre- Bornes that did not exist and the children went to another school and they graduated as an HSC or SC student with a school that did not exist. You can be funny at times, my dear friend.

(Interruptions)

My hon. friend also mentioned labs, but do you know, Mr Speaker, Sir, how many schools were devoid of labs? I think they forget that schools need labs at Form IV. I have got some very close relatives that went to these schools and *nous ont supplié* : « please let us go into a situation where we can have labs to do our practicals.” That was the planning of our dear friend here.

There is one term that I will like to take exception to. I do not know where the notion of *l’abattoir* comes from? You said that our ladies have been sent to *l’abattoir* during the elections.

You were doing the “demagogy style MMM”, but sending students to do an HSC, I do not understand, why you have to use words such as *l’abattoir* when we are trying to encourage our kids to go to schools. This is beyond my understanding, I must admit to you. Let me reassure my hon. friend, that for students who have got other aptitudes, there are a HND Programme that is available at the MID, at the Fashion and Design Institute, even in the private sector. For students who have got other aptitudes, there are HND programmes that are available at the MITD, at the fashion and design institute, another institution, even the private sector and this is being taken care of. Mr Speaker, Sir, for the next ten or 15 minutes or so, shall I quote Mr Dev Virahsawmy again -

“Hon. Steve Obeegadoo *n’a rien apporté de nouveau dans l’éducation*”

I think it is too hard.

Mr Baloomoody: On a point of order, this morning I was quoting from a newspaper and there was an objection and the Deputy Speaker ruled that one cannot quote; one can only say exactly what he has said. So, may we have a proper ruling: are we allowed to quote from newspaper or not because the Minister is quoting?

Mr Speaker: No, I think as far as I remember there was some sort of a ruling I gave that Ministers can quote only from official documents and they must cite the source of their document, but not the newspapers.

Dr. Jeetah: Thank you for your ruling Mr Speaker, Sir, although the hon. Member had all the chance to read his press cuttings. Maybe if I am not allowed to say that...

Mr Speaker: I am just talking; I am just citing what is said in Erskine May. Ministers cannot cite, but Members of Parliament can cite from any source.

Dr. Jeetah: I totally agree with you Mr Speaker, Sir, I am just bringing your attention to the fact that this morning he was allowed to go around. *La faillite intellectuelle du MMM est irréversible* and none other than Dev Virahsawmy the founding father of the MMM. You had your marks my dear friend.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I need to get back to this topic of today where we have got tremendous challenges where we would like to offer the chance to have people to be able to have, at least, the chance of dreaming to be able to be in some tertiary institution. I think we are on the right way, I

have five elements that are critical, quality, increasing and widening access, internationalisation of tertiary education, research, funding and a sixth issue that is dealt with my Ministry is Science.

Since the hon. Member mentioned quality, we do appreciate and we do not understand the importance of quality. If one is to have a look at what is happening in the secondary sector, I am quite amazed and I am quite pleased to mention that at SC and HSC level, we have students who not only have done very well in Mauritius, but they are top in the world and I have 21 students in 2009 who did extremely well throughout the world in Biology, Computer Sciences, Physics and so on. So, the point I am trying to make here is that we do appreciate the importance of quality and with regard to the tertiary sector, it is not only access, but it is quality as well that is of prime importance. We are working in such a manner that it will, in the near future, become mandatory for all education institutions, at least, the tertiary sector to have a quality assurance office. It is going to be mandatory; we will have also to build our capacity just like we had to build our capacity to teach all degrees in Mauritius now, we have to set up a plan where we would like to see all faculty members being holders of PHDs. It is a must because we have to move in this direction if we want to offer quality to our students.

Of course, we will have to continue the training in pedagogy, prior to starting lectures in all the respective institutions; and here I need to make a point that this Ministry does not only stand for the public sector. It has under its responsibility the private sector as well. As you have heard that today we have 51 institutions offering tertiary courses. We have come up with a student charter so that now the students know what is their row, what we expect of them, but more importantly they have to understand what they should expect from us, from the providers, so that there is a contract in case there is a *litige* they would have some documents to refer to and seek redress.

We are working on mutual recognition of qualifications, as well as we are beefing up the quality assurance being offered by Tertiary Education Commission where we have auditors not only who are local members, but who are also from overseas. For private institutions, in addition to registration and accreditation of programmes, there are annual visits from TEC and they are subject specialists who go and evaluate established criteria. With regard to increasing and widening access, I need to say that today we have 46,000 students as a rounder figure who ask

for enrolment in some tertiary education system and the wish of this Government is to have an enrolment rate rising up to 70% and I don't have any doubts that we would achieve these figures because we have been following the figures and we are on the right track.

We have increased access and we had some criticisms and I need to respond to that criticism. I think what we have done is that we have made a system where now there won't be any barrier for somebody to join the tertiary sector. There are students who have only one 'A' levels. There are mature students and there are students with prior learning and we are going to recognise all these through foundation courses, but then the final exams would not be an option. The student will have to do the final exams so that this would be the final test. We are opening up our institutions to come out from this system of working nine till four and, more importantly, Mr Speaker, Sir, yet again Labour Government in this alliance is going to bring about a silent revolution in the tertiary sector. We all know that we have a campus in Réduit and we have UTM in the suburbs of Port Louis.

We are now going to open campuses along the island in Rose-Belle, in Pamplemousses, in Piton, in Montagne Blanche and around the Réduit/Highlands area. I hope my hon. friend is listening to me; this is yet another major project of this Government. It will take time and it is going to require massive capital inflow, but yet, again the Labour Party is contributing in an alliance to some major change.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I took the liberty to go and look into the MMM contribution in the field of tertiary education. I must say that I was a bit shocked, nothing doing, University of Mauritius, University of Technology, MIE, MGI, Mauritius College of the Air, RTI, *Institut Supérieur de Technologie*, Fashion and Design Institute, all the making of the Labour Party. The foundation stone was laid by Dr. Ramgoolam and there was a Prime Minister of India who visited us and the contribution of the MMM in this country is just amazing. As the saying that we are going to increase the number of programmes in both public and privately funded institutions, currently we have 660 programmes being offered in Mauritius and we are going to offer new programmes such as architecture, science, a Master of public health in association with Imperial College, London and a Master of Law. Training of air and sea pilots and I would like to quickly bring to the attention of the House the big opportunity that we have here. I requested the MRC to conduct a survey and it is now known to us that the global demand of the commercial aviation industry

will require 466,650 pilots and 596,000 maintenance personnel over the next 20 years. So we have found an opportunity here and we have started working a project where our kids would be able to learn how to become pilots in Mauritius itself. On average, Mr Speaker, Sir, there is a need of 23,300 new pilots and 30,000 new maintenance personnel per year between 2010 and 2029 and the highest requirement is in the Asia Pacific which would require 180,000 and 220,000 pilots and maintenance workers respectively.

So, it is a tremendous opportunity in the field of creating a little aeronautical hub. We are going to sow the seed, of course, my colleague, Attorney-General and myself, had this meeting and we are working towards creating a department for professional legal studies, and we were all appalled here by the low rate of success in this domain and we are taking some positive action. So, Mr Speaker, Sir there would be a wide range of courses that would be available here. I have requested TEC to scour around the world to see what is being offered and what is it that we are not offering so that we can bridge the gap. We would also have new stakeholders; Amity group is here. They have taken a seat in the Cyber Tower 1 and my interest in Amity was that they are very strong in research and they offer courses such as Nanotechnology and so on. So, it would be a pleasure of having the largest private university in Mauritius.

We have JIS group that have requested TEC to look into their application for vet sciences. Il y aura *l'Ecole de Médecine avec l'Université de Bordeaux et l'Université de Genève*. The University of Mauritius currently does not have a Faculty of Arts. We are training our technicians, but we are training thinkers and philosophers. So, we have requested the University of Mauritius to consider bringing in classical music, philosophy and so on and so forth so that people would study for the pleasure of studying. We have the University of Versailles, *St. Quentin de France* that have shown an interest by a representative of theirs.

There is another issue that is very important. It's the issue of the kind of classes that we would like to see. At the moment, the classrooms in the Tertiary sector mainly comprise of Mauritian students. For most of us who have had a chance to study overseas, it is not normal to have only one national or one nationality in a classroom. So, what we are trying to do is to internationalise the student population. And, we have set ourselves some targets by 2020, so, we have started certain actions to show Mauritius as a platform for Tertiary education. We have been to India, I have had a chance to meet the Ministers in charge, the institutions and next year

we are going to Kenya and Tanzania on road shows, just like we did with the Textile Industry and with the Tourism Industry, and for sceptical Members from the Opposition, let me just remind ourselves that between 1970 and 1980, we increased the number of tourists in this country by 100,000 and then we were a poor country. Today, with all these facilities, I don't have any doubt that with the commitment we would achieve that.

Mr Speaker, Sir, my Ministry is setting up a new unit that would be called "Study Mauritius" and this unit will have as responsibility –

- marketing;
- visa application of students;
- accommodation;
- occupation permits;
- dealing with recruiting agents;
- providing information;
- career guidance;
- mutual recognition agreements, and so on and so forth.

So that people would know that this exists. I am sure just as our other institutions have delivered, this institution as well will have to be supported so that it provides the result that we would like to see.

So, I have talked about quality, increasing and widening access, internationalisation of Tertiary Education, now I have to come to research. Once again, I have to admit that this is a major challenge in this country. Once again, not blaming anybody, because we had to build the capacity to be able to have our faculty members who would teach all the subjects that we would like to see in a University and, I think, we have been successful.

So, we have created a research firm and we have started leading actions; not only offering scholarships locally, but then, now we have created a Research Fellowship Scheme to attract researchers from overseas. We do not want to be in a position where we only gain scholarships, but we want to offer scholarships; we want to see that there is a potential here. In fact, we have done well in some spheres, in chemistry, sugar technology, engineering and so on and so forth.

We have to make sure that we put some emphasis here and one of the tools that is required is information.

So, we have now, created an online library providing unlimited access to some 11,000 journalists. I understand about 21,500 users. We have set up Business Angels meeting and we have now a set of mentors and advisors from throughout the world who are here to assist our young scientists to do well in research and, as I said, in 10 years' time we are giving an opportunity to all faculty members to embark on a PhD programme and hopefully, they would have achieved a PhD and it would have to become normal for somebody to join the sector, minimum with a PhD.

I would like now to come up with the issue of funding, Mr Speaker, Sir. My Ministry has a budget of pretty close to Rs1 billion and the strategy is to have one for each undergraduate student at the University. We would like to have two third post graduate students, of course, post graduate being paid and a third external division student on the same model as the University of London. Today, it is so easy to get a University of London degree, taught in some other institutions, but it used to be practically impossible to do so with the University of Mauritius. So, now we are using the model of the University of London so that if there is an institution that is able enough through the TEC requirements, they would be able to offer the degrees provided they assure the quality requirement of TEC. Also, as I mentioned, we have got a scheme where we would like to attract more foreign students. When we say 100,000 foreign students in 10 years' time, if one were to make a small calculation, it represents 1 billion dollars. So, this is going to be another major income earner in this country.

Mr Speaker, Sir, there is another responsibility that falls under my Ministry which is the promotion of science. Given that I am running out of time, I must say that we have set up a Mauritius Best Scientist Award where we would offer a price of Rs200,000 plus a Rs50,000 grant for our scientists to go and visit major universities overseas. We have also started a *Caravane de la Science* where I myself with my colleagues, are taking great pleasure in talking to the community and explaining the importance of chemistry, physics, biology and maths, and we are boosting up the actions of Rajiv Gandhi Science Centre. We are also raising funds from the private sector to move further in this venture.

To conclude, Mr Speaker, Sir, I would like to re-iterate the commitment of this Government, once again, to bring about something new, something bold, that is, to have one graduate per family. Well, I hope people understand that the Labour Party in this Alliance has stood for education throughout since the 1970's when it brought about free education. A Leader of the Opposition couldn't see a child not going to school every day. There and then, he decided to offer free transportation and, today, he is so bold enough to come and say that he would like to see one graduate per family. Please, let's not make a joke out of it! We have to make families understand that to have an increase in their quality of life, they have to understand that they will have to go through education and, when I am saying one graduate per family, I am not only saying for some of our friends, it's for each and every family to realise that there is an opportunity; there is funding. I will have to make sure that there is enough space for them to be able to get into the Tertiary sector. I must say, Mr Speaker, Sir, that the MMM seems to have passed itself by a date, it's a pity. On this side, we have a Prime Minister with a vision, who has the resolve; he has the wish, as I said, to make sure that he offers a chance to his people. This is what he has been doing ever since he has joined politics; having offered, as I said, free schooling, free health care, free transportation and maintaining all these, despite the fact that we went through all the major challenges that a Government could go through.

a Government could go through. I was there in 2005, Mr Speaker, Sir, we went through all the crisis that we could have gone through: the economic crisis and the economy kept on growing. We never had a recession in this country and, by definition, a recession is negative growth in two successive quarters. We always had a positive growth, whenever the situation went bad, we kept on working hard and we provided for our people.

Over the food crisis, there has never been a famine in this country. Over the financial crisis, we never had a bank that failed; over the petroleum crisis we always had the supply. The hon. Prime Minister negotiated with the Prime Minister of India to bring in petroleum products from India. Even through the H1N1 crisis, the health sector did not break down; it still continued offering 22,000 patients care, day in day out, and handled the H1N1 crisis together with the Dengue - I know about it, I was there.

Mr Speaker, Sir, we have kept our promises and we must all rally around our Prime Minister, he wishes to see a modern and able country. We must be able to be proud of ourselves. A small country with a great ambition!

Mr Speaker, Sir, I wish to end to say that, one day, in not a too distant future, each and every town and every village, would definitely have one graduate per family and we would have stopped talking about it. It would have become natural.

Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, on a point of personal explanation.

Mr Speaker: I would like to know where the hon. Member wants to have a point of personal explanation, on which issue? On the evolution of the CPE examinations, the result you mean? That is not within the ambit of personal explanation. If that is what you are telling me, you want to speak about the evolution of the CPE pass rate over the period of 2000 and 2002, that will be further debate; and this is not a matter of personal explanation.

Mr Obeegadoo: I would wish to bring factual element of information to the House.

Mr Speaker: No, I am sorry. One is allowed to make a point of personal explanation when what has been said about a speech is distorted or facts have been misrepresented. If that is so, yes and if that is not so, I won't allow it.

Mr Obeegadoo: I submit a case of misrepresentation of facts and this is why I would wish to ask for clarification to the House.

Mr Speaker: As far as I remember, the hon. Member never spoke about the evolution of the pass rate at the CPE during his speech. Am I right? He did not refer to the pass rate. I will not make an argument with him, I would like to hear him in my Chamber and then we will decide. I ask the Deputy Speaker to take the Chair.

At 6.54 p.m. the Deputy Speaker took the Chair.

Mr S. Dayal (Third Member for Quartier Militaire & Moka): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it is always with pride and a high sense of responsibility that I rise to intervene on the occasion of the presentation of debate in the House. At the very outset, let me commend and

congratulate the vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development, who, under the able leadership of Dr. hon. Navinchandra Ramgoolam, our Prime Minister, has presented a balanced Budget.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we all know the conditions under which this Budget has had to be framed. Everybody in this House and outside the House, are fully aware that the task of the Minister of Finance was not at all an easy one, especially after taking into consideration the prevailing international economic situations.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I will dwell very solemnly on something which is very dear to me, which is education, and having listened to the Budget of the vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, I noted what he said in his speech that he wants to achieve a GDP of one trillion rupees by 2020 and to an income of *per capita* of USD 20,000. I will try to say how we can reach it in my own humble way. But, before that, I would like to respond to a point canvassed by my good friend, hon. Baloomoody, with regard to the National Residential Property Tax. My colleague, hon. Ms Deerpalsing rightly said that we, at the Labour Party, get enough latitude to discuss, propose and criticise things which our conscience dictates that we cannot accept. This happened on 09 June 2006 when the Budget was presented. The following day, 10 June at 10.00 a.m., we had a Parliamentary meeting and for about one hour I voiced my concern and opinion against the NRPT.

I would ask my friend, hon. Baloomoody to read the original proposition in the Budget Speech of 09 June 2006 and to try to compare with that which was eventually implemented in the Finance Bill. This is the kind of leadership we had at the *Alliance Sociale* and which now we are having at *l'Alliance de l'Avenir*. It is not like in 1982, 8% *avant negociation*, 8% *pendant negociation* et 8% *après negociation* regarding compensation.

You will find, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that subsequently only 1% of the taxpayers were subjected to pay the NRPT. The NRPT on bare land was removed. The NRPT was to be applied on bare land. Suppose you have one *arpent* of land on which you have a building and you are earning more than Rs240,000, so you had to pay on the extent of one *arpent*, amounting to some Rs50,000. This was also removed. We had to pay only on the extent of land on which there is the building. There are so many other features. This demonstrates the quality of leadership we have and the quality of Parliamentarians we have. We follow the dictate of our conscience and

we stand up and speak out whenever we do not agree on anything. We disagree without being disagreeable.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with your permission I will take some of the arguments which have already been canvassed by some Members in this House. And because of their crucial importance, I am going to dwell on them for some time. I will elaborate on them during the course of my intervention.

The international economic environment, more particularly in the Euro zone, has been sufficiently underlined on this side of the House. We all know that many economies in the Euro zone, particularly our main trading partners are almost bankrupt or if not bankrupt, they are on the verge of bankruptcy. For example, Ireland, known as a Celtic tiger is bankrupt. UK has embarked on an economic and fiscal reform path making deep economic and social cuts in its budget. France, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, has had to take drastic measures to prevent the country from plunging into an economic morass. The measures that these countries are taking are so painful for the population that they are having devastating effects on their lives and this is why this Budget lays so much stress, so much emphasis on the need to rebalance the economy. In other words, we cannot afford to put all our eggs in one and the same basket.

For how long will we in Mauritius continue to rely on these countries for our exports? I have heard in this House : 'Go East young man'. How do we go East? Yes, the question begs for an answer! How do we go East? With the same mindset? With the same culture and ethos? With the same way of doing things. Let us not fool ourselves, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, for if we do this the same way, then the future will be very uncertain for us. To look East, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the emphasis should be more importantly on high-tech and knowledge based industries. If you are surrounded by countries like SADC, COMESA which do not want your product what do you do? We sit down and lament. No, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir! We have to leapfrog them economically so that they will need our products and they will come to us. We have to go ahead of these countries technically through excellent education, training and skills. Many of our trading partners, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, will remain volatile, unpredictable and unstable during the coming years and this should be an eye opener for us. We should act and fast. Again this begs the question: how do we act? After four decades of independence, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, Mauritius is at crossroads. The situation demands that we continue to be

vigilant. My focus, therefore, will be more on where we are going and where do we want to reach.

I listened to the speech of hon. Dr. Arvin Boolell who, I have no doubt, is fully embraced and alive to the challenging times that we have to face in the years to come. He, in fact, raised a handful of pertinent relevant questions and I have understood the message of the Minister, I think, fully well. There is one fundamental thing that he has unfolded: it cannot be business as usual. Therefore, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, what is the economic model that we should pursue that will guarantee us a stable and predictable economic environment. What model will ascertain and enhance the quality of life of our citizens while enabling us to achieve a GDP of one trillion rupees and a per capita income of 20,000 US dollars as announced by the vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Finance in his Budget Speech.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, can we achieve this with the same growth rate as we have had during the period 2000 to 2010 or should we increase it? These are the questions that we should ask ourselves because the year 2020 is next door. Likewise, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, should it be the same economic model or should we chart out a new course in view of the fast changing economic paradigm? It is definitely incumbent upon us to ask these questions. In my opinion, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, our key objectives should be to grow our productivity by an additional 3% or more over the next decade, more than what we have achieved over the previous ten years. Raising the skills and productivity of our workforce will be the only viable way for us to achieve higher wages as well as the best way to help our citizens in the low income group.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as human beings - and that is quite understandable - we have the tendency to believe that what is happening in the euro zone economy will not happen to us – *comme-ci ça n'arrive qu'aux autres*. As if we are shielded! We are protected! We believe that Mauritius is shielded, is protected! I came across a book recently published and entitled 'This Time is Different' and that deals with the financial meltdown, the financial slowdown, that has engulfed Europe and the USA. I quote, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir -

“The essence of ‘this-time-is-different’ syndrome is simple. It is rooted in the firmly held belief that financial crises are things that happen to other people in other countries at other times; crises do not happen to us, here and now. We are doing things better, we are smarter, we have learned

from past mistakes. The old values of valuation no longer apply. Unfortunately, a highly leveraged economy can unwittingly be sitting with its back at the edge of a financial cliff for many years before chance and circumstance provoke a crisis of confidence that pushes it off.”

Forty-two years ago when we started as an independent nation, we did not know where we were going. In fact, some of our compatriots, no less than 44%, believe that Mauritius, as an independent and sovereign country, was not a viable option, hence would not be able to stand on its feet. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, then there was a massive exodus of brains towards other shores. It was also stated that, being given that the country was experiencing a large scale of unemployment and was a stagnant economy coupled with its mixture of racial, ethnic, religious and caste identities, seem to constitute a well tested recipe for social and economic disaster. That was the bleak picture that was painted then by the doubters and unachievers - yes, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, by the doubters and unachievers - but they forgot, and nobody can deny it, we are a nation of doers and achievers.

As I said earlier, when we started, we did not know what lay ahead of us, but we were determined to survive and to build a better future for ourselves and for our children.

Today, *le ciel soit loué*, M. le président, Mauritius has transformed itself. In more than four decades and thanks to the vision of the Father of the nation, Sir Seewoosagar Ramgoolam - I emphasise on that - with the right policies evolved and implemented at that time, we have progressed in leaps and bounds, beyond anybody's imagination. People in this country, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, because of the vision of that great man and his son, the torch bearer of economic reform, live well. This is, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the reality that nobody can deny or distort because history speaks for itself. We have got books and figures for that.

Our children are well-educated. Why? The question begs for an answer, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. Because of the commitment and vision of the then Prime Minister, Sir Seewoosagar Ramgoolam to provide education to each and every Mauritian, *le salut de l'île Maurice*. He was convinced that universal education was the only gateway to success, elimination of poverty and providing social and economic mobility. In sum to pave the way for nation-building and economic prosperity.

After those four decades, Mr Deputy Speaker Sir, we are maturing as a nation. We have moved from the status of least developed country to an upper middle income country. From a *per capita* income of USD 100 in 1968, we have reached a *per capita* income of USD 8,000. This is indeed a remarkable achievement. This is also due to the bold decision, the bold economic measures implemented by the Labour Party. I am not going to elaborate on this because it will take hours, some other time, in other forums.

The situation of massive unemployment that had underpinned the post-Independence era is something of the past. Today, we also have a much diversified economy, not relying on the mono-crop economy of 1968. Whose vision was that, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir? I leave it to the House to judge.

Our achievements have been recognised and widely acclaimed by regional and international economic experts, and our economic success is being quoted as a reference for other countries to emulate. And we are proud as a nation.

But, as I said earlier, there are questions that have to be asked, especially, when Mauritius is moving away from preferences to competitiveness. For example, what will Mauritius be in 50 years from now? I can't tell you. I know nobody in this House can. But I can tell you, it must be a totally different Mauritius, because if it is the same Mauritius as it is today, then we are dead.

One thing is also certain, if we stay where we are, we will definitely be irrelevant and simply marginalised because of the profound changes in the economies of our main trading partners, which changes, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, will have far-reaching consequences for us. We should not be oblivious to the fact that the world itself will be different in the coming years.

Against this background, can we afford to be the same? We can't, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir! Therefore what is the option? Well, we have to perforce remake Mauritius, remake our economy, remake our educational system, remake our mindset. This is very important, remake our mindset.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I was much encouraged, I know, almost all Members of this House have been encouraged when we listened to our Prime Minister intervening on the President's Address. He quoted "Singapore" over a dozen times in his speech. During his recent

trip to Singapore, he visited some sectors of the Singaporean economy and was very much impressed by the quality and level of the development of its infrastructure which contributes immensely in enhancing the performance of its economy.

In fact, the hon. Prime Minister solicited the support of the Singaporean Government to help us in certain sectors of our economy. He has on many occasions expressed the wish that we should strive to reach the level of development of Singapore. He is totally right and this is indisputable. There are lessons to draw, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, from the experience and success of Singapore.

Singapore became Singapore by a stroke of magic. Nothing came from the sky. Singapore became Singapore because of the vision of its leaders. Still, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I should like to say that Singapore became Singapore because it dared to take bold measures, adopted a series of decisions that made it what it is today in the comity of nations, from a *per capita* income of USD 200 to USD 40,000 with a population of three million living in less than half the size of Mauritius and devoid of all natural resources. In fact, Singapore even imports water.

At the same time, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we should be mindful of our specificity and culture which should go hand in hand with any transformation that might become imperative and irreversible. The world is moving very fast and we cannot afford to be complacent. Nobody owes us a living! This, we hear repeatedly.

I totally agree, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we cannot continue to rely on the depreciation of the rupee, as had been the case since 1982, to enhance and maintain our competitive edge for our exports. Enough is enough! Mauritius is a net food importing country and we rely for about 90% of our requirements from abroad

Any depreciation of the rupee, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, to maintain our competitiveness results in the increase of our costs of living and, at the same time, spirals inflation. Therefore, we have to imperatively address the question of productivity to maintain competitiveness of our exports and guarantee a better and sustainable quality of life of our people.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, to achieve a major uplift in productivity, we have to overhaul our system of education starting right from the pre-primary to secondary and ultimately to the

tertiary levels. All countries which have had an economic transformation have relied on quality education, superior skills, quality jobs and high incomes. While at present, our education policy is geared towards addressing the problem of failure at the level of the primary education, we should not lose sight of quality because it is only quality that will guarantee us a better future.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I will have to seek your indulgency as well as that of this House. I am going to quote extensively from an official document, Vision 2020, The National Long Term Perspective Study, prepared by the then Ministry of Economic Planning and Economic Development which was released in 1997, quite recently. It is Education base and I quote –

“The only way upwards is that followed by the new dynamic countries like Singapore, Hong Kong and South Korea, and before Japan, Germany and the US, of improving education and training so as to upgrade the skills and equip people for the high skill, high reward jobs for the future.

There will be a need for all children to get into secondary school and for more children to stay longer in secondary schools; and for more to go to university, to technical training and to adult education; there must be scope for the high flyers to reach their full potential, but also for the failures to get remedial help so that they too can benefit from secondary education - we shall need to make full use of the capabilities of all our people.

We shall need flexibility to switch between courses; but we shall need to make sure that more people study the scientific and technical subjects, including new ones like ocean sciences, and that everyone has the basics of computer literacy. But it is not simply a matter of numbers or subjects. In education, as in the economy generally, it is quality that matters. It will be necessary to review the whole education system, to modernise the methods of teaching and the approach to learning. Rote learning and deference had their advantages, but their day is done; tomorrow's world will belong to the inquiring minds, the original thinkers-people who have learned by exploring, by undertaking projects, by questioning, by thinking things out for themselves.

Traditional methods will need to be re-examined to find ways of bringing out creativity and innovativeness which will be the key to future success.

Education is crucial to generate the career skills which are needed for a top quality labour force, which in turn is essential for future competitiveness, economic development and full employment. However, that is not the only thing that education is about. No less important, it is also to bring out people's full potential in a wider sense, to make them into whole, mature, fully developed individuals, able to flourish and nourish, in their families and in their society. These educational aims need not be in conflict with the vocational one."

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, these are not my words. These are the words of experts who sat for several months and came to that conclusion if we, indeed, want to achieve a higher social and economic development of the country. I do recognise that we cannot lose 30% of our kids at the end of the primary cycle. But that is not sufficient result, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, to compromise and to thus jeopardize, that is, put in jeopardy those who want to achieve and excel. We should work towards an education policy that stands out. The characteristics of our schools should constantly produce students who will place Mauritius on the list of best performing school system. Quality teachers, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, and first rate instruction are just some other factors that will enable our school system to produce bright and ambitious students.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the question I would like to put in this House is this: has there been a study conducted to find out why 30% of our kids fail at the CPE? Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have been in the education field for more than 25 years and education is of particular interest to me. I have done my homework. It is in the bracket of 0-5 years. It is here, either we lose the child or we win the child. I am not talking through my hat. I am talking out of experience. It is here that we have to follow the child, that is, from 0-5 years. From 0-5 years, we either win the child or we lose the child. The kindergarten, the pre-primary and the primary are the foundation, the rock bottom basis of any educational success. This will be my plea to the hon. Minister of Education.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, children are not born stupid. If we take care of them at an early age, as I said, we will win them and they will excel in life. Let us put in place an educational system that will cater for everybody. This is my humble plea as a father, as an educationist, as a social worker, a Mauritian and as a Parliamentarian. Those who want to excel, let them excel. We cannot afford to suffocate those students who have the ability and the capacity to excel. Why should we suffocate them? Why should we stand in the way of excellence, in the way of

achievers and doers? On the contrary, we should encourage them and provide them with the necessary tools, the necessary opportunities, but at the same time we must not turn our back on those who, for obvious reasons and for reasons beyond their control, are not able to follow suit. Likewise, those students with special needs should be provided, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with what we call 'customised education curricular'. No-one should be left out. This is the vision of the Prime Minister. I want to make a special appeal in this House. Let us work for a system that will take into custody the child from 0-5 years. If we do it, we will go a long way towards addressing the problem of failure at CPE level, *n'en déplaise* those so-called educational reformists, those political pundits. Today our pre-primary education system is too disjointed and fragmented. It is hybrid. It should be harmonised in the wider interest of the pre-primary kids. I repeat, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. It is here that we either lose or win the child, and the consequence is apparent at the end of the secondary cycle. I have stressed on education, because this is what we urgently need to remake the economic foundation of Mauritius. If we want to lay the foundation for the next 50 years, we have to recognise that the only resource that we have in this country is our people, their brains and their skills. Sort them and pick the best, because it is the quality of people that determines the income of the nation. It is how we select our people, how we educate them, and how we organise them, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, and ultimately, it is how we manage them that will make the difference in the coming decades. Our job, as a Government, is to set our objectives, direction and *modus operandi* clearly and unequivocally. The rest is up to the people to achieve and excel. By reforming our education system, we will ensure that more opportunities are created for our people, regardless of colour, creed or caste. We will also be successful in developing every available talent in the country. Reforming our education system, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, warrants the practice of modern management techniques, of new and sophisticated technologies. If we want to achieve high level technical and profession skills, reform in the education sector is no longer a choice. We have to follow in the footsteps of those countries that have improved their educational system, in order to upgrade the skills and professional competence of their people. It is acknowledged that education is crucial to generate the career skills for a top quality labour force which is, in turn, an essential prerequisite to ensure our competitiveness, as well as our socio-economic development. Our education system must, therefore, be geared to bring our people's full potential to make them mature and fully developed individuals.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we should be able to find our place in the global competitiveness, in terms of our capacity to meet the needs of a competitive economy, because competitiveness will be central to our survival in the years to come. Both as a parliamentarian and as an educationist, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have always militated for the cause of education. As far back as 1996, I tabled a motion about the type of education that will be relevant to the socio-economic needs of this country. I have maintained a consistent approach all along.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as a patriot, I know that reform is always difficult and painful, *mais il faut oser dans la bonne direction*. These are my deep and sincere beliefs. The environment in which we are living today, as far as education is concerned, I know, is far from making unanimity. I am sure - I am on the other side of the fence - that the silent majority in the country is with me regarding quality education. This is why, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I think that the reform of our education system demands a deep and wider consultation with all the stakeholders.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in UK, when a simple thing as a curriculum has to be changed, a select committee of the House is appointed, whereby all stakeholders and educational experts are invited. Here, what do we do? We just operate *à peu près*, at random; *clientèle politique*, an eye on the vote bank. It is not too late, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. We can still have a select committee of the House, chaired by the Minister of Education himself, and discuss the reform by inviting all stakeholders to express their views before the committee, so as to guarantee that the future system will respond to the needs and requirements of the socio-economic needs of the country. As for me, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I will continue to voice my deep concern and my views, even if I have to walk alone. As Rabindranath Tagore puts it in his poem 'walk alone', and I quote with your permission -

“If they answer not thy call, walk alone

If they are afraid and lower mutely facing the wall

Open thy mind and speak out alone

If they turn away and desert you when crossing the wilderness

Trample the thorns under thy tread

And along the blood-soaked track walk alone”

Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

(7.37 p.m)

Mr J. C. Barbier (Second Member for GRNW & Port Louis West): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, allow me first of all to say some things to hon. Dayal pertaining to the education sector. I will give two cases of pupils in my constituency who are very weak. One has been to *l'école* Roche Bois, precisely Nicolay Government School. He had a very weak result at the CPE exams, and he had many difficulties to go to college. In those days, his teacher told his father not to send him to college and waste time, but to send him to the cabinet maker where he could easily learn a good *métier*. This is what the teacher told the father. But, his father, who is a Chagossian, and who can hardly read a newspaper, did not accept that and sent his son to the college, and tried to follow him until he reached School Certificate. His first attempt was not that good, and so he made a second attempt. He did his HSC, where he had three As in science. Today, he is an aeronautical engineer in the USA. They pretended that this guy was not able to go to school because of this or that. Hon. Mrs Navarre-Marie knows the person I am talking about.

The second case, which I would like to take as example, is a girl who did not even have her CPE. She liked to draw models of dresses, and she managed to have some private courses in the subject of dressmaking. She was unable to have an employment in Mauritius because she did not have her CPE. She got married to a French national and went in France; she pursued her study there in the field of dressmaking. Mr Deputy Speaker Sir, this girl who did not even have the CPE before, managed to get a Bac+3 in France. She worked for some time for a large group in France and, today, she is self-employed. She has already bought her own house and is staying with her family in France.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I put the question to myself: what would have happened to these two persons, if they were in Mauritius, in this system of education which we have here? No, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir! That's why I said that we have a system which privileges the elite. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we cannot leave aside people who may have some potentials, but who maybe, are late bloomers and can *ratrapper - comme avait dit l'honorable Obeegadoo* - in the future. I am not for a system of education which gives the chance only to the elite, but I am for

a system which caters for those late developers who may have some potential which can just erupt in the future.

Hon. Minister Jeetah talked about the results of the CPE exams of 2005 to 2007. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we all know that those who are going to have their results in 2010 or 2011, are the intakes of five years back. Those of the 2005-2008 who have had good results - which hon. Minister Jeetah just mentioned - were the intakes of the reforms which, at the time, hon. Obeegadoo the then Minister of Education was making. Maybe, hon. Minister Jeetah forgot about that. I will have to refresh his memory.

The Minister did not explain to the House how, when he was Minister, the country had a deficit of Rs4.7 billion through the edging, which he negotiated and which brought those failures to the consumers in Mauritius. The Minister did not explain to the House how when he was Minister, we had *pénurie dilait*, *pénurie feray*, *pénurie médicament* and so on. *Ministre 'pénurie'*! I don't think this Minister can give any lesson to the MMM Government and to the MMM Ministers.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the 2011 Budget does not take into account the world economic situation. It does not strengthen our economy, help the country to face the economic constraint which is happening globally. This Budget, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, is not the usual forecasting strategy for the future which we have been used to in the past years. This Budget does not bring any new factor to increase or boost up significantly our income. This Budget is only maximising its revenue from the pockets of the population.

We were expecting a new social soul as far as the revenue and income strategy is concerned, but nothing would happen in this way. So, this Budget has absolutely no vision.

This Budget, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, is going to impoverish the population. We are expecting the hon. Minister of Finance, who said so much about the loss of purchasing power of the population, to come with, at least, a policy for recovering back partly the purchasing power on which he himself worked out the figure to be of 17% for the past five years. In fact, the workers got a meagre compensation and a considerable increase in the usual commodities the days that followed the Budget speech. Whereas they will receive the compensation only at the end of January and they would have already paid more than they would have received as compensation by that time.

M. le président, dans ce budget, le ministre a fait aussi du clientélisme politique. Pour moi, les efforts faits par rapport aux planteurs sont les bienvenus. J'en suis bien content. En ce qui concerne la politique du logement, du *SC and HSC* en ce qui concerne l'éducation, j'en suis content, M. le président. Mais, que n'avons-nous pas entendu quand il s'agit des logements sociaux depuis ces cinq dernières années ? Je croyais qu'il n'y aurait plus de problème de logement, qu'il y aurait plus de maisons que de demandes, tellement qu'il y a eu des effets d'annonces et des promesses dans cette Chambre concernant la politique de logement. Mais, on saura d'ici un ou deux ans, si vraiment ce ministre des finances *means business* par rapport à la politique du logement. En ce qu'il s'agit de cette partie du clientélisme politique que je viens de citer, le Premier ministre ne s'est pas laissé faire. Le soir même du budget, alors que pour moi *it was the day of the hon. Minister of Finance*, le soir à la télé qu'a-t-on vu ? Un Premier ministre qui s'est empressé de s'approprier les quelques mesures positives annoncées par le ministre des finances ! Mais il ne nous pipe mot en ce qui concerne les augmentations qu'on vient de constater par rapport à l'huile comestible, boîtes de conserves et le riz. Il ne nous dit pas que le riz va être frappé de la *TVA*, alors que c'était *zero-rated* avant et les boîtes de conserves aussi.

Je voudrais savoir qui va maintenant prendre la paternité de ces augmentations dont on ne s'attendait pas après le discours du budget ? Ce n'est que le commencement ; en janvier et février ce sera pire. Quand le produit pétrolier va être frappé de plus d'*Excise Duty*, il y aura encore une cascade d'augmentations. Qui va en prendre la paternité ? Est-ce que cela va être encore : '*Pas moi sa, li sa*' ? On a vu dans le passé, le Premier ministre, s'approprier des mesures populaires, par exemple, le transport gratuit. Mais quand il s'agissait de *NRPT* et de taxe sur l'épargne, c'est le '*pas moi sa, li sa*'. J'espère que, durant ce mandat, on ne va pas assister à une telle politique de '*pas moi sa, li sa*', par rapport aux effets négatifs et néfastes de ce budget.

Ce budget, M. le président, non seulement nous appauvrit tous, mais va augmenter les tensions familiales et la violence conjugale. Ce budget causera encore plus de dégâts dans les familles pauvres et dans la société en général, parce que le ministre des finances sait pertinemment bien que l'augmentation sur l'alcool et la cigarette ne va ni arrêter les gens à fumer ni à boire de l'alcool. Les hommes et les femmes qui fument des cigarettes et qui boivent de l'alcool vont en général couper les autres dépenses, par exemple, sur les enfants, les habits, l'éducation, mais ils ne vont pas couper leur consommation d'alcool et cela le ministre le sait très

bien. C'est pour cela qu'il a prévu dans son budget l'augmentation des revenus à la hausse par rapport à la taxe sur la cigarette et sur l'alcool. Si le ministre était convaincu que les gens allaient diminuer leur consommation d'alcool et de cigarette, il aurait tout simplement ramené sa dotation budgétaire en baisse au lieu en hausse.

M. le président, ces mesures vont être catastrophiques sur les familles et sur les petites gens. M. le président il faut que je souligne une chose. En 1990, le conseil municipal de Port Louis d'alors sous le MMM avait arrêté de donner des permis d'alcool '*off premises*' dans les cités ouvrières dans la capitale. Dieu sait combien de mécontents on en a fait depuis cela. En prenant cette résolution au conseil municipal, il y a eu vraiment beaucoup de mécontents et au bout de quinze ans on avait rejeté des centaines de demandes à travers la ville, certains sont allés en cour et certains ont eu gain de cause, mais nous, au niveau politique, on est resté sur notre position et ces décisions étaient plus sociales que partisans. On avait fait ce qu'il fallait pour protéger les citoyens et voilà que depuis 2005, M. le président, depuis que les mairies sont contrôlées par l'Alliance sociale, elles ont donné des permis à gogo dans toutes les rues des quartiers populaires et cinq ans après elles récoltent le fruit de leur semence. J'ai l'impression qu'après avoir écouté l'hon. Ms Deerpalsing que ce problème n'est pas seulement à Port Louis, mais un peu partout ailleurs parce qu'elle a attiré l'attention de la Chambre elle-aussi sur ces phénomènes des points de vente d'alcool qui se sont multipliés ces cinq dernières années depuis que les mairies sont contrôlées par les conseillers municipaux de l'Alliance sociale. On constate le résultat aujourd'hui partout à travers le pays. Aujourd'hui, c'est tout le pays qui paie les conséquences de ces décisions, M. le président. L'alcool est accessible à tous, à tout âge et tout sexe. Beaucoup le consomment au bord de la rue et lorsqu'ils ont la vessie trop remplie, alors ils vont se soulager tout simplement sur les murs des voisins à côté de ces points de vente et vous imaginez les problèmes sociaux et les bagarres que cela suscite dans ces régions de la périphérie de nos circonscriptions.

Ce qu'on avait voulu empêcher, vingt ans de cela s'est produit dans les villes, aujourd'hui, par l'incompétence des conseillers municipaux qui croyaient prendre des mesures pour démocratiser la vente des produits alcoolisés. C'est normal qu'avec ce genre d'action on a, aujourd'hui, dix fois plus de '*soulards*' dans nos rues. Croyant démocratiser la vente de l'alcool, les conseillers municipaux de l'Alliance sociale ont vendu à la population ...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order please! Order !

Mr Barbier : Ce qu'on appelle dans le jargon mauricien, le 'yen'

Zordi tout dimoune in gagne yen, banne jeunes in gagne yen l'alcool !

En d'autres mots une addiction à l'alcool s'est vite propagée parmi les jeunes du pays. Sachant que c'est une chose qui est très souvent irréversible, le ministre des finances trouve les moyens maintenant de venir taxer le 'yen' semé par l'Alliance sociale pour remplir la caisse de l'état de l'argent 'haram'. L'argent de la souffrance, l'argent du 'yen', l'argent du 'vice' ! Autre exemple, M. le président, ce sont les jeux du hasard. Dans le souci de démocratiser les vices, l'Alliance sociale a fait pousser partout à travers le pays des casinos, des *game houses*, des maisons de paris de tout genre et ajouter à cela on a vu pendant ces cinq ans venir aussi s'implanter le 'lotto', gratter, la roue millionnaire, paris de toute sorte pendant ces cinq dernières années. Il y a seulement à Terre Rouge, M. le président, par exemple, dans une seule rue, au moins quatre maisons de paris. Vous savez à Terre Rouge, c'est une région un peu mixte où il y a toutes les communautés. Il y a les hindous, musulmans, créoles, tamouls, tout y est, mais la plupart de ces gens à Terre Rouge sont tous de la classe moyenne et la classe pauvre.

Ces maisons de jeux - qui sont sur la route royale à Terre Rouge - sont comme une tentation permanente pour ces habitants ; ils sont tentés un jour d'y aller et de voir comment cela ce passe, M. le président. Et là aussi beaucoup fine gagne 'yen'. Hommes, femmes, jeunes, filles et garçons, tout le monde y est. L'Alliance sociale a réussi dans son tour de démocratiser les vices. Maintenant le ministre des finances, content de cette situation va tout simplement *highly tax* les vices et, en conséquence, nous allons constater, M. le président, dans les années à venir, les effets néfastes qu'il y aura sur les familles à travers Maurice de par cette mesure que le ministre a prise. Au lieu de combattre ces vices comme l'hon. Ms Deerpalsing l'a dit si souvent - et je la félicite - le ministre des finances en profite pour remplir la poche de l'état de l'argent 'haram'. Alors ce 'haramisation' je dirais de notre budget - permettez-moi l'expression - est à l'encontre du social car cela n'arrêtera pas les vices. Il va causer encore plus de dégâts. *This is for me a 'vice revenue budget'* et si le ministre des finances persiste dans cette direction, l'année prochaine on aura sûrement droit à une législation pour légaliser la prostitution, avec des permis d'opération très chers, des maisons closes cinq étoiles, pourquoi pas un permis pour cultiver le

gandia qui coûtera très cher et pourquoi pas une législation pour fumer du gandia bio, sans nicotine, économiser sur les devises étrangères.

(Interruptions)

Cela ferait entrer beaucoup d'argent. Qu'attendent-ils ! Il y a certains qui se frottent déjà les mains probablement, M. le président. En fait, M. le président, c'est un budget qui *pé boire disan* des démunis et je ne sais pas ce qui se passe au gouvernement, le ministre des finances *pé boire disan alors qui ministre la santé pé vane nu disan pu Rs1500 ene pinte*.

Le gouvernement veut nous retourner vers *létemp margose*, où toute la population retournera au riz 'ration', *réssso charbon ek foyé di bois*. C'est dans cette direction que pousse actuellement le nouveau ministre des finances. Alors dans leurs interventions le ministre de la pêche et même le ministre des finances ne nous fait aucune révélation nouvelle concernant la pêche. Que du déjà entendu et jamais commencé ! Je ne sais pas pourquoi, M. le président, il ne se passe rien de concret au niveau de ce ministère. Alors rien n'est envisagé pour la sécurité. Mon combat principal pour le moment concerne les pêcheurs ; c'est la sécurité en mer. Plusieurs fois je suis intervenu à cet effet dans cette Chambre. Aujourd'hui, bien que la technologie nous permet d'avoir des GPS, des boussoles digitales, on peut aujourd'hui même à travers l'internet, via satellite, visionner *live* des événements, des mouvements, bref la vie un peu partout dans le monde. Il est donc techniquement possible, M. le président, de donner des équipements de communication, des GPS, des boussoles permettant de retracer les pêcheurs en mer en cas de détresse.

C'est la énième fois que je fais cette requête, comme je viens de dire, ici, à la Chambre. Malheureusement, le gouvernement fait preuve d'insensibilité totale par rapport aux problèmes des pêcheurs. Il nous faut, M. le président, protéger ces pêcheurs qu'ils soient dans les lagons, hors lagons ou sur les bancs. Il nous faut une politique claire et nette par rapport au développement des barachois sur terre comme sur mer. Il y a beaucoup de pour et de contre concernant l'aquaculture et je pense qu'il est grand temps d'avoir une consultation de tous ceux concernés et venir de l'avant avec une politique claire et nette prenant en considération la sécurité alimentaire de la population qui - on le sait - va en se détériorant mondialement parlant. Il faut qu'on arrête les pillages de nos poissons dans notre zone économique exclusive. Là aussi la technologie d'image par satellite peut aider à chasser et à stopper les contrevenants en mer. Il

nous suffit, M. le président, qu'il y ait une bonne volonté au niveau de la politique pour qu'on puisse mettre tout cela en œuvre, M. le président.

M. le président, du côté des petites entreprises qui travaillent exclusivement, je dirais, pour le marché local; ces petites entreprises sont appelées à une mort lente. J'ai vu beaucoup qui ont fermé leurs portes depuis ces quelques années passées – d'autres essayent quand même de rouvrir leur *business* mais ils sont rapidement décontenancés par la concurrence des pays asiatiques et cela malgré les taxes assez fortes imposables à la douane. Il y en a qui essayent de résister, mais il y en a qui n'arrivent plus à survivre. Et nous savons qu'avec le concept de *duty-free island* qui va venir dans les années à venir, ce sera la mort totale des ces petites entreprises qui travaillent exclusivement pour le marché local.

Donc, dans ce budget, par exemple, rien n'est dit de ce qui va se passer pour ces fabricants locaux; que ce soit de vêtements, de meubles et autres, et qui ne pourront concurrencer avec les pays asiatiques. Déjà ils ne peuvent pas le faire malgré qu'il y ait une forte taxe douanière sur les importations de ce produit, maintenant imaginez-vous lorsque cela va être *duty-free*, qu'est-ce qui va se passer. Ce sont des interpellations, des choses qui nous interpellent par rapport à l'avenir, M. le président. Je pense qu'il est grand temps d'y mettre un peu d'ordre et de donner une politique claire et nette à la population en ce qu'il s'agit de ce qui va être l'avenir de ces petites entreprises une fois que le *duty-free island* sera là.

Rapidement, je vais parler sur l'administration régionale. Y aurait-il une réforme de l'administration régionale? J'ai entendu à la radio que cela va coûter R 1 milliard. R 1 milliard dans ce budget-ci, mais il n'y a rien du tout. Alors, pour qu'on puisse appliquer les politiques qu'on a lues dans les journaux, des déclarations *piecemeal* faites, ici et là, par le ministre, on comprend que la municipalisation du pays est en marche, mais cela nécessiterait quand même pas mal de construction des blocs administratifs, de recrutement des cadres, des éboueurs, de main-d'œuvre, des camions, etc. qui nous arriveraient selon une estimation provisoire à R 1 milliard. Mais il n'y a rien dans ce budget et donc ce n'est pas pour l'année prochaine. Et si ce n'est pas pour l'année prochaine, je ne comprends pas pourquoi le renvoi des élections municipales alors. On aura peut-être certaines explications dans les jours qui viennent avec la présentation du projet pour renvoyer les élections municipales, mais j'espère du moins qu'on aura certains éclaircissements.

M. le président, je voudrais dire deux mots par rapport à la MASA. La MASA qui est une association des artistes mauriciens. En ce moment, il se passe vraiment des choses obscures à la MASA. À la dernière assemblée générale de la MASA, il y a eu beaucoup de questions qui ont été soulevées par les artistes. Les artistes ont demandé la mise en place de deux *ad hoc committees* pour étudier toutes leurs doléances et de faire la lumière sur les questions. Jusqu'à maintenant depuis l'assemblée générale, deux ou trois mois de cela, le comité ne s'est pas réuni depuis et malgré tous les efforts faits sur l'administration pour que ce comité puisse se réunir, malheureusement, il ne donne aucun signe par rapport aux résolutions prises par l'assemblée générale. Au contraire, ils ont essayé de casser les reins à un certain Richard Hein, qui est un producteur; qui avait posé beaucoup de questions pour essayer de le faire porter le chapeau par rapport aux disputes qu'il y a en ce moment pour les *caller tunes*. Les artistes savent que M. Richard Hein n'a rien à faire, il n'a aucune responsabilité à porter dans cette affaire. Je vous parle en connaissance de cause en étant moi-même membre de la MASA et cela a été discuté en assemblée générale. Il avait même produit un contrat qu'il a avec Emtel qui montre très bien à tous les membres qu'il n'a rien à faire avec le problème de *caller tune* qui se pose actuellement. Mais certains à l'administration de la MASA, étant donné qu'il a soulevé tant de points qui ont été éclaircis en assemblée générale; on essaye de lui casser les reins, à lui et à certains autres membres qui essaient de travailler pour l'avancement des artistes mauriciens au sein de la MASA.

Donc, j'en ai déjà parlé au ministre concerné. Je reviendrai sûrement sur la question à l'ajournement bientôt, mais j'attire l'attention maintenant de la Chambre parce qu'il y a des magouilles, des manipulations en ce moment au sein de la MASA pour essayer de faire porter le chapeau à des gens qui ne sont pas coupables, mais, au contraire, qui veulent tout faire pour aider les artistes. J'espère que mes propos iront dans l'oreille du ministre concerné et que d'ici les jours qui viennent on trouvera une solution à ce problème.

M. le président, je n'aurai pas le temps de venir sur ma circonscription, ce sera pour la prochaine fois, mais mon souhait pour le pays c'est que ce budget arrive à donner les meilleurs pour que la population puisse en profiter. Je terminerai en souhaitant à toute la population mauricienne un joyeux Noël et une bonne et heureuse année.

Merci, M. le président.

(8.07 p.m.)

The Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping (Mr A. Bachoo): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, on listening to hon. Barbier, I was really feeling scared and that reminds me of Shakespeare –

“Stepped in blood should I wade no more, returning was as tedious as to go over again.”

So much love for blood has dominated his mind that repeatedly he has been speaking about bloodshed and that’s as if everybody was being bled-white as a result of the action that this Government has taken. On the one hand, he was talking about bleeding the public and on the other hand, he has been condemning Government for the drastic decision that we have taken to impose taxes on the gaming houses and alcoholic drinks. So, which is which? I can hardly understand. Everybody in the whole country, I know, people are happy about the decision that Government has taken that we have to put an end to this practice, that is, too much of drunkenness, too much of playing *lotto* and lottery. I sincerely wish to thank the Government and the Minister of Finance for the decisions that he has taken and the best way to control betting...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order, please! Hon. Barbier and hon. Henry!

Mr Bachoo: I didn’t stop anybody during their address and I hope it would be the same on my side also.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, so, this is the best formula, that is, if you touch the pocket of somebody then he reacts. I hope that by taking such a drastic measure, we are in the right direction in order to control these two evils.

At times, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am not blaming anybody in the Opposition, I have had the opportunity of listening to all the hon. Members, but I get the feeling that somewhere someone or a few are suffering from a sense of mental anaemia; stating anything without even thinking. The best solution in life, first of all, if you want to open your mouth, it’s important that you have to think properly; a sense of spiritual cancer you have caught.

They have become experts in criticising, opening their mouths and just start criticising as if we have career critics just as we have career diplomats. Just for the task of criticising, a sense of competition, who will criticise the most so that the Leader can appreciate them. This is the impression that I get. These are all fruitless. Gossip-mongers just for the sake of discussion. They talk anything that they want. Justified criticism is important, that is positive and that's why we are here today, but necessarily you speak whatever you want and, at the same time, losing the time of the House. When you are out of power, you can indulge in all types of criticisms, baseless criticisms and that is the reason why we say these types of negative messages are useless for a country and particularly at this time. The only way if you don't want ourselves to be criticised, we do nothing, we speak nothing and we have nothing. There is nobody who will come forward and criticise us. Sometimes, we are being unjustly criticised because they want to take our place, that is the only reason. So, had you been here, there would have been no criticisms. That tree that bears the most fruits gets the most stones...

(Interruptions)

I will come on that, just have a look at the career of your leader and then you will see how many languages how many times he has been changing. I don't want to wallow into that.

Mr Speaker, Sir, that tree that bears the most fruits gets the most stones. We have got plenty of fruits on our side, we have got plenty of stones. So, you have to keep on pelting stones and unfortunately we cannot do much about it. But we are here to turn negative into positive. The Budget has shown it, we are here to turn negative into positive, to turn adversity into advantage, stumbling blocks into stepping stones. That is what the Budget is aimed at and I take this opportunity to congratulate my friend the hon. vice Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, for the compassionate Budget, for the pro-poor Budget that he has presented to the House.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we have courage, we have commitment, we have conviction, we have capacity to do whatever we are doing and that is the reason why this country is moving ahead. I got the opportunity of hearing a few Members on the other side. I am not blaming everybody, but it is really very very sad. One Member has even gone to the extent of talking about – I am quoting: “These people could not care less about the religious preference of candidates and their Constituency or if they wear a tikka or have a chirag,” or whatever, these are all useless, living in a secular country and passing such type of comments. Unfortunately, I

don't want to pass any comments on that. At the same time, there has been another one, my hon. friend, a few hours ago spoke about certain things that are tainted with communal overtone and I hope that these things should not be repeated in the House. As tainted with communal overtone, taking one example, as if somebody has accused Mr X or Mr Y because of his communal *appartenance*. Such thing has to be avoided at any cost in the House. I heard that and it is my duty just to draw the attention and, in fact, this happened today. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, yesterday the Prime Minister in a function..

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order please!

Mr Bachoo: I am just making a passing reference to what was uttered in the House. It has to be avoided, that is what I am telling. Yesterday, while addressing a gathering, the Prime Minister picked up a very interesting example where he spoke about ..

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order please!

Mr Bachoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, when others were intervening, I did not disturb anybody, so it is my duty to speak. I am not accusing anybody whatever I heard I am just commenting.

The Deputy Speaker: Yes continue!

Mr Bachoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, yesterday the Prime Minister, while addressing a gathering was talking about the attitude of mind. The motive, the intention is more important. We always say that the attitude of mind is important. The mindset has to change. Harvard University conducted a survey in which it concluded that 85% cause of success is because of positive attitude and 15% is because of intelligence and knowledge. So, attitude has to be positive. If attitude is negative, then success is limited. Success is limited, you can't do much and that is why we say that success is limited, life is restricted. That is why attitude has always to be positive. We have to think of the best and we have to work for the best. We have to expect the best in our lives and that is the reason why on this side of the House we always think in such a way. God has given us five senses. Touch, taste, smell, sight and hearing and to be successful in life, we need a sixth sense: common sense and that explains the reason why we are moving

towards progress and prosperity. In life we have to strive, we have to struggle, we have to sweat and it is only then we are going to succeed. We can take this country on the path of progress and prosperity. We can face the challenges of the future.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we believe in the concept of a strong, stable and of a benevolent leadership. We believe in that, we have such a leadership and that explains the reason of success. A party and for that a country needs a strong and able leadership. Last time, I remember having said that a good leader is one who guides and a bad leader is one who misguides. A good leader is one who guides and a bad leader is one who misguides and that also explains the reason why we are here today. We have got a leader who symbolises direction, dedication, determination and discipline as well as deadlines. He sets the goals and we do the rest of the work.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we have got all the ingredients to create a successful and prosperous Mauritius. We have got talented people, rich human resources, full fledged democratic system, a dedicated team and this Budget aims at eradicating poverty, at improving the standard of living and, at the same time, at eliminating pollution, social evils and preparing the country to face the challenges. Most of the orators on this side of the House, we have been making references to the gloom, the uncertainty that is prevailing in the world, but very few of them had dared to do so on the other side of the House. We are speaking in terms of global village and all of us know when one country sneezes the others catch cold. This is what happens in the whole world, we are living in a global village and there have been devastating consequences on the economies of developed and developing countries.

The Euro zone countries, our trading partners, the tourist generating markets, are reeling under the effects of economic and financial crisis. What is happening in Portugal? Crippled by the workers' strike because of cuts, there have been wage cuts, pension has been frozen, taxes have increased at a skyrocketing speed. In Ireland, a series of tough austerity measures have been taken and the Irish Government is seeking Rs85 billion from the EU and IMF. Greece also has effected drastic cuts in spending and the Budget deficit in Greece stands at 13.6 % of GDP, the bonus payment has also stopped. Public sector pension has also been frozen. Salaries for three years have been frozen. The VAT has gone from 19% to 23% and they are seeking Rs110 billion. That is about Greece. In UK all of us know that there has been the biggest cut since the

Second World War where 500,000 people are losing job in Government, another 500,000 people are losing job in the private sector.

The tuition fees in colleges have trebled; have gone up by three times. At least in Mauritius, we are fortunate because we have got prudent management under the able leadership of the Prime Minister, a compassionate Budget, a caring Budget, a pro-poor Budget, a pro-development Budget focused on modernisation, democratisation and social justice. Mr Speaker, Sir, we are part of the answer; they are part of the problem, that is the only difference. We have got an answer to whatever we do. We have got a well prepared programme. I heard hon. Ms Nita Deerpalsing, in the morning, quoting from the programme. We have got a programme, you have got an excuse and we try to find an answer to every problem and you will find a problem to every answer that we provide. That also makes the difference.

(Interruptions)

We make commitments, you make excuses, promises. We have got dreams, we are dreamers of dreams, but you are schemers, that's it. We see gain everywhere, whatever action we do we are taking this measure we are going to have gains. We see gains and you see pains everywhere. We see possibilities you see pitfalls. That is the biggest problem. If you start finding only cracks in life, you can't make too much of advancement. At times I find that the Opposition feels very unhappy when people are happy out there. That is also the problem with them, because if people are unhappy then you have to be happy here because you know you are going to count on their votes. When people feel bad, you feel good that's it and most of the time they are complaining. Just imagine I was sitting and listening a series of accusations: Budget is not good, Budget is not good! So that is the biggest problem, tomorrow you may put off the light to see how dark Mauritius is. So, creating cracks in life, finding cracks in life and you may even believe that sunshines are only to cast shadows. My advice is: Be practical and pragmatic.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am not criticising. With my limited intellect, I am trying to comment on what I have heard. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, there has been one Member of Parliament - I am not going to name just not to incur the wrath - passing comment as if, in his or her constituency, nothing was done. Unfortunately, I don't want to take the time of the House. I can speak for two hours on what has been done in Constituency No. 1, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

We should not forget the memory of our late friend, Dr. James Burty David; from 2005-2010, *résultat lor résultat*.

There have been 200 projects. I can start with upgrading and embellishment works, kiosk, clearing, cleaning, construction of concrete steps. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, not only that; that is not enough, I continue.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order, please!

Mr Bachoo: As for Environment and National Development Unit, there has been plenty of resurfacing of roads, upgrading of roads, enlargement of roads, cleaning of rivers - another 50 projects. Not only that, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. Last week,...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order, order!

Mr Bachoo: A sum of Rs55 m. has been allocated for the construction of a bridge. Then, we have got Pont Topaze Rs5 m.; upgrading of children garden at Grand River North West and La Tour Koenig, Rs1 m.; construction and resurfacing on 9 km of road, Rs4 m.; construction of multipurpose complex at Residence Vallijee, Rs11,400,000. There are a series of projects. I have got here all these. There is a grade separated junction at Caudan that falls in that area, to the tune of Rs108 m. Then, a new footbridge is being constructed at Food Cannery for Rs10 m.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order, please! Order!

Mr Bachoo: The works have already started. So, I would humbly request hon. Members that, at least, these things should not be repeated in the House, because we are caring for each and every constituency. We have done plenty of work, and it's only six months now. We have got four and a half years to go.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, for the last five years, we have done plenty of work in the Road Decongestion Programme. So far, we have spent over Rs4 billion. Traffic congestion is our biggest challenge, and this has increased as a result of the national economic growth. Everybody knows about it. Our standard of living also has increased significantly and, in parallel, car

ownership has also risen in proportion. In the past, traffic congestion was limited to Port Louis, and now it has spread throughout the nook and corner of the country, starting from north to south, east or west. According to a study, which was conducted 10 years ago, it has been mentioned that we are losing Rs2 billion.

Today, it might be that we are losing Rs4 billion yearly, as a result of traffic congestion. It has a negative impact on productivity, on human health and environment. Our road network had not known too much of improvement, and that is the reason why we have started the decongestion programme, and every year we have to spend Rs25 billion. This is a project on infrastructure in general, where the lion's share will go in the construction of roads.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it's my duty to give you a trailer, if I can say, a *réclame* of what is being done. With regard to M1, the road that starts from Pont Fer and ends up in Caudan, decision has been taken by Government to provide a third lane, and the project is being implemented in phases. The widening of that road, the creation of a third lane from Pailles to Caudan is costing us Rs206 m. The work is nearing completion in the months to come.

Second, from Pont Fer roundabout to St. Jean, this is costing us Rs140 m. and works have already started. Next year, towards April, we are going to complete it. A grade separated junction at Caudan, unique in itself, at the cost of Rs108 m. had already started, and it will take about 10 to 11 months to be completed. Then, from St. Jean to Colville Deverell Bridge, the contract has been awarded Rs238 m. to the company Civic. Work is going to start in January.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Phoenix-Beaux Songes, to the tune of Rs280 m. - all of us know the difficulty, the hardship that people living in the vicinity of Vacoas and Quatre Bornes undergo to move towards Flic en Flac. The first part of the road is nearing completion - towards the end of December - and the second part will take another six to eight months to get completed.

With regard to the conversion of Pamplemousses/Grand' Baie road in the north, the dual carriage way, the first part is nearing completion. In five to ten days, it will be completed to the tune of Rs227 m., and the second part starting from Forbach to Sottise, works to the tune of Rs249 m have started. General Construction is the contractor.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the new bypass at Triolet: Rs225 m. The work is already completed and we are waiting for an auspicious time to inaugurate it.

A bypass at Goodlands to the tune of Rs295 m. will be completed towards the end of December. Camp Thorel link road is already in operation. Ebene Triangle, Rs300 m., is nearing completion. It will take us another one month. Flacq bypass, Rs30 m., is nearing completion. Nalletamby, first part Rs25 m., has already been completed, and the second part is going to start in the month of January. Piton/Poudre d'Or upgrading works, Rs35 m., is already completed. Mare d'Albert/Gros Bois link road, Rs52 m., is completed, and we have not yet inaugurated. Wootton to Belle Rive, Rs138 m. is already completed. There is the construction of a new bypass at Rivière du Rempart to the tune of Rs81 m. The work has already started; the first phase has started. We are going to start the second phase after acquisition of land is over.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, other projects which are funded through loans from development partners, for example, Terre Rouge-...

(Interruptions)

Verdun dual carriageway...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order, order!

Mr Bachoo: ...R 2.2 milliards! Last week, the Leader of the Opposition was stating in the House that, as a result of pressure that they had exercised on Government, Government had to give up the original loan which was given by the Chinese Government. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, nothing can be worse than this untruth. It was the Prime Minister who took the decision not to go for the Chinese loan, because only three contractors were allowed to tender. He took the decision to move towards *Agence Française de Développement* (AFD), and it was the Prime Minister's personal intervention that brought the French agency to Mauritius. That is the reason why they financed it, and then we got it at Rs2.2 billion. I wanted to clear this point out, namely that it was the personal intervention of the Prime Minister to invite the French agency to come and to finance our project.

Another one, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, is the Verdun-Trianon to Valentina, to the tune of Rs1.5 m. The contract has already been awarded. There has been a slight delay, because of land acquisition problems.

The tender for the second part of Belle Rive to Quartier Militaire is being evaluated and is costing Government over Rs780 m. Tender is being evaluated, and the work will start towards the end of January. Then, concerning the upgrading of motorway from Quay D to Terre Rouge, to the tune of Rs102 m., work is nearing completion.

With regard to the upgrading of the existing carriageway between Pamplémousses and Grand' Baie to the tune of Rs100m., the work is going to start.

The Nouvelle France/La Vigie upgrading work is costing Rs140 m. and is starting in January.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we have the public-private partnership scheme (PPP). The road decongestion PPP project is going to cost approximately Rs15 billion. It will be a 30-year concession. It comprises the construction, reparation and maintenance of the Harbour Bridge, the Ring Road Phase II and a new bridge over Grand River North West, between Belle Etoile and Soreze, by a private consortium. We are going very fast and, most probably, by the month of April, we are going to appoint the contractor, and then the same consortium will take over the operation, maintenance of Terre Rouge-Verdun-Trianon dual carriageway.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the first phase of the Port Louis Ring Road under construction is costing Government the sum of Rs1.2 billion. I am coming to the new project again, Mr Speaker, Sir, the Tulip Avenue. It is a long-awaited project. Unfortunately, because of the particular problem that we had regarding the sewerage, we have not been able to start the work that is costing Rs50 m. Probably during the first part of next year we are going to start it. We have the upgrading of Riche Terre Road at the cost of Rs80 m. That project got delayed because of the sewerage problem. Mr Speaker, Sir, the Higginson Road from Providence to St. Julien d'Hotman, the tender documents are ready and probably in February/March, the work is going to start at Rs160 m. We are constructing another bypass, St. Pierre Village to the roundabout of Bramwell Hospital, because there is too much congestion in that way, it is about Rs200 m. The work is going to start, probably in March/April of next year.

Mr Speaker, Sir, we have not forgotten the south and we are conducting a study to have a look at Nouvelle France to Souillac, what type of road we are going to put, either we have to enlarge/expand the existing one or whether we are going to have a new road. The study is on. In addition to this, Mr Speaker, Sir, there is a modern pedestrian bypass at Place d'Armes. When

we are constructing the grade separated junction, the fluidity of traffic will be such that we have to prepare ourselves not to allow pedestrians to cross over, in front of the Government House. So, that is the reason why we are constructing an underpass in order to relieve the traffic congestion and I hope next year the work has to start. As far as the other projects are concerned, the east-west connector, from the east to come towards Flic en Flac, the feasibility study is on and the project may be costing us about *R 3.5 milliards*. Forbach to Bel Air, a double carriageway, here the land acquisition has already started and we are waiting for the completion of the study. Once it is completed, probably the work may start towards the end of next year and the cost is *R 3 milliards*.

Mr Speaker, Sir, we have not yet forgotten the GRNW Bridge and now we are undertaking a study to see whether we can reinstate that bridge over again, because that would be of great help to the people who live in that vicinity. Again, a partial great separated junction at Montée S Coromandel junction is very important, because of the big development which is taking place towards Black River-Médine-Bambous and that may create a big traffic jam in that region. Even there, the study has already started.

Mr Speaker, Sir, at Pont Fer, near the Ministry of Education, the fly-over at Pont Fer, the study is nearing completion. I hope once the study is completed – Budget has already made provisions for a fly-over in that region. I hope we are going to precipitate because that is also a very big problem that takes place, traffic jam is too much.

As far as bridges are concerned, the new bridge at Ferney, we have already started the construction of a new bridge to the tune of Rs65 m. and that bridge used to get flooded all the time. The construction of a new bridge at Pailles junction - I have already mentioned – Rs55 m. The contract has already been awarded. We have got bridges at Tamarin, Rivière des Galets and Souillac costing Rs80 m. Here also, the work will be awarded next year. Mr Speaker, Sir, this year, we have spent about Rs700 m., apart from these big projects in maintenance, resurfacing, upgrading, enlarging and realignment of road. This clearly gives you an idea that we are not sitting idle. Last time, when I was addressing the House there was a *brouhaha*, outcry, as if I am not putting the truth, these things are all utopian dreams. They cannot be realised. But today, I can stand up and assure the House that all the promises that we have made, we are keeping them and we are going ahead.

Mr Speaker, Sir, my friend, hon. Obeegadoo was interested in the *metro léger*. We are investing massively on improving accessibility and mobility through our Road Investment Programme. However, in our congestion management strategy, we are improving our public transportation system also. Following the visit of our Prime Minister to Singapore, we are working on the modalities for the implementation of the rapid transit system. A team from Singapore is expected to visit Mauritius before the end of this year in order to move ahead with the project which we have decided.

Mr Speaker, Sir, apart from the Road Development Authority, the National Development Unit also falls under my responsibility. It is another implementing body of my Ministry, it is responsible for the implementation of infrastructural works and social amenities. Recently, we had witnessed massive floods which had ravaged many parts of the country where human lives were lost. Under the Emergency Rehabilitation Programme, Government had made a provision of Rs900 m. to be spent over four years. 158 localities were identified and by the end of November, 96 drain and bridge projects were implemented in different parts of the country. The major ones being La Tour Koenig, Camp Chapelon, Cité La Cure, Poste de Flacq, Mon Goût, Nouvelle France, Quatre Soeurs, La Maury, Petite Julie, Panchavati, Rivière du Rempart, Cité Argy, Pointe aux Sables, Bel Air/Rivière Sèche, to quote a few only. Actually, 21 projects are in progress, 41 projects are at design stage. There has been delay, Mr Speaker, Sir, because of the problem of way leave and land acquisition. Again, we had to comply with the CPB regulations and then, Mr Speaker, Sir, we have the problem of contractors. As at now, in my Ministry, CPB has approved contractor for only one zone and this explains the delay in implementation of projects. At times, we also have recourse to selective bidding for a number of projects, mainly amenities. Even Justice Domah, in his report on Fact Finding Committee, made mention of the laudable work which was done by NDU for the implementation of major projects. That's why I say it is no mean achievement of what we have with our limited resources.

At present, Mr Speaker, Sir, comprehensive surveys are being conducted by consultants at Panchavati to implement the second phase of the drainage programme. I know the difficulty and hardship that people are undergoing at Vallée des Prêtres and there we have to invest massively if we want to do away with the problem of flood. At Gokoolah, Quartier Militaire, the cost of these projects is too much on the high side. That is the reason why we have to phase them and NDU is going ahead with the implementation next year of the following projects: drains at

Péreybère to the tune of Rs50 m., Terre Rouge near the Police station: Rs15 m., Morcellement Sans Soucis: Rs50 m., bridge at Morcellement Sohawon: Rs25 m., Beau Bois/St. Pierre: Rs32 m., in Old Mahebourg approximately Rs100 m., Poste de Flacq: Rs16 m., Plaine de Gersigny: Rs8 m. and then the bridges in Constituency No. 5: Jouvance, d'Epinay and Ilot approximately Rs20 m. All these give you an indication of how caring a Government can be, we cannot go beyond that, Mr Speaker, Sir. We are doing our maximum. We have also many other projects - in the rural and urban areas - which we have already implemented during financial year 2010.

Mr Speaker, Sir, it is no joke constructing and upgrading 199,100 square metres of roads. Construction of social welfare centre at Caroline, football grounds in many parts of the country, lighting of football grounds at Cité Mangalkhan, Cité Loyseau, l'Espérance, Laventure, construction of volleyball pitches at Calebasses, Lallmatie, Grand Bois, upgrading of cremation grounds in many places as well as construction of children playgrounds. I will not be able to give the entire list.

Mr Speaker, Sir, when I was talking about Constituency No. 4, I have to mention that we have given works order to the tune of Rs50 m. a few weeks back, because we know that there are constituencies that need special care as a result of the heavy floods that have damaged most of the roads.

Mr Speaker, Sir, as far as road safety services are concerned, the fixing of handrails, we have thousands of metres of handrails which we have already fixed, embellishment and then escaping work at Château d'Eau, Tranquebar, St. Vincent, Vacoas, construction of market fair at Lallmatie, provision of street lighting, that is, two thousand units which we have given to local authorities, construction of *pétanque* courts in different localities, construction and upgrading of 175 internal access roads, construction of 23 drains in different parts of the country.

Mr Speaker, Sir, next year our priorities are the upgrading of the existing roads again, construction of new unclassified roads, improvement of the existing cremation grounds and cemeteries, provision of bus shelters, another hundred bus shelters will be constructed, upgrading and construction of children playgrounds and *pétanque* courts, supply of economic street lanterns to local authorities and, at the same time, construction of health tracks and we are constructing three markets, market fair at Roche Bois, Rivière des Anguilles and one at Quatre Bornes. I hope that next year the work is going to start.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, Government took the decision to revamp the CAB offices and a workshop was held. The recommendations should be put into practice. My Ministry will sustain the provision of information, guidance and advice to citizens across the country through the network of the Citizens Advice Bureau. These CABs collaborate with the NHDC with regard to Roof Slab Grant Scheme and provide support to other Ministries to reach out to citizens.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, at the same time, I would like to thank my colleagues, the Private Parliamentary Secretaries who are doing a really herculean task because the responsibility of locating and finding regions which need upgrading work normally go to them. I take this opportunity to thank them for the work that they have been doing. Next year, I would request them to do more than what we have been doing now.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I will now come to the Public Infrastructure Division, the MPI. We have done a lot of improvements in the infrastructure sector and our dream, as mentioned in the Budget, is to see that our GDP grows to Rs1 trillion and a per capita of US\$20,000. This is our dream. To realise this dream, we must have appropriate infrastructure. As we have mentioned, we are aiming to spend Rs25 billion annually and implementing infrastructure projects is a very difficult, costly and sensitive responsibility. These projects may have considerable impact on the quality of life and environment. Before committing huge amounts of money on capital projects, we should see that there is proper planning and implementation. The Project Plan Committee (PPC) is set up under the aegis of my Ministry and we have been scrutinising meticulously every capital project above Rs25 m. to ensure feasibility and cost-effectiveness. We are appointing Project Managers on capital projects so that there can be proper coordination and monitoring. We have to ensure their efficient and effective implementation. We are also recruiting adjudicators on large projects to resolve conflicts. This will avoid projects being bogged down in litigations afterwards. We have appointed adjudicators on new Dr. A. G. Jeetoo Hospital for the first time and the project is going at an accelerating speed. The first phase is expected to be ready by the end of this year.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I will not be able to mention all the works that had been done in the education sector, but I would like to mention that we have completed over 95 projects to the tune of Rs1 billion. We have 25 ongoing projects that are going to cost us another Rs500 m. The number of projects at design and tender stage is 45 and next year we have got another hundred

minor projects which will be implemented for the Ministry of Education and Human Resources. I have to thank my colleague, hon. Dr. Bunwaree, for the support that he extends to us so that we can accomplish these works on time.

In the Health Sector, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we have completed 34 projects and we have 26 ongoing projects that will cost Rs1,865,000,000 and we have got five projects at tender stage.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it is important for us to mention this and we have to congratulate the hon. Prime Minister, the Deputy Prime Minister and the former Ministers of Health and the actual Minister of Health for the personal interest that they have taken in Dr. A. G. Jeetoo Hospital which is costing Government Rs1.4 billion. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the first part will be completed towards the end of this year. The Accident and Emergency Department at Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam National Hospital at the cost of Rs70 m. will be completed in another one and a half to two months' time.

Concerning Flacq Hospital, a sum of Rs125 m. is being spent in the construction of a new block. Extension to Longue Mountain, a long dream is coming to reality, will be completed in a few months' time and one medi-clinic at Plaine Verte has already been completed.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I will not be able to dwell on all the other projects that we have, for example, the new Mahebourg Hospital, the new medi-clinic at Triolet at a cost of Rs57 m., the new outpatient department at Moka Eye hospital, the extension to ENT and one hospital at Bambous. I can go on and on in this way. Again, I would like to thank all the officers who are involved in doing this herculean task.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in the Police Department, the number of projects completed is 15, two projects are ongoing and the number of projects at design stage is five. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, here also we have undertaken important projects, including the construction of Police stations.

As far as social security is concerned, we have completed 17 projects and we have got a dozen of ongoing projects. We have the centre for elderly at Riambel and a centre for elderly at Pointe aux Piments. These are the two big projects that will be implemented next year and that is going to cost us about Rs350 m. or more.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, despite the lack of professionals like Architects, Quantity Surveyors, we have been able to do a herculean work. We are also willing to help voluntarily in the design of the low-cost housing project for NHDC. This is what my officers have promised. Construction of buildings, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, is not our only concern, we want our buildings to be properly maintained and we are finalising guidelines for the maintenance of buildings. We have also increased the number of district contractors from five to ten to attend to urgent repairs and maintenance. We have to ensure that lifts, Government vehicles, plant and equipment are also properly maintained. Appropriate facilities are being provided to the mechanical section of my Ministry. We are consolidating the legislative framework to ensure that capital projects are designed and implemented according to appropriate norms. An international consultant has been appointed with the assistance of UNDP, NAFD to help the technical committee to draft a new Building Act because the actual Building Act is old and dates back to 1919. Consultants have been assigned the task of incorporating the Energy Efficiency Concept in buildings. A new Professional Architects Council Bill is ready. It will be introduced in Parliament shortly. The registered Professional Engineers Council Bill, the Professional Quantity Surveyors Bill are also being finalised. The CIDB which was set up last year is finalising regulations for registration of contractors and consultancy firms. CIDB is also finalizing the National Schedule of Rates and a model contract document for construction of houses and minor works. CIDB will pursue its objectives to help in the capacity building of contractors especially SMEs.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we are talking of the concept of *Maurice Ile Durable*, we cannot ignore the green building aspect of sustainable development. Buildings are amongst the biggest consumers of energy. Therefore, it is necessary to provide the necessary framework for a more economic and efficient use of energy in building. We are ensuring that the green concept is implemented in our new building. Regarding the existing old buildings, with the help of EFD, an energy audit is being carried out in big Government-owned buildings. With the climate change and frequent flooding, risk of landslide has become more pronounced. The monitoring of landslide is one of our priorities, but we have a lack of expertise in the field. Geotechnical engineers are rare birds and we are trying to procure the services of one from India. We have also approached the Japanese Government for an in-depth investigation of landslide prone areas. We are also setting a Landslide Monitoring Unit.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, apart from roads, amenities and public buildings, my Ministry is also responsible for land transport. There has also been major innovation. At the land transport section, we are creating the Mauritius Land Transport Authority. We want to bring under one banner all the three departments: the Road Development Authority, the NTA, the TRMSU and consultants are already working on that. If everything goes well within two or three months, it will be over. We will have only one, that is, the Mauritius Land Transport Authority to look after the road transport and security aspects.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, implementing the Free Travel Scheme within a short time was also a great achievement. It was a major achievement and since the introduction of the Free Travel Scheme, a total of Rs3.5 billion has been disbursed for students, for old age and disabled persons. We are adopting stringent monitoring so that there can't be abuse by operators. We can check operators properly and we have set up a fast track investigating mechanism so that complaints relating to Free Travel Scheme can be looked into and cases heard before the Board. 208 cases have been heard and licences held by 124 operators were suspended, even the payments due to operators are withheld. From January till now, Rs5.1 m. has been forfeited from compensation of bus operators because we are applying the law in all its severity and great improvement has been noted in the customer service. By the end of this year, we will be having about 375,000 vehicles on our roads and this means that there has been an average increase of 4.5 percent. Every year, 15,000 new vehicles are coming on our roads and yearly we have got 35,000 transfers of ownership of vehicles. Database of registered vehicles has been computerised and this has enabled us to register new and second-hand vehicles and issue registration books on the same day. Renewal of motor vehicle licences are not done at the Head Office only as now we have decentralised the system. Actually there are 56 post offices which are providing the service to private cars and motor cycles and by next year, all the 99 post offices will provide those services. Besides, other types of vehicles it is good news for taxis and contract cars as even they will be able to pay their registration duty at all the post offices and they will not have to come to Port Louis and queue for the whole day.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, online services are also being provided for reservation of specific registration marks or for the appointment of examination of vehicles. E-services do not only ease access to services, but render the allocation of specific registration marks more

transparent and avoid any possible malpractice. E-services ensure that a person who first applies for any registration mark is allocated that number in priority.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we have also decided to privatise the motor vehicle examination centres. Actually the examination is undertaken in a very subjective way and the failure is less than two percent, which means that almost all the vehicles which go for examination obtain the road worthiness certificate. Government has taken the decision to set up private examination centres with mandatory requirements for scientific examination of vehicles. Procedures will be transparent and so will be the results. Government will exercise regulatory control on the operation of these centres to ensure that provisions of law are complied with and the interest of vehicle operators is safeguarded. Expression of interest will be launched probably in January.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, regarding the new registration plates, Government has also decided to look into it. Actually, the registration plates on our vehicles are of different colour background and the plates are procured from different suppliers. There are fancy plates as well on our roads. The prescribed letterings are often disregarded. Often fake plates are used to commit crimes and car thefts. The Prime Minister is very much concerned about this and on many occasions he has voiced out his concern in the House. That is why it is high time for us to come forward with new requirements to govern the standard and quality for registration plates. He wants to have more uniformity, improve safety and he wants to bring them in consonance with international standards. We are introducing legislation to licence plate suppliers. The user personalised registration marks is also being considered. But, for that we need to amend the Road Traffic Act and we are working on it.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I cannot forget to mention the National Transport Corporation (NTC). It is the largest bus operator in Mauritius which transports 200,000 commuters daily. It has 548 buses which operate along 79 routes out of which we have 32 routes which are non-commercial which means that we are providing social services where private buses refuse to operate. Mr Speaker, Sir, the fleet of NTC is an ageing one and we are trying to renew it. We are putting up 46 new buses on the roads in the weeks to come. Mr Speaker, Sir, we are trying to solicit assistance to get a soft loan to replace 150 buses. Tough measures are being taken to eliminate wastage and to do away with fraudulent practices at the NTC. We have the workers in our mind and for the welfare of the workers, the Bus Industry Employees Welfare Fund is

providing several types of loan schemes to cater for the welfare of the members and even scholarships are provided to their children.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, another arm of my Ministry is the Shipping sector. The Merchant Shipping Act has been enacted followed by proclamations of three regulations, namely: the Registration of Ships, General Practitioners Regulations and Fees Regulations. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Merchant Shipping Act has been reviewed and amended to make room for piracy, hijacking and other offences. Mauritius has become a party to the Djibouti Convention which deals with the issue of piracy in the region. Additionally, a set of regulations to support the proper implementation and to incorporate the provisions of the IMO has been contracted out to a consultant. Draft regulations have been submitted and my Ministry is reviewing the regulations before submitting these to the SLO for final vetting.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we are a party to the International Convention on Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS). As a contracting State, we have the duty to provide GMDSS services. The GMDSS station at Cassis provides maritime information on weather forecast, dissemination of distress messages, navigational and safety warning to ships prying on our territorial waters and EEZ zones. Such information is very important for the safety of navigation and safety of life at sea. The GMDSS station also helps in event of search and rescue operations at sea. The existing GMDSS equipment is very old and my Ministry is replacing this equipment which is going to cost around Rs18 m. To the high frequency equipment, my Ministry is providing maritime safety information to our local fishing vessels which are fishing in our territorial waters. We are providing long range identification and tracking system for ships. Information such as identity, location, date and time of position of ships wherever they may be, are obtained. This is important, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, for safety and security. A committee has been set up at the level of my Ministry to identify sources of ballast water, compile information, evaluate the volume of such water, advise on national policy for awareness control and the surveillance and management of ballast water. A ballast water corner has been set up at the Rajiv Gandhi Science Centre. The Shipping Division has sought the services of Fisher Associates to prepare a comprehensive strategic plan for our maritime sector. One of the recommendations relates to the development of registry of shipping. Our ship registry needs to be promoted to attract foreign ship owners to register under the Mauritian flag.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Mauritius Maritime Training Academy undertakes multidisciplinary courses for seafarers and other personnel working in the shipping industry. Many courses are being organised to enable those trained to secure employment easily in Mauritius and abroad. The academy in collaboration with the Ministry of Tourism will run a basic safety course for 500 catering staff to work on board cruise vessels.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Mauritius Shipping Corporation Ltd. has been fulfilling the Government's social responsibilities towards Rodrigues and its inhabitants. Operations of Shipping Corporation Ltd. on Rodrigues route are cross subsidised by a surplus generated from operations on Reunion Island and Madagascar. Due to the sharp decline on its profitability, Government has been advancing loans for its sustainability.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the last issue of my Ministry concerns the Traffic Management and Road Safety Unit. Installation of traffic signal equipment, signalised pedestrian crossings throughout the country – to lower energy consumption, traffic lights have been replaced by LED aspects. We get several advantages like low maintenance cost, prolonged design life, better visibility, high light intensity. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, additional speed cameras are being fixed throughout the country. We have two types of cameras; fixed and mobile. I would request hon. Members to be a bit careful while driving either in day time or at night because we have about two dozen cameras. So, please be careful. Probably towards the end of December, most of them will already be installed. For the safety of two wheelers, road safety and enforcement campaigns are being conducted, sensitisation campaigns on visibility jackets and the wearing of helmets are also on. We are also conducting many campaigns on drink and drive. Road education programme, sensitisation campaign for senior citizens in recreational centres, senior citizens clubs and over 100 road safety sessions are being held. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we are also trying to amend the Road Traffic Act in order to provide the penalty point system which is very important and I do believe that probably towards the beginning of next year we will be ready with that amendment. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, my Ministry is really concerned with a series of work and I personally believe that with the limited number of officers, architects, engineers, quantity surveyors and technical officers, we have really been able to do a satisfactory job.

I take this opportunity to thank, congratulate and support all the technicians of my Ministry, the Private Parliamentary Secretaries and the different departments of the Government,

including my colleagues, Ministers and Members of Parliament. At the same time, I would like to thank the Members of the Opposition, because time and again, through questions, we also get much information wherever we need to do some patching works. This is the reason why I take this opportunity to thank them. Once again, I would like to express my gratitude to the hon. Prime Minister, who has given us the responsibility to do our work, and the hon. Minister of Finance for providing the finance for the implementation of these works.

Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

The vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Social Integration and Economic Empowerment (Mr X. L. Duval): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I move that the debate be now adjourned.

Mr Bachoo rose and seconded.

Question put and agreed to.

Debate adjourned accordingly.

ADJOURNMENT

The Deputy Prime Minister: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that this Assembly do now adjourn to Tuesday 07 December 2010 at 11.30 a.m.

The vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Social Integration and Economic Empowerment (Mr X. L. Duval) rose and seconded.

The Deputy Speaker: The House stands adjourned. Hon. Mrs Navarre-Marie!

MATTERS RAISED

MRS FLEURETTE MARINE – LIVING CONDITIONS

Mrs A. Navarre-Marie (First Member for GRNW & Port Louis West): Merci, M. le président, de me permettre d'attirer l'attention de la Chambre sur un cas qui est sur les lèvres de tous les mauriciens depuis quelques jours. Il s'agit du cas de Mme Fleurette qui habite à Pailles, sur un terrain vague, avec ses enfants. Donc, Mme Fleurette Marine vit depuis quelque temps autour d'un arbre, sur un terrain vague à Pailles. Elle vit dans cet abri de fortune avec ses deux

enfants, une fille et un garçon âgés respectivement de 13 et 12 ans. Les vêtements sont emballés dans des sacs en plastique, et vous devinez qu'à chaque intempérie, dès qu'il pleut, ils ont beaucoup de problèmes. Cette mère de famille a apparemment tenté d'attirer l'attention des autorités sur son sort mais, jusqu'ici, rien n'a été fait. C'est pourquoi je fais un pressant appel au gouvernement en général, et en particulier au ministre de l'intégration sociale, pour qu'une décision soit prise, afin que cette famille puisse trouver un abri décent. Apparemment, les enfants sont livrés à eux-mêmes. La mère qui souffre de diabète, laisse les enfants errer dans les rues de Pailles, à la merci d'individus peu recommandables. Ces enfants sont à risque, de même que leur maman. A ce matin, la situation n'avait pas évolué. Donc, je fais encore une fois un pressant appel au gouvernement, en particulier au ministre de l'intégration sociale, pour que le nécessaire soit fait pour cette famille.

Merci, M. le président.

The vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Social Integration and Economic Empowerment (Mr X. L. Duval): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we will look into the matter, and try to help the lady.

At 9.02 p.m. the Assembly was, on its rising, adjourned to Tuesday 07 December 2010 at 11.30 a.m.