

No. 28 of 2010



FIFTH NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

PARLIAMENTARY

DEBATES

(HANSARD)

FIRST SESSION

TUESDAY 14 DECEMBER 2010

CONTENTS

PAPERS LAID

QUESTIONS (ORAL)

MOTION

BILLS (*Public*)

ADJOURNMENT

QUESTIONS (WRITTEN)

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

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

Members

Members

PRINCIPAL OFFICERS AND OFFICIALS

Mr Speaker

Purryag, Hon. Rajkeswur, GCSK, GOSK

Deputy Speaker

Roopun, Hon. Prithvirajsing

Deputy Chairman of Committees

Hossen, Hon. Abdullah Hafeez

Clerk of the National Assembly

Dowlutta, Mr R. Ranjit

Deputy Clerk

Lotun, Mrs B. Safeena

Clerk Assistant

Ramchurn, Ms Urmeelah Devi

Chief Hansard Reporter and

Lam Shu On, Ms Clivie

Sub-Editor

Senior Library Officer

Pallen, Mr Noël

Serjeant-at-Arms

Munroop, Mr Kishore

MAURITIUS

Fifth National Assembly

FIRST SESSION

Debate No. 28 of 2010

Sitting of Tuesday 14 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)

PAPERS LAID

The Prime Minister: Sir, the Papers have been laid on the Table –

A. Prime Minister's Office –

Certificate of Urgency in respect of following Bills –

- (a) The Finance (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill (No. XX of 2010), and
- (b) The Additional Remuneration (2011) Bill (No. XXI of 2010).

B. Ministry of Agro Industry and Food Security –

- (a) The Annual Reports and Accounts of the Tobacco Board for the year ended 30 June 2009.
- (b) The Annual Reports and Accounts of the Small Planters Mechanical Pool Corporation for the years 2007/2008 and 2008/2009.

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

METRO LEGER PROJECT

The Leader of the Opposition (Mr P. Bérenger) (*By Private Notice*), asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to the *métro léger* project, he will state if -

- (a) the study on the financial aspects has been completed, indicating the updated estimated cost and the financing option proposed;
- (b) a feasibility study will now be carried out, and
- (c) bids have been received and if so, give details thereof, indicating whether there is a proposal for a layout along the Curepipe-Réduit-Port Louis motorway.

The Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping (Mr A. Bachoo): Mr Speaker Sir, I wish to inform the House that the subject of *métro léger* has been extensively discussed within this august Assembly time and again and the latest being the PNQ dated 03 August of this year. Since this issue has again been subject to a PNQ, I wish to reiterate that this Government has already taken the decision to go ahead with *métro léger*.

Following the official visit of the Prime Minister to Singapore in September last where he visited the LRT system, he engaged discussions with the Singaporean institutions including Singapore Cooperation Enterprise (SCE) to implement the LRT system in Mauritius.

Mr Speaker Sir, I wish to emphasise that Singapore Cooperation Enterprise was set up by the Ministry of Trade and Industry and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Singapore to have an agency to respond effectively to many foreign requests to tap on Singapore's development experience. The SCE works closely with Singapore public agencies and taps on the wealth of expertise of the public and private sector where relevant.

Subsequently, a Steering Committee chaired by the Secretary to Cabinet and Head of Civil Service has been set up and its first meeting was held on 07 October 2010.

The Steering Committee prepared a proposal to seek technical assistance for the implementation of the LRT system, which was forwarded to the Singapore Cooperation

Enterprise. The SCE enlisted the Singapore Mass Rapid Transit (SMRT) to provide the necessary technical expertise.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I wish to inform the House that extensive discussions have taken place between the SMRT and the Steering Committee. SMRT has agreed to provide assistance for the preparation of a Request for Proposal for the implementation of the LRT system

In the light of the above, Mr Speaker, Sir, it is abundantly clear that this Government means business and the approach being adopted is a proactive one focusing on implementation rather than any further studies. We are seeking from Singapore assistance to enable us to find the right operator through a transparent process.

Mr Speaker, Sir, with regard to part (a) of the question, I wish to inform the House that all existing reports have already been forwarded to SMRT to enable the latter to make a proper assessment of the financial and technical aspects, including alignments. Conference calls were held with the Singapore counterparts and it has been agreed that SMRT would also look into bankability of the project including operation risks, financing risks, technical risks as well as any subsidy element required to make the system affordable, sustainable and viable. SMRT has agreed to work out the updated estimated cost. All financing options would be explored including Public Private Partnership mode and other development partners. SMRT has confirmed that the above elements would be provided within four months.

Mr Speaker, Sir, as regards part (b) of the question, we have already indicated that no further feasibility studies would be undertaken as on the basis of existing reports and studies and involvement of SMRT, we are embarking on the implementation of the LRT system. This is why we are focusing on preparation of a RFP document for the selection of a developer.

Mr Speaker, Sir, as regards part (c) of the question, no bids have so far been received as tenders have not been launched. I wish to add that the LRT alignment is not restricted along the ex-railway track from Port-Louis to Curepipe. SMRT has been requested to study extension possibilities which may exist in the surrounding regions including new urban developments.

Mr Bérenger: Mr Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister himself made reference to my PNQ of 03 August, but it is in that PNQ that he replied -

“Actually the financial aspect is being studied by the Ministry of Finance.”

I take it that this is on hold pending discussions with the job to be done by Singapore Authorities.

Mr Bachoo: The findings of the financial implications were submitted to SMRT. This was for our internal consumption. Now, the SMRT has taken over and we are trying to give them all types of support.

Mr Bérenger: On the same day, on 03 August therefore, replying to a PNQ, the hon. Minister was quite categorical that things would be finalised in the near future, as early as possible, and he even went so far as to say in the weeks to come, things will be wrapped up. Can we have some kind of time frame now?

Mr Bachoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, the reason why I am happy that the hon. Leader of the Opposition has asked this question is because from August to December is not a long time in the history of a country. Within a few months, we have already gone much ahead with the project of the LRT and that is the reason why I would request him to bear with us, because now the ball is in the court of the SMRT and they are also trying to precipitate. Not later than yesterday, there was a conference call for half a day with the technicians of our country and the SMRT. They are trying to work as fast as is possible.

Mr Bérenger: On the same occasion, Mr Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister told us, therefore - on 3 August, replying to the same PNQ - that the estimated cost of the *métro léger* project had moved from Rs6 billion in 2001 to between Rs10 billion and Rs15 billion a few months ago. Does he have any further estimate or guess estimate?

Mr Bachoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, in fact, we have requested the SMRT to have a look at the economic analysis for the implementation of the project. In fact, they are working on that. As far as I have mentioned, we have submitted all the reports to them. We hope in the near future we are going to have an idea of how much it is going to cost us.

Mr Bérenger: I am sure the hon. Minister is aware of why I asked whether a feasibility study would be now carried out. It is because the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, replying to a PQ on 30 November, had said in the House - and it is on record - that there must be a feasibility study. I am quoting verbatim in my case -

“There must be a feasibility that will be undertaken.”

I understand that this is behind us and there will be no further feasibility study.

Mr Bachoo: In fact, I have mentioned it should not be any other type of feasibility but rather an economic feasibility has to be conducted. This is what they are busy doing. But as far as the feasibility in terms of the structure and all, that can't be undertaken because we have got plenty of feasibility studies conducted in the past.

Mr Bérenger: The hon. Prime Minister visited Singapore. From what I read, he was impressed and we have now a team from Singapore to advise us on this very important *métro léger*. Can I ask the hon. Minister whether he has discussed with the hon. Prime Minister and whether he has looked into what is in place in Singapore? If you will allow me, we are after a *métro léger*. In French, they call it tramway whereas in Singapore, my information is what there is in Singapore is, on the one hand, a full-fledged *métro* which we do not have in mind at all and then what they call a light rail transit, small vehicles on rubber wheels that are used to bring in passengers from three different housing estates. We fall in between. We are not going for a full *métro*, a full heavy *métro*, classical *métro*, is out, it is underground, it is something different. This very light rail transit system that prevails in Singapore is also out. We are looking for something in-between. Can I know why we have turned to Singapore? I am not saying they are not qualified to advise us. But of all places, we have landed in the place where we cannot find the *métro léger*, the light rail transit system that we should be aiming at.

Mr Bachoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, let me, first of all, thank our Prime Minister. He went, he saw and he brought something for the country. For that we are *redevable envers lui*. Secondly, when the hon. Leader of the Opposition is talking in terms of the exiting light rail, that is, the feeder system, and then we have got the bigger one. If I am not mistaken, the hon. Prime Minister is in favour of a modern one, of a midway between the two, that is, whatever is being used through the world, neither the small one nor the biggest one, but rather one which can be adaptable with the conditions of our country.

Mr Bérenger: Yes, this is my point. We have landed in the place where what interests us does not exist there whereas, as the hon. Minister knows, there are other companies that are perfectly equipped to advise us or to provide us with the kind of *métro léger*, modern tramway that we have in mind. Why did we end up with Singapore where what prevails is of no real interest to us?

Mr Bachoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, the reason is simple. As I have just mentioned, they have got the expertise. We have submitted to them all our documents and, definitely, we are going to advise them also on what mode we are going to require in our country. But I can't tell you that they are going to stick themselves to the two systems that are involved, because they are well-known experts and they are providing support and services to other countries also.

Mr Bérenger: I want to raise strong doubts. The hon. Prime Minister has been impressed; he speaks from the body language I witnessed a few minutes ago. It seems that he was impressed, especially by the *métro* – full-fledged *métro* – being given that the light rail on wheels, I don't think it has been of interest to him. He went there, he travelled on the *métro*. I still think we should not have gone to a country that has its own choice and now it is going to advise us. Well, as I said, there are big vested interests in that business. It is billions and billions of rupees. So, why did we go to a country where, as I said, what prevails there is of no interest to us?

Mr Bachoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, I have just mentioned that, in fact –

- (i) we have to go fast;
- (ii) we wanted a modern system;
- (iii) the Prime Minister's official visit was there.

At the same time, all of us know the way things are done in Singapore, they are so cost-effective and they mean business. That is one of the reasons. Secondly, I have already mentioned that based on our economic analysis, the best options would be adopted. Even in our country, we have got good experts. So many years, we have been talking about *métro léger* and we have learnt extensively and we have known about *metro léger*. I think the best choice would be made together with experts of Singapore.

Mr Bérenger: Are the Singapore authorities going to advise us also on the kind of equipment that we should turn to?

Mr Bachoo: This is what I have been made to understand, because they are looking at all the aspects and we depend upon them for all types of advice and support that they can give us.

Mr Bérenger: I heard the hon. Minister saying that requests for proposals are now going to be prepared and issued. Can I know who is going to prepare those requests for proposals?

(Interruptions)

They are going faster than the *metro léger*! Can I know who is going to prepare the requests for proposals and roughly within what timeframe it should be issued?

Mr Bachoo: It is the SMRT that is going to prepare the requests for proposals. That's why we have solicited their support and, if I am not mistaken, they have given a time limit of about four months. The papers will be prepared for requests for proposals there are other things which need to be done before launching of the tender.

Mr Bérenger: Can I know whether, as in the past, the World Bank is going to be on board as far as the work done by the Singapore authority, the advice and the way we move forward is concerned?

Mr Bachoo: In fact, all along the World Bank had been kept informed of what we have been doing, starting from the mass transit to the bus way. Up till now, we have been keeping the World Bank informed of all our actions that we are doing.

Mr Bérenger: I was going to put a question which has been answered, but I still say why I was going to put it. I had the impression that Government was still hesitating. For example, in the Budget Speech, instead of mentioning 'light rail transit system' on that occasion and other occasions, what was mentioned was 'rapid transit system', giving the impression that we were still open-minded, whether it would be a light rail transit system or a bus rapid transit system which had been considered. Today, it has been confirmed that Government has definitely decided to go ahead with the *métro léger* project and that within the shortest time frame possible.

Mr Bachoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, in fact, when mention was made by the Minister of Finance about the mass transit system, by that time the technology was not yet known and that is the reason which explained that he has made use of the words 'mass transit'. But I can assure the House that the decision had been taken by Government and we are going ahead.

Mr Bérenger: Does the Minister mean that the point was clarified, that we have finally opted for the light transit system...

(Interruptions)

Non?

Mr Bachoo: I have just mentioned that concerning this type of technology, there are so many. The Leader of the Opposition himself mentioned that we have got the bigger one, the smaller one, the middle one. Then, we should know which type we have to accept....

(Interruptions)

That's why he has mentioned that.

Mr Bérenger: The Minister has not understood anything! What prevails in Singapore is not different technologies, it is a heavy rapid rail and a light rail rapid, whereas when you leave it open, when you talk of a rapid transit system, it might possibly be the buses which the Minister loves so much until recently. Now, I take it that, it is absolutely clear that we are going for the *métro léger* project.

Mr Bachoo: I have already answered this, Sir, and I again maintained that we are going fast and we are going for the best possible system.

Mr Speaker: There is no need for the hon. Minister to maintain every time 'fast, fast, fast'. The question is clear: whether it is a light *métro* - I don't know the technology.

Mr Bhagwan: From the reply given by the hon. Minister, are we to understand that there would be a change in the alignment, *le trajet va être changé*, there would be intra urban added to the Curepipe/Port Louis corridor?

Mr Bachoo: I have just mentioned that we have got other developments going on in the country, we are not maintaining the same trend. There can be a slight deviation. It all depends on whatever advice is being tendered to us, but we have to cater for the needs of the maximum number of people.

Mr Bhagwan: I have a supplementary, Sir. There was an initial alignment. Can the hon. Minister give the guarantee to the House that there has not been any encroachment on the State land? There was a policy decision on the alignment that no building, no lease of land would occur. Can the hon. Minister give a guarantee to the House that there won't be any encroachment to the existing layout set up?

Mr Bachoo: In fact, I mentioned last time that there have been encroachments. There is a committee under Dr. Reesaul who is looking at all these encroachments and they are going to take action wherever it is required. There are 14 buildings that need to be pulled down in the Quatre Bornes area. The Ministry of Housing and Lands is actually carrying out a survey on that particular region. There are other encroachments also which have taken place. In fact, we are taking action against them.

Mr Lesjongard: Mr Speaker, Sir, since the hon. Minister has stated that SMRT will prepare the requests for proposals for the LRT, can I ask the hon. Minister what will be the

contribution of local expertise with regard to the preparation of the FRP, since they have done a lot of ground work?

Mr Bachoo: As I have just mentioned, there was a conference yesterday between the two groups and for half a day they had discussions. The officials are also coming to Mauritius and the local team of our country will definitely cooperate with them and extend to them all types of advice and support that they require.

Mr Bhagwan: Can the hon. Minister inform the House whether in the brief sent to the Singapore Consultant, the project would be an eco-friendly project for the protection of the environment and that in the context of the *Maurice Ile Durable*?

Mr Bachoo: The answer is in the positive.

Mr Bérenger: As the hon. Minister knows, when we worked on the *métro léger* project between 2000 and 2005 with the World Bank, it developed into something much more than just an infrastructure project, it became a huge commercial project, a huge urban project - no longer an infrastructure project only.

I did not get the reply of the hon. Minister, whether consideration is being taken for a layout along the Curepipe-Réduit-Port Louis motorway. If we are considering that, I consider it a waste of time if we won't have the catchment areas that we need and that we had in mind when we follow the old railway lines.

Can I ask the hon. Minister, this suggestion of a layout along the Curepipe-Réduit-Port Louis motorway, is it under consideration?

Mr Bachoo: We have made the suggestions and recommendations, Mr Speaker, Sir, because I have to admit that what the hon. Member is saying even, on this side of the House, we are agreeable to this, that we have to make slight deviations in order to rope in as many people as possible; I have mentioned that.

Mr Speaker: Time is over! Questions addressed to the hon. Prime Minister! Hon. Fakeemeeah!

**SECRETARY TO CABINET & HEAD OF THE CIVIL SERVICE –BOARDS -
FEES**

(No. 1B/745) Mr C. Fakeemeeah (Third Member for Port Louis Maritime and Port Louis East) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communication whether, in regard to the Secretary to Cabinet and Head of the Civil Service, he will state the Boards of the parastatal bodies and/or of Government-owned companies on which he sits, indicating in each case –

- (a) in which capacity;
- (b) the fees to which he is entitled, and
- (c) since when.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, the Secretary to Cabinet and Head of the Civil Service, as has always been the practice, is designated to sit on the Boards of several Public Institutions. The remuneration payable to the Directors of these institutions is according to their respective internal policies of those institutions, except for those which are governed by the PRB.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I would like to point out the fact that the Secretary to Cabinet and Head of the Civil Service also chairs several standing and other ad hoc Committees for which he is not remunerated.

Mr Fakeemeeah: Mr Speaker, Sir, can the hon. Prime Minister inform the House the normal working hours of the Secretary to Cabinet and Head of the Civil Service?

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order, please!

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I must tell the hon. Member that there are no normal working hours for the Secretary to Cabinet and Head of the Civil Service.

Mr Fakeemeeah: Mr Speaker, Sir, I would like to know the time and days the Secretary to Cabinet and Head of the Civil Service attends the various committees of which he is a member.

Mr Speaker: The Prime Minister has explained in his answer that the Secretary to Cabinet and Head of the Civil Service has got a lot of responsibilities and assignments, and the

committees he sits on are not held at fixed dates or times and, therefore, it will be impossible for the Prime Minister to give the dates to the hon. Member. Next Question, hon. Uteem!

PORT & AIRPORT - DRUGS SEIZURE

(No. IB/746) Mr R. Uteem (Second Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether in regard to drug trafficking, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to the amount of drugs seized, since July 2005 to date, at the -

- (a) Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam International Airport, and
- (b) Port, indicating in each case, the –
 - (i) market value, and
 - (ii) type thereof.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, in regard to parts (a) and (b) of the Question, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that from July 2005 to 09 December 2010, 52 cases of drug trafficking were established at the Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam International Airport and 13 at the Port.

During the period July 2005 to 09 December 2010, drugs of a total value of Rs605,453,589 were seized at the Airport and the Port, this compared to Rs290,303,805 during the period 2000 to June 2005.

The information requested by the hon. Member is as follows -

- (i) At Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam International Airport -

TYPE OF DRUG	QUANTITY OF DRUG SEIZED	APPROXIMATE STREET VALUE (RS)
Heroin	41.01 Kg	410,138,200
Hashish	0.05 Kg	80,000
Cannabis	0.98 Kg	293,923

Cocaine	2.17 Kg	21,670,000
Buprenorphine (subutex)	86,708 tablets	86,708,000
Sedatives	225 tablets	22,500

(ii) At Port -

TYPE OF DRUG	QUANTITY OF DRUG SEIZED	APPROXIMATE STREET VALUE (RS)
Heroin	4.62 Kg	46,160,000
Hashish	24.24 Kg	36,358,200
Cannabis	12.01 Kg	3,602,766
Buprenorphine (subutex)	420 tablets	420,000

Mr Speaker, Sir, the total value of drugs seized shows clearly the effectiveness of the Police in tracking down drug trafficking and this is the result of the introduction of new measures that we have implemented.

Mr Uteem: Mr Speaker, Sir, despite all the measures that have been announced, we still have a high incidence of drugs entering the country by the port or the airport. Will the hon. Prime Minister inform the House whether there is going to be new equipments to be purchased and an increase in the Police Force to combat drugs in the port and airport area?

The Prime Minister: I believe this is the result of the new measures that we have introduced, Mr Speaker, Sir. We have reinforced, for example, surveillance at the airport and at the port including CCTV cameras. We are now making sure that those cameras are properly fixed. Once in the past, we have heard that cameras were not properly fixed. We have also invested and we are continuing to invest on the acquisition of new equipment, that, we are

continuing to do. I don't know whether I should mention the equipment that we are using, but there are very new equipments that we are introducing.

Mr Uteem: Here, we are talking about cross border importation of drugs. May I know from the hon. Prime Minister how many requests for assistance, if any, have in the past five years been made by Mauritius to countries from where we suspect the drugs are coming?

The Prime Minister: In fact, we have a lot of information. This is what is helping us also. For example, I can tell the hon. Member that we have information on every person who is travelling by plane and is coming to Mauritius. If they come into the bracket of persons who have had problems before, they are closely monitored when they come. Their luggage is automatically looked at properly. Sometimes we know that they use different tricks. I don't need to go into this, but 'x' comes on one plane, 'y' comes on the other plane. That also we are well aware of and actually we are sharing a lot of information with different agencies, including Interpol.

Mr Bérenger: The Prime Minister has given us the figures and he has interpreted those figures as meaning that the Police is better at catching drug traffickers. Has he had the occasion to discuss with the Commissioner of Police whether this is the explanation or whether more drugs are being imported in the country?

The Prime Minister: I have discussed with the Commissioner of Police. He is quite convinced that this is the result of additional measures that we have taken. We have taken a lot of measures. I am not sure whether I should enumerate those measures here because these drug traffickers would be aware of it, but believe me there are lots and lots of new measures that we have taken, including very sophisticated equipment.

Mr Fakeemeeah: Mr Speaker, Sir, will Government see to it that there is a live broadcasting of the destruction of drugs seized for transparency? People are waiting for it.

The Prime Minister: I will pass this on to the Commissioner of Police. I don't see any reason why not. I think this has been done in the past as far as I remember, but the hon. Member is right to say that. I don't think it has been done recently. Maybe we should look at this.

Mr Bhagwan: From what happened last year, the Prime Minister gave the assurance to the House that there would be more control over people having access to VIP lounges. Can the

hon. Prime Minister inform us whether more necessary steps are taken to have a review of that policy to have more stringent conditions and better check-ups on suitcases and so on?

The Prime Minister: In fact, we have taken those measures and this is constantly under review. We have also changed the access to VIP. I know some Members have even complained, we have to do one or the other, but this is constantly under review.

Mr François: Mr Speaker, Sir, will the hon. Prime Minister consider of reinforcing control at the port and airport of Port Mathurin and Plaine Corail? It seems that not much is being done; I travel mostly every week and there is not being much done in terms of control.

The Prime Minister: This also we are looking at, Mr Speaker, Sir, but we have to do what we have within our means. We are doing that also. Maybe we should look at it in a fresh way.

Mr Fakeemeeah: Mr Speaker, Sir, we have had the case of a South African lady saying that she was used to fool the ADSU with a small amount of drugs while another person carrying a bigger amount of drugs was entering the country. Has this been enquired into?

The Prime Minister: In fact, this is a case that is still under enquiry. What she said has been taken as a statement. I know the enquiry is still going on in this case.

ELAHEE, LATE MR MOHAMMAD ANWAR - TRIBUTE

(No. IB/747) Mr A. Ameer Meea (First Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether he will state if Government will consider honouring the memory of late Mr Mamade Elahee.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, let me at the very outset pay tribute to late Mr Mohammad Anwar Elahee, an exemplary figure, who devoted over sixty years of his professional life to football.

Late Mr Elahee who passed away on Friday 26 November of this year at the age of 81 was a legend in the football history of Mauritius. We all know that he had at heart the advancement of football above everything else.

In recognition of his immense contribution to the field of football, late Mr Elahee earned awards both on the local and the international fronts. He was made a Member of the British Empire in 1970 and a Member of the Star and Key of the Indian Ocean in 1997.

His outstanding performance as a player, a coach and an adviser should be a source of inspiration and should serve as a model for our present and future generations. Let me again therefore inform the House that a football ground already exists at Cité Martial bearing the name of late Mr Mamade Elahee since 1974.

I am informed by the Ministry of Youth and Sports that the Mauritius Football Association has already decided to name the Memorial Hall of the Mauritius Football Association House at Trianon as the Mamade Elahee Memorial Hall.

I am also informed by the Ministry of Youth and Sports that a posthumous award will be conferred upon him at the National Sports Award ceremony scheduled for 20 December 2010 in recognition for his contribution to football in Mauritius.

And let me, Mr Speaker, Sir, once again, seize this opportunity to convey my sincere condolences to the bereaved family.

MUNICIPAL AND VILLAGE COUNCILS ELECTIONS – WOMEN - SEATS

(No. 1B/748) Mr S. Obeegadoo (Third Member for Curepipe & Midlands) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in regard to the forthcoming municipal and village councils elections, he will state if Government will consider introducing legislation with a view to guaranteeing one-third of the seats to be held by women.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, it is not proposed to make immediate alterations to the existing Local Government legislation to provide for one-third of the seats to be held by women for the forthcoming Municipal and Village Councils elections. As already announced in the Government Programme 2010-2015, a major review of Local Government legislation will be undertaken in order to better meet the aspirations of the population.

In reply to PQ 1B/627 on 16 November 2010, the hon. Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands informed the House that his Ministry was currently working on a new Local Government Bill which will be introduced into the National Assembly.

In the context of that proposed legislation, and as part of the Government's wider review of the electoral system in Mauritius, consideration will be given to proposals such as that made by the hon. Member. In fact, I hope that he will participate in the consultation process. I invite him to participate in the consultation process because what we want is coherent change, not piecemeal change.

POLICE STATIONS - RENT

(No. 1B/749) Dr. R. Sorefan (Fourth Member for La Caverne & Phoenix) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in regard to the Police Stations, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, a list thereof which are housed in rented buildings, indicating –

- (a) in each case the -
 - (i) rent payable, and
 - (ii) rental period, and
- (b) if it is proposed to put up Government owned buildings for the housing thereof and if not, why not.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, in regard to part (a) of the Question, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that 12 Police stations are housed in buildings rented by the Police Department. I am tabling the information requested by the hon. Member.

In regard to part (b) of the Question, I would like to inform the House that it is the policy of Government to construct its own buildings to house Police stations. Land has already been acquired for the construction of 10 of the Police stations presently located in rented buildings and procedures are ongoing for the purchase of another plot of land for the construction of a Police station at l'Escalier. The Police station housed in the National Pension Fund building at Port-Louis will remain in its present location. The projects are at different stages of implementation and construction of two of these Police stations is expected to start in early next year.

Dr. Sorefan: Mr Speaker, Sir, can I ask the hon. Prime Minister whether rental fees are being reviewed, and if so, the frequency thereof?

The Prime Minister: That is an administrative procedure which they do whenever it needs to be done.

AIR MAURITIUS LTD - HEDGING LOSSES

(No. 1B/750) Mr A. Ganoo (First Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in regard to the hedging exercise and the financial situation of Air Mauritius Ltd., he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the company, information as to the amount of hedging losses which has been borne by the company as at to date, indicating if any such losses still need to be borne by the company.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I would invite the hon. Member to refer to the reply which I made to PQ 1B/646 regarding the status of Air Mauritius Ltd. I reiterate that Air Mauritius Ltd. is a public company listed on the stock exchange and it is governed by the Constitution and Articles of Association as well as the Listing Rules of the stock exchange.

The nature of the information being asked is considered as privileged information. Such information as requested by the hon. Member can only be released to the Board of the company.

Mr Ganoo: Can I ask the hon. Prime Minister that, even on these hedging exercises, precise answers had been given in the past on two occasions by hon. Minister Duval who was then Minister of Tourism?

The Prime Minister: Let me just reassure the hon. Member if he wants really because Government is the major shareholder. I can tell that now this hedging business is behind us. We have nothing to pay for those hedging.

(PQ Nos. 1B/751 & 1B/752 – See ‘Written Answers to Questions’)

CIGARETTES - RETAIL SALE

(No. 1B/753) Ms S. Anquetil (Fourth Member for Vacoas & Floreal) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether he is aware that cigarettes are sold at retail in some shops in spite of regulations prohibiting same and if so, will he, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to the measures that will be taken to ensure that the regulations are complied with.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that since the coming into operation of the Public Health (Restrictions on Tobacco Products) Regulations 2008, the Police carry out regular surprise checks at shops to prevent the selling of cigarettes by retail. Since 01 June 2009 up to 09 December 2010, 16,061 such checks have been carried out and eight cases of “selling cigarettes other than in a package which contains 20 cigarettes” have been established by the Police.

The Police are also working together with the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life for the enforcement of the Regulations. An Enforcement Protocol has already been devised, and provides measures to ensure a consistent and standard approach by the Police and the Health Inspectorate Division. In this respect, 300 Enforcement Officers comprising Police Officers, Health Inspectors of the Ministry of Health and Health Inspectors from the Local Authorities have been trained in August and September 2010 on the Enforcement Protocol.

I would also like to inform the House that an Enforcement Committee has been set up at the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life which includes representatives of the Police, who receive complaints from the public, NGOs and the Civil Society. These complaints are directed to the Police and the Health Officers for necessary action.

As I said, there are also Health Inspectors who carry out checks, they have carried out some 7,200 inspections in shops and 11 contraventions have been established.

Ms Anquetil: I thank the hon. Prime Minister for his answer. There is considerable evidence that young people under 18 years old have little difficulty to buy cigarettes at retail. Most of them are regular smokers and buy their own cigarettes. Can the hon. Prime Minister inform the House if he will consider the use of identity cards as proof of age cards for purchasing cigarettes?

The Prime Minister: The problem, Mr Speaker, Sir, is to get the evidence. I see that the hon. Member that there is evidence, but we must be able to establish actually a case of selling cigarettes by retail and the Police should be able to catch the person selling cigarettes to the young person or somebody to report. But, maybe we should look at this ID card.

GOVERNMENT HOUSE POLICE POST - POLICE OFFICERS - ALLOWANCE

(No. 1B/754) **Dr. R. Sorefan (Fourth Member for La Caverne & Phoenix)** asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in regard to the Government House Police Post, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to the number of Police Officers presently posted thereat, indicating -

- (a) the number thereof in each grade, and
- (b) if they are paid any allowance for work performed during the sittings of the National Assembly.

The Prime Minister: Mr. Speaker, Sir, security and policing at the Government House are maintained round the clock by personnel of the Government House Police Post as laid down in Police Standing Order No. 83. Postings and transfers in the Police Department are the prerogative of the Commissioner of Police, who in the exercise of his duty, is governed by the interest and exigencies of the service.

In regard to part (a) of the Question, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that 86 Police Officers are presently posted at Government House Police Post and the number in each grade is as follows -

- 1 Chief Inspector;
- 4 Police Sergeants;
- 15 Corporals, and
- 66 Police Constables.

As regards to part (b) of the Question, I am informed that the Chief Inspector performing the duties of Sergeant at Arms at the National Assembly is paid a monthly allowance in accordance with the recommendations of the Pay Research Bureau (PRB) Report 2008. Other Police Officers posted at the Government House Police Post and who serve at the National Assembly work on a shift system. Therefore, the question of payment of allowance does not arise.

Dr. Sorefan: May we know from the hon. Prime Minister how many vacant posts we have got here?

The Prime Minister: I am not aware that there are any, but these are administrative affairs, Mr Speaker, Sir. I did explain that it depends on the exigencies of the service of the Police. As you know, there is a whole new audit being done of the human resource management of the Police which, I believe, is ready now.

**CENTRAL PROCUREMENT BOARD, PROCUREMENT POLICY OFFICE &
INDEPENDENT REVIEW PANEL - MEMBERS**

(No. 1B/767) Mr G. Lesjongard (Second Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue) asked the vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to each of the members of the Central Procurement Board, the Procurement Policy Office and the Independent Review Panel, he will state if -

- (a) their term of office has come to an end and if so, if same has been renewed, and
- (b) bids were opened during the beginning of November 2010 and if not, why not.

The Prime Minister: Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. With regard to part (a) of the question, the answer is in the affirmative. However, I must say that it has not been deemed appropriate to renew the membership of the bodies concerned at this juncture, given that in a very near future, major amendments will be brought to the Public Procurement Act that will most likely impact on their structure, role and functions.

Mr Speaker, Sir, as announced in the Government Programme 2010-2015, Government will continue to empower Ministries and Departments by improving their capacity to implement capital projects and delivery of services. In this regard, the public procurement system will be further reviewed, modernised and decentralised. In this context, a Review Committee was set up by Government in July of last year to propose changes that need to be brought to our public procurement legislation, especially in the light of the assessment of our public procurement system undertaken by COMESA and the World Bank, so that it can be used on projects funded by the World Bank and other funding agencies. The Committee is expected to submit its recommendations very shortly. I shall also add that there was one person from the World Bank

who had come and met myself and other people and the hon. vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Finance to finalise what we are doing for the funding of the procurement system.

In his last Budget Speech, the vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Finance has also reaffirmed Government's intention to bring changes in our public procurement legislation, so basically we want to speed up implementation of Government projects, while of course, having transparency, otherwise we will open up to all sorts of things.

Pending these changes in the procurement law, the members of the Central Procurement Board, Procurement Policy Office and the Independent Review Panel are continuing in office pursuant to section 31(3) of the Interpretation and General Clauses Act.

Regarding part (b) of the question, the answer is in the affirmative.

Mr Lesjongard: May I ask the hon. Prime Minister, whether the Chairperson is still attending Board meetings and regular meetings at the Procurement Office.

The Prime Minister: My attention has been drawn to the fact that he hasn't been attending meeting recently. We are finding out why. Maybe he wants to move on. I am not sure what the reason is, but if that is the case, we will of course, replace him.

LA CROISEE, GLEN PARK - TRAFFIC LIGHTS

(No. 1B/755) Mr J. Seetaram (Second Member for Montagne Blanche & GRSE) asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping whether he is aware that the present traffic lights found at La Croisée, Glen Park, provide for only three of the five roads that emerge on this junction and if so, will he state if consideration will be given for the review of the traffic lights system thereat to cater for all the five roads.

Mr Bachoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the TMRSU that the traffic lights at La Croisée, Glen Park cater for only the main road namely La Marie – Candos Road and the secondary road, Henrietta Branch Road. The other three roads emerging at the junction which are minor roads have not been signalised because they conduct light traffic and giving additional phases to them will cause major traffic delay in respect of the timings for the main and secondary roads. Moreover, two of these minor roads are dead end roads.

I have nevertheless, requested TMRSU to examine the cross road, especially the minor roads and come up with necessary measures to enhance road safety.

Mr Seetaram: Mr Speaker, Sir, concerning the minor roads; we have a road which comes from Beau Songe to Hollyrood and then proceeds towards Curepipe. This road is quite busy during the morning. Will the hon. Minister consider giving attention to that road because during peak hours, mostly around 9 a.m, it does create traffic congestion? Could the hon. Minister give a consideration to that road?

Mr Bachoo: As I have mentioned, I have requested the technicians of TMRSU to have a proper look at it and to come forward with certain propositions.

CITADEL - HEALTH TRACK

(No. 1B/756) Mr A. Hossen (Third Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central) asked the Minister of Tourism and Leisure whether, in regard to the construction of a health track, a social component of the Citadel, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Tourism Authority, information as to where matters stand, indicating the –

- (a) amount earmarked, and

- (b) name of the consultant therefor, and
- (c) the start and completion dates thereof.

Mr Bodha: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed that the Tourism Authority has no plan at this stage to construct a health track at the Citadelle. However, my Ministry through the Tourism Fund will be prepared to contribute financially towards any initiative taken by the appropriate authorities and in this respect parts (a), (b) and (c) of the question, therefore do not arise. I am further informed, Mr Speaker, Sir, that the Tourism Authority has been implementing an upgrading and rehabilitation project of the fort. The aim of this project is to restore the fort to its original cache.

M. le président, nous voulons recréer l'atmosphère d'antan. The major works carried so far relate mainly to partitioning, electrical and painting works, renovation of toilet blocks, placing of handrails and waterproofing works.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I am also informed that the Tourism Authority is further collaborating in the project relating to the creation of a native green space at the Citadelle. The project is financed by the UNDP and the Tourism Authority will contribute to the project.

Mr Hossen: I would like to thank the hon. Minister for his answer. Taking into account the proposed use which will be made on a daily basis at the Citadel for hosting certain events and taking into account that, in the past, there have been several protests from people around the Citadel and in the vicinity, can the hon. Minister inform the House of the urgency of the Tourism Authority to look into the social component of the whole project of Citadel?

Mr Bodha: I will, Mr Speaker, Sir. I think it is a very good suggestion and I will work closely with the hon. Member.

MAURITIUS COMMERCIAL BANK LTD – IT SYSTEM

IMPLEMENTATION

(No. 1B/757) Mr K. Seeruttun (Second Member for Vieux Grand Port & Rose Belle) asked the vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether in regard to the Mauritius Commercial Bank Ltd., he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Bank of Mauritius, information as to if the Mauritius Commercial Bank Ltd. has complied with the provisions of the Banking Act regarding its obligations to inform -

- (a) all the authorities and its clients of the implementation of its new IT system and
- (b) the Bank of Mauritius of the problems encountered during the implementation phase and the hardships caused to the clients and if not, the actions that have been initiated against the Mauritius Commercial Bank Ltd., if any.

The vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development (Mr P. Jugnauth): Mr Speaker, Sir, with respect to part (a) of the question, the Bank of Mauritius has informed that it is not a requirement under the Banking Act 2004 for a financial institution to inform any authority and its customers of the implementation of a new IT system. However, as a practice, financial institutions do inform the Central Bank of any major developments in their systems. As early as in the year 2008, the Bank of Mauritius was made aware by the Mauritius Commercial Bank Ltd of its plan to implement a new core banking system, namely, T24. Furthermore, MCB Ltd. had, in a communiqué dated 14 October 2010, on its website, informed its customers that due to planned system maintenance, its services would be impacted with disruptions in the delivery of some internet banking services, ATMs, Cards and Refill services within some specific time periods, on such dates in October 2010. In another communiqué dated 21 October 2010, on its website, the MCB Ltd. expressed its apologies regarding the disruptions in its internet banking services which had inconvenienced its customers.

As regards part (b) of the question, based on information that the migration of the new IT system was causing inconvenience to customers, a report was sought by the Bank of Mauritius on 20 October 2010 from MCB Ltd. Following this communication, the CEO of MCB Ltd called at the Bank of Mauritius to clarify matters. A preliminary report was submitted to the Bank of Mauritius on 26 October 2010. Further clarifications were provided on 04 November 2010. The MCB Ltd. stated that the IT system was, in general, working satisfactorily and that the first month end passed through relatively well. It also mentioned that some problems had, however, been encountered in respect of the processing of bulk payment of salaries for corporate customers and pension payments with the result that delays have occurred in crediting salaries to customers' accounts. MCB Ltd has given the assurance that it is working assiduously to resolve this matter and has informed the Bank of Mauritius that it is in continuous communication with customers through its branches, MCB call centres and its website to respond to questions and resolve issues.

In view of the clarifications provided by MCB Ltd. and the fact that it is not unusual for migration to a new IT system to encounter teething problems initially, the Bank of Mauritius will continue to monitor the situation closely.

Mr Seeruttun: Mr Speaker, Sir, I would like to thank the hon. Minister of Finance for his answer being given that the migration took place on 18 October, until now most of clients and customers of the bank are still unsatisfied with the service being rendered. May I request the hon. Minister to see to it that the Bank of Mauritius ensures that a client of the MCB be charged penalties for lack of funds in the accounts due to late payment of salaries.

Mr Jugnauth: I understand from the Central Bank that there have been complaints by some customers to the Mauritius Commercial Bank, and that these complaints are being attended to. I don't know of specific cases. If the hon. Member would communicate any specific case, I will, of course, be very happy to pass it on to the Central Bank, so that they might take it up with the Mauritius Commercial Bank, in case any matter has not been resolved. I understand, as I stated in my answer, that they are attending to such problems that are being faced by customers.

Ms Deerpalsing: Is the hon. Minister aware that the MCB has not deemed it fit to even publishing one single communiqué in the press? This is a scandal that they've gotten away with. Can the hon. Minister seek information from the Bank of Mauritius whether it is in order that the MCB does not publish even one single communiqué in the press to inform its clients of this major disaster of their IT system?

Mr Jugnauth: I am not aware if that has not been done through the press. But, as I said, they have put two communiqués on the website. As I said, I have inquired from the Central Bank whether it is a procedure. I suppose, as a matter of practice, they should have done it to inform the customers. We will look into that.

FAMILIES (POOR) – CIS - GRANT

(No. 1B/758) Mr A. Ameer Meea (First Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Social Integration and Economic Empowerment whether, in regard to the grant of corrugated iron sheets and wooden structures for the construction of houses to poor families, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from

the Trust Fund for the Social Integration of Vulnerable Groups, information as to the number of applications received, since July 2005 to date, indicating the number thereof which -

- (a) have been approved, and
- (b) are awaiting approval.

The vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Social Integration and Economic Empowerment (Mr X. L. Duval): Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the National Empowerment foundation as follows -

- (a) from July 2005 to date, 6,486 applications for CIS houses have been received at the Trust Fund for Social Integration of Vulnerable Groups operating under the aegis of the Foundation;
- (b) of this number, 4,164 applications have been approved, and
- (c) 1,064 applications are under process, whereas the remaining 1,258 applications were found to be non receivable, as the applicants did not meet the eligibility criteria.

Mr Bérenger: The hon. Minister has given us figures. Can I ask him three things? First, what publicity is given to that possibility for poor people to get a grant of corrugated iron sheets and wooden structures? How is the public supposed to know? Second, how are the requests processed? By what committee? Finally, who takes the final decision?

Mr Duval: With regard to publicity, it has been going on for five or six years, Mr Speaker, Sir. We haven't given any specific publicity to that but, as I mentioned during the budgetary debates, we are changing some of the provisions for housing, as regards the very poor. Secondly, the process is for the person to be identified. Sometimes, the case is referred by an NGO or by our own field officers, or people go the CAB offices or to the NEF for registration. Once they have been identified, then there is an inquiry which is performed as to the social circumstances, the income, and various documents are obtained as to their eligibility to construct on the land. You need to have permission. Either you are land holder or you have permission from the land holder. Once that is all done, then there is supervision by the Supervisor, and it comes to the NEF through the Trust Fund to be approved. We have tightened up the situation since I took over, to ensure that, in fact, the system is better controlled.

Ms Perraud: As regards measures taken in the Budget for the construction of houses, will the Minister inform the House whether his Ministry will continue with a grant of CIS?

Mr Duval: Mr Speaker, Sir, in some circumstances, we will not be able to do away with CIS, because of the situation of the particular vulnerable person. But we are moving away from CIS and going to the Rodrigues system, where we will be constructing houses - *blocs croisés* - with a CIF roof. We think it is better for the environment and socially more acceptable for the person, and it is not that much more expensive.

Mrs Labelle: The delay up to now is long after approval of the project. Will the hon. Minister look into that? Because it can happen that these persons have to wait for months and months before these materials are being delivered from the shop. I have cases, because I have been waiting for nearly one year now and, as from the time of approval, till the delivery, months are going on.

Mr Duval: Mr Speaker, Sir, concerning pending applications, I have asked about when they have been submitted, and I am told that they have been submitted within the last six months. This is what I am told. I said that one of the reasons is that perhaps people don't submit all the required information. But I have, ever since I came to this Ministry, Mr Speaker, Sir, impressed upon the Trust Fund that it should be processed quickly. Some of the delays are, in fact, procedures for procurement, etc. As I said, we are changing substantially the provision of this type of housing anyway.

Mr Lesjongard: May I ask the hon. Minister what measures are taken at the level of his Ministry to ensure that the grant is disbursed as per a waiting list? We hear a lot of complaints with regard to the disbursement of the grant.

Mr Duval: Is the hon. Member saying that people are jumping the waiting list? I am not aware, and I will look into it.

Mr Uteem: Mr Speaker, Sir, may I know from the hon. Minister whether there is a maximum amount of grant, and whether there is any officer from the Trust Fund who goes and ensure that that the materials are being used and not being resold?

Mr Duval: The grant is Rs60,000 plus Rs5,000 for labour. We have, since a few months now, tightened up the system where, in fact, the supplier signs for it; the Trust Fund is involved;

they sign at completion, and we have a supervisor also. It is maybe not perfect, but we have tightened up the system. We also have a monitoring unit now that will go on a spot check basis, to see that the houses are being constructed.

MOTORWAYS & HIGHWAYS - SPEED CAMERAS - SIGN POSTS

(No. 1B/759) Mr J. Seetaram (Second Member for Montagne Blanche & GRSE) asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to speed cameras, he will state if clear and conspicuous sign posts will be installed on the motorways and highways to indicate the presence thereof over reasonable distances and by way of bright fluorescent markings.

Mr Bachoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Traffic Management and Road Safety Unit that reflectorised traffic signs have already been installed on the motorway M2, between Pailles and Camp Chapelon, in both directions, at reasonable distances from the speed tracking zone, to inform motorists of the presence of fixed speed cameras. These speed cameras have become operational with effect from 06 December 2010 on a 24-hour basis.

Mr Seetaram: Mr Speaker, Sir, would the hon. Minister inform the House whether his Ministry has earmarked a particular speed zone, over a particular distance, where the speed limit will be applicable? Is it only over some metres? For instance, it might be over 200 or 300 metres, and it is only for that particular distance that you can, in fact, take any infringement over the speed limit.

Mr Bachoo: I can assure the hon. Member that we are going to introduce more cameras. I know one camera won't do, and so we are going to include more cameras.

Mr Seetaram: For example, at Pailles, we do have speed cameras. But, if we have a zone, over a distance earmarked, it is only in that particular zone that someone can infringe the relevant speed limit. Will the Ministry consider putting a zone? That zone can be earmarked by bright markings or fluorescent markings.

Mr Bachoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, all zones are important and dangerous. Wherever we have such dangerous zones, we are bound to include such speed cameras. I am happy to announce to the House that many VVIPs have also been caught in the net.

Mr Seetaram: As the Minister has answered there are signposts which have been erected on the motorway. Can I ask the hon. Minister if he could consider putting it clearly and conspicuously on those signposts that there are such and such speed limits over so many metres and that over so many metres there are also cameras? For example, when someone is coming towards...

Mr Speaker: Advance warning! Yes!

Mr Bachoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, it is only a warning sign. I am not going to spoon-feed those people who are breaking the law.

Mr Obegadoo: Along the same lines, Mr Speaker, Sir, if the objective is not income generation for the State but prevention of speeding, would the hon. Minister consider practice overseas which is to have much more conspicuous signs well before the camera so that all motorists are fully informed and aware of the presence of such cameras?

Mr Bachoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, the private radios are doing this job for us because they inform earlier on where speed cameras are found.

Mr Lesjongard:, Mr Speaker, Sir, since the formula for calculating speed is distance over time, may I ask the hon. Minister over what distance is that speed limit of 60 Kilometres per hour calculated in the region of Pailles between the two cameras?

Mr Bachoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am not a technician, I am very frank about it; it is difficult for me to say.

Mr Uteem: Mr Speaker, Sir, may I know from the hon. Minister...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order! Hon. Minister could you please listen to the question!

Mr Uteem: May I know from the hon. Minister whether he has been made aware that at night when there is this flash by speed cameras, it is quite discomfiting for drivers and there is a risk of accident?

Mr Bachoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, I have been informed of this and I am requesting the officers to have a look at it.

Mr Bhagwan: Mr Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister has just stated that even VIPs are taken to task. Can the hon. Minister give guarantee to the House and the nation that even those riders using motorcycles going 500km/h are being taken to task and would not be exempted?

(Interruptions)

Mr Bachoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, as far as I am aware, nobody is spared.

Dr. S. Boolell: Mr Speaker, Sir, I would like to ask the hon. Minister on the basis of which rationale are the figures 40, 60, 70, 80, 90, decided upon? There is no logic; 60 has gone to 70 and back within 24 hours.

Mr Bachoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, in fact, there is a technical committee, presided by the top officers of TRMSU, which has been set up since long. They come up with recommendations and get the Cabinet's approval and it is only after that we are reaffixing those limits.

Dr. S. Boolell: Can the hon. Minister please inform the House of the qualifications of those members who are on this technical committee?

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: No!

Mr Bachoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, they are top genius; I can assure the House.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Dr. S. Boolell, if you are not satisfied, you can raise the matter at Adjournment time!

Mr Seetaram: Mr Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister has informed the House that more speed cameras would be erected around the island. Can I know from the hon. Minister whether any survey around highways or motorways has been carried out in relation to other cameras being installed around the country?

Mr Bachoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, there is no need for surveys for wherever we have speed limits, we are going to impose cameras. Secondly, we have requested the technicians of my Ministry to review again the speed limits and the hon. Member, himself, spoke to me a few weeks earlier, and I am very sympathetic to his cause. We will look into it.

Mr Seetaram: Can the hon. Minister inform the House whether in some areas humps would be replaced by speed cameras?

Mr Bachoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, these are two different things but everybody will have to agree with me, even the actual Prime Minister and all hon. Members are almost unanimous on the decision that putting of humps creates too much of disadvantages. There have been cracks appearing in houses and that is the reason why we are discouraging the utilisation of speed humps. In places where it is necessary and important, we are putting speed cameras.

E-REGISTER PROJECT - IMPLEMENTATION

(No. 1B/760) Mr J. Seetaram (Second Member for Montagne Blanche & GRSE) asked the Minister of Information and Communication Technology whether, in regard to the E-Register project, he will state the reasons why it has not been implemented as at to date, indicating the expected date on which it is proposed to be implemented.

Mr Pillay Chedumbrum: Mr Speaker, Sir, initially, there was a proposal from a private company to develop the E-Register system as a project under the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Programme. However, in September 2010, my Ministry was informed that the project had not been approved by the CSR Committee. That is why it has not been implemented.

In the face of such a situation and acknowledging that the project would go a long way towards curbing down school bunking off, my Ministry decided to have the application developed in-house. The National Computer Board and the Government Online Centre were tasked to developing the application.

I am glad to inform the House, Mr Speaker, Sir, that the prototype has already been developed and successfully tested. As per the deployment plan, the system will be implemented in 21 State Secondary Schools at the beginning of the 1st Semester 2011 and when all the admissions and transfers would have been completed.

Further, it is expected that by the end of 2nd term next year, the system will be available in all public and private secondary schools.

Mr Bérenger: Can I know whether it is the same firm that came forward with that project? Is that firm implementing it all over the place now?

Mr Pillay Chedumbrum: No. At first, there was Blanche Birger Co. Ltd. who wanted to come forward with a CSR project but, unfortunately, the project was not accepted at the level of CSR and now, it is my Ministry who is taking it online.

Ms Perraud: Est-ce que le ministre peut nous dire, dans la pratique, comment le *e-register project* va être appliqué?

Mr Pillay Chedumbrum: Au juste, M. le président, à une certaine heure, c'est-à-dire, le matin, l'huissier va prendre le registre de tous les étudiants qui sont à l'école et pour ceux qui sont absents, il va l'envoyer au server du GOC et, à partir de ce moment, les parents vont recevoir ce message sur leur portable leur informant que leur fils ou fille n'est pas encore arrivé à l'école. Si, après quelques minutes, l'enfant se présente à l'école, le parent va recevoir un autre message lui disant qu'il ou elle est arrivé en donnant la raison évoquée pour le retard, c'est-à-dire, un accident, une maladie ou autre.

Mr Ameer Meea: Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. Can I ask the hon. Minister what would be the cost of such a project?

Mr Pillay Chedumbrum: The funding would come from the Ministry of Education. It is estimated at around Rs1 m.

Mr Obeegadoo: May I ask the hon. Minister in which country this system has been tried out?

Mr Pillay Chedumbrum: Lorsqu'on a été mis au courant de ce problème, tout de suite notre ministère, avec toute une équipe, ont travaillé là-dessus et on est arrivé avec un système très original pour nous ici, à Maurice.

INTERNATIONAL CALLS - UNAUTHORIZED TERMINATION

(No. 1B/761) Mr J. Seetaram (Member for Montagne Blanche & GRSE) to ask the Minister of Information and Communication Technology whether he will –

- (a) for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Information Communication Technology Authority, information as to if it has received complaints in relation to unauthorized termination of international calls, and if so
- (b) state the measures his Ministry has taken in regard thereto.

Mr Pillay Chedumbrum: Mr Speaker, Sir, being given that this question is of a general nature, there are two possible ways by which there could be unauthorised termination of international calls in Mauritius. It may be either by a person who is not duly licensed to carry

out international telecommunication activities or by a person who is duly licensed but who resorts to undercutting of prices.

As regards the first potential way of unauthorised call termination, I am advised by the ICT Authority that it has received three complaints. In these three cases, the Police has, with the help of the ICT Authority, seized the equipment in place for the unauthorised call termination. In one of the cases, the Police has even arrested one person, and court proceedings are currently ongoing.

Insofar as the second way of unauthorised call termination is concerned, I am advised by the ICT Authority that it has received representations from two operators to the effect that one foreign carrier is publishing a price below the prescribed termination rate for Mauritius. I am given to understand from the ICT Authority that, on the basis of the said representation only, it cannot be inferred with 100% certainty that the licensed operators in Mauritius, who have working agreements with the said foreign carrier, are undertaking unauthorised call termination.

Technical and financial investigations are required to establish whether or not any licensed operator in Mauritius is actually terminating unauthorised international calls. The ICT Authority is pursuing its investigations.

As for part (b) of the Question, I wish to inform the House that when I took office as Minister of Information and Communication Technology, one of the issues which was brought to my attention was the second type of unauthorised termination of calls and I was explained that innovations in technologies provided opportunities for operators to adopt this mode of call termination very easily.

To address this unsatisfactory situation, I have made the Information and Communication Technologies-Fraud Tracking Account Charge Regulations, which came into effect on 01 October 2010, with a view to enabling the implementation of a technical setup for a Fraud Tracking System on international terminating calls. The system is currently being put in place by the ICT Authority, in consultation with the licensed operators. Upon completion of the installation by the end of January 2011, it will then be technically possible to track the second type of unauthorised call termination. Thereafter, financial investigations with the assistance of competent financial institutions will be undertaken to identify the offenders and legal proceedings will be instituted against them in accordance with the provisions of the law.

Mr Seetaram: The hon. Minister has mentioned fraud tracking. Could the hon. Minister inform the House how the fraud tracking will be put into place and how is it going to work out?

Mr Pillay Chedumbrum: In fact, it will be installed at the level of the ICT Authority, ICTA. And from there whenever there is any termination of call which is illegal practice, they are going to track it from a server from ICTA.

Mr Speaker: I have to inform the House that Parliamentary Questions Nos. B/762 and B/773 have been withdrawn. Hon. Radegonde!

MINISTRY OF TOURISM AND LEISURE - MR C. H. - APPOINTMENT

(No. 1B/762) Mr K. Ramano (Second Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes) asked the Minister of Tourism and Leisure whether, in regard to Mr C. H., he will state the capacity in which he is serving in his Ministry, indicating -

- (a) his qualifications,
- (b) his present terms and conditions of appointment,
- (c) the total amount of emoluments, fees, benefits and/or allowances drawn, since his appointment to-date,
- (d) if he has submitted any report as at to date, and
- (e) any specific event wherefore he has acted as coordinator/consultant, giving details of the cost thereof.

(Withdrawn)

BATS - SURVEY

(No.1B/763) Mrs J. Radegonde (Fourth Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Minister of Agro-Industry and Food Security whether, in regard to bats, he will state if any survey has been carried out to assess the present number thereof, indicating if he is aware of the disastrous effect they are presently having on the fruit trees, and if so, the remedial measures that will be taken, indicating if consideration will be given for the culling thereof.

Mr Faugoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, conscious of the adverse effect which bats are having on fruits, mainly litchis and mangoes, Government launched a Bat Control Net Scheme in November 2009 to encourage food growers to purchase nets and be refunded 75% of the expenses incurred. Last year, some 173 beneficiaries took advantage of the scheme and a sum of Rs518,000 was disbursed.

This year growers indicated that the prevailing climatic conditions were very favourable for a very good fruit crop and they made request for renewal of the Net Scheme. I wish to inform the House that indeed the scheme has been renewed for period 01 October 2010 to 31 December 2010 on the same terms.

We have also launched a National Campaign for the protection of fruits against bats through the use of nets to protect fruit production. In addition, AREU has prepared and distributed posters, information sheets and conducted regional demonstrations of net installation on litchi trees. Fruit growers are also being advised to regularly prune their trees so as to render the use of nets more effective.

As the House is aware, the Mauritius Fruit Bat was endemic to the Mascarene Islands and it is now only found in Mauritius. Accordingly, the bats found in Mauritius have been classified as endangered by the International Union for Conservation of Nature to which Mauritius is a member. In addition, we are a party to major conventions related to Biodiversity including the Convention of Biological Diversity and the Convention of International Trade for Endangered Species of fauna and flora, all of which aim at protecting our native biodiversity resources.

Taking all these into consideration, to be able to resort to culling of bats, we need to assess the number of bats so as to be able to determine whether it has achieved the pest level status. The decision to cull bats will therefore depend on the findings of the survey which is presently being carried out. These findings will be submitted to the International Union for Conservation of Nature which will establish as to whether the bat population has reached the status of pest level. Culling is allowed only when the bat population reaches that particular level.

In this regard, the National Parks and Conservation Service of my Ministry has conducted a survey of roosting sites in November 2010. This survey has revealed that there are some 15 important roosting sites around Mauritius. As from 06 December 2010, a full count of the bat

population has started. This exercise is expected to last around 20 days, thereafter the results will be communicated to ICUN.

We are also currently reviewing the Wild Life and National Parks Act whereby provision is being made in the new law for the culling of bats if the population has reached pest level status.

Mrs Radegonde: Mr Speaker, Sir, since bats rely on sonar to navigate, locate and capture their prey, can I ask the hon. Minister whether there has been any research to discover the frequency of the bats sonar to blind, scare and discourage them from desired area?

Mr Faugoo: Not to my knowledge, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Minister whether there is any particular help which is being provided to individuals because I am aware of the nets that have been provided to planters? When individuals are concerned, very often the trees are not trimmed like in a verger, so is there any particular help which is granted to those who want to put the net because it is very difficult for an individual to install this net?

Mr Faugoo: The help to start with is in terms of finance, Mr Speaker, Sir. We are providing 75% of the cost of the net, but technical advice is being given by AREU to growers.

SUPREME COURT JUDGMENT - D. H., v Y. K. J. Y. S. Y

(No.1B/764) Mr D. Khamajeet (Second Member for Flacq & Bon Accueil) asked the Attorney General whether he has taken cognizance of the Supreme Court Judgment in the case of D. H., v Y. K. J. Y. S. Y.,(2010) SCJ 373 inviting him “to initiate such action as he may deem appropriate in the circumstances” and if so, will he state the actions, if any, that he has taken.

Mr Varma: Mr Speaker, Sir, I wish to inform the House that the powers vested upon the Attorney General under Section 13 of the Law Practitioners Act are in relation to law practitioners, as defined under Section 2 of the Act.

Being given that the Supreme Court has, in 2008, ordered that Mr H.’s name be erased from the Roll of Barristers, Mr H is no longer a law practitioner. I am, therefore, unable to initiate any action under section 13 of the Act. Any breach of the Act is a purely criminal matter.

I am informed that the Police has already carried out a full inquiry and submitted a file to the DPP's office for advice.

At 12.58 p.m the sitting was suspended.

On resuming at 2.31 p.m. with the Deputy Speaker in the Chair.

BOARD OF INVESTMENT - OCCUPATIONAL PERMITS

(No. 1B/765) Mr K. Ramano (Second Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes) asked the vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Board of Investment, information as to the -

- (a) number of occupational permits delivered to -
 - (i) investors;
 - (ii) self employed;
 - (iii) professionals;
 - (iv) retired non-citizens;
- (b) type of business carried out by the -
 - (i) investors
 - (ii) self employed and the
 - (iii) professionals, indicating the salaries drawn by these professionals, and
 - (iv) the age of the retired non-citizens and
- (c) number of foreign investors and foreign retirees owner of property and foreigners owning IRS and RES villas.

The vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development (Mr P. Jugnauth): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Board of Investment that, since the coming into force of the Business Facilitation (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act on 01 October 2006, 7,278 occupational permits have been delivered to non-citizens of Mauritius, out of which 1,398 to investors, 5,628 to professionals, and 252 to self-employed non-citizens as at 01 December 2010. In as far as retired non-citizens are concerned, 675 residence permits have been issued. Details on occupation permits and residence permits, delivered as from 01 October 2006 to 01 December 2010, are being tabled.

As regards part (b) of the question, the investors, the professionals and self-employed people are involved in a number of economic activities. A breakdown of the number of occupational permits delivered on a per sector basis is being tabled.

The salaries drawn by the professionals who have benefited from an occupational permit issued from October 2007 to March 2010 were above the qualifying salary of Rs30,000, which was revised to Rs75,000, effective from 01 April 2010. The average salary of professionals delivered with an occupational permit from 01 October 2006 to 01 December 2010 is Rs93,130.

The age of the retired non-citizens is between 31 to 89 years old.

With regard to part (c) of the question, since 01 October 2006, 129 foreign workers have obtained authorisation from the Board of Investment to acquire immovable property for business purposes, under the Non-Citizens (Property Restriction) Act.

The total number of residential units sold to non-citizens under the Integrated Resort Scheme and the Real Estate Scheme amounts to 404 and 95 units respectively.

Eleven occupation permit holders, six investors, five professionals and three retired non-citizens have acquired residential property under the Integrated Resort Scheme.

Nine occupation permit holders, six investors, three professionals and five retired non-citizens have acquired residential property under the Real Estate Scheme. I am tabling the required information.

Mr Lesjongard: With regard to information being tabled, for example, for self-employed who have obtained an occupational permit, may I ask the vice-Prime Minister whether that includes countries from where they come from also?

Mr Jugnauth: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as far as the document that I am tabling is concerned it does not include the countries. But, of course, I can provide the countries where they come from. I have got no problem.

ALZHEIMER DISEASE - MEASURES

(No. 1B/766) Ms S. Anquetil (Fourth Member for Vacoas & Floreal) asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether, in regard to the Alzheimer disease, she will state the -

- (a) number of persons suffering therefrom;
- (b) budget allocated for the treatment thereof, and
- (c) measures put in place to assist the patients suffering therefrom.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I cannot say how many people in Mauritius suffer from Alzheimer, as I rely on statistics obtained from the registration of those who attend hospitals, AHCs and CHCs. This information is being compiled.

According to information gathered, at present there are eight patients following treatment for Alzheimer disease.

Concerning part (b) of the question, the cost for the treatment of Alzheimer patients is met from funds allocated to hospitals for providing the different health services.

As regards part (c) of the question, patients suffering from Alzheimer are provided with all necessary medical treatment and care. However, they get particular attention from specialists in the field of General Medicine, Neurology and Psychiatry and Clinical Psychologists, as Alzheimer patients suffer from sleeplessness, wandering, depression, anxiety and agitation.

Presently, there is no specific unit in our hospitals dedicated to the treatment of patients suffering from Alzheimer disease. As the risk for the population above 65 years to develop Alzheimer disease keeps on increasing, with the setting up of a National Geriatric Hospital, a specific unit will be created to cater for Alzheimer patients.

Ms Anquetil: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, would the hon. Minister inform the House whether early Alzheimer *dépistage*, screening is made in our hospitals?

Mrs Hanoomanjee: This is not being done, Mr Deputy, Sir.

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, pending the hypothetical setting up of a geriatric hospital and given the importance of Alzheimer in societies experiencing the aging population phenomenon, will the Minister consider, drawing from the experience of developed countries, give the required impulse to a new effort to look at prevention, detection and treatment of Alzheimer disease?

Mrs Hanoomanjee: This will be done, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Minister whether her Ministry has a line of communication with a newly set NGO that is taking care of Alzheimer, particularly when the hon. Minister has said that she does not have the exact figure and rely only on figures of those who come to the hospital? There are much more than eight persons. Is there a line of communication with the NGO to have proper information?

Mrs Hanoomanjee: In fact, there is a line of communication between my Ministry and the NGO, because I have attended myself several functions organised by that NGO. In fact, according to that NGO, they say there are around 6,000 patients. I am not a medical person, and I am trying to make the difference between patients suffering from Alzheimer and patients suffering from dementia.

Mr Obeegadoo: Can the Minister indicate whether we do have any specialists in geriatric medicine to advise and support the Minister in focusing on Alzheimer?

Mrs Hanoomanjee: In fact, we have got our own medical officers and the specialists. But, as I said, with the setting up of the geriatric hospital, we will have people who will be trained especially to deal with this sort of disease.

Ms Anquetil: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have got two supplementary questions. The Alzheimer NGO grant is severely underfunded, and is about *R 500,000 par an*. Would the hon. Minister consider to significantly increasing the grant allocated to the NGO? Second, this disease requires 24-hour supervision. Would the hon. Minister consider reviewing the carer's allowance for patients suffering from Alzheimer?

The Deputy Speaker: Unfortunately, I don't think these two questions are within the purview of the Minister of Health; or else, if the hon. Minister has got some information.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: In fact, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, my Ministry gives grants to NGOs. But, it depends on the work which is being done, because I have around 20 NGOs falling under the aegis of the Ministry which regularly come and ask for an increase in grant. What I am doing, actually is an evaluation of the work which is actually being carried out by those NGOs. It is in the light of this evaluation that I will look again and redistribute the grant that is being given to each of them.

Mr Ganoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, since this disease is on the increase in most countries of the world including ours, can the hon. Minister consider the possibility of organizing a sensitization campaign so that the parents of the patients afflicted with these diseases might know what are the early symptoms of Alzheimer, for example, so that they really take the necessary precautions, so that the patients can be sent for treatment as early as possible in view of the very complex nature of the disease?

Mrs Hanoomanjee: In fact, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this work has already started together with the NGO in question which has just been mentioned by hon. Ms Anquetil.

(PQ No. 1B/767- See Questions addressed to hon. Prime Minister)

MINISTRY OF FINANCE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

– MR M. S. -ADVISER

(No. 1B/768) Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin and Petite Rivière) asked the vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to Mr M. S., Adviser at his Ministry, he will -

- (a) state his terms and conditions of appointment;
- (b) give a list of the Boards of parastatal bodies and/or Government-owned companies in which he is a member, indicating the fees paid to him in each case, and
- (c) state if he travelled to France in October 2010 and if so, indicate -
 - (i) in which capacity;
 - (ii) the duration thereof, and
 - (iii) the total amount of money spent in connection therewith, giving details thereof.

The vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development (Mr P. Jugnauth): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, Mr M. S. has been appointed as Senior Adviser on Information Technology and Communication Strategies in the Ministry of Finance and

Economic Development, for an initial period of three years, on the terms and conditions as exist for contract officers in the Civil Service. The information in respect of parts (b) and (c) of the question is being compiled.

Mr Bhagwan: Est-ce que le ministre peut informer la Chambre si ce Monsieur *was a Director of Smart Card Co. Ltd, selling prepaid cards* et qu'il a eu des démêlés avec la Police ?

Mr Jugnauth: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am not aware about his directorship in a private company.

Mr Bhagwan: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, is the vice-Prime Minister aware that that person who was a director of a company selling prepaid cards *a eu des démêlés avec la Police*?

Mr Jugnauth: Well, I am not aware, but if the hon. Member has information, of course, I am willing to look into it.

Mr Bhagwan: The hon. vice-Prime Minister has not replied to the question, he has said he will circulate the answer. Can he confirm that that person went to France on an official mission during the month of October and in what capacity, representing which Government Company?

Mr Jugnauth: Yes, I can confirm that he had travelled to France for the Tax Free World Association from 16 to 23 October 2010, as Director of the Mauritius Duty-Free Paradise.

Mr Bhagwan: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, can the hon. vice-Prime Minister inform the House whether that person has actively been participating in meetings between the Ministry of Finance and the Mauritius Turf Club, the Ministry of Finance and Super Tote, in the association of bookmakers and whether he was representing the Minister in those meetings?

Mr Jugnauth: I am not aware about that.

COOPERATIVE SOCIETIES - TAX

(No. 1B/769) **Mr K. Li Kwong Wing (Second Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière)** asked the vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to the cooperative societies, he will state the -

- (a) date of introduction and reasons for the imposition of the 15% tax on the surplus thereof, indicating the amount of tax collected, since the introduction thereof, on a yearly basis, in the -
- (i) sugar sector, and
 - (ii) non-sugar sector;
- (b) number thereof in each sector that are dormant or have not filed tax returns, and
- (c) reasons why tax exemption should not be reintroduced for all the types thereof.

The vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development (Mr P. Jugnauth): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the income tax exemption granted to cooperative societies was removed as from income year 2006/2007 as part of the 2006 income tax reforms.

I am informed by the Mauritius Revenue Authority that the amount of tax collected from cooperative societies in the sugar sector was as follows -

- Rs573,711 for year of assessment 2007/2008,
- Rs338,925 for 2008/2009, and
- Rs353,711 for 2009/2010.

For cooperative societies operating in the non-sugar sector, the figures were Rs11.6 m., Rs7.7 m. and Rs3.8 m. respectively.

Regarding part (b) of the question, I am informed that 14 cooperative societies in the sugar sector had not filed income tax returns for the year of assessment 2009/2010. The corresponding figures for 2007/2008 and 2008/2009 were 8 and 23 respectively.

The number of cooperative societies in the non-sugar sector which did not file returns for years of assessment 2007/2008, 2008/2009 and 2009/2010 were 57, 72 and 88 respectively.

As for part (c) of the question, in taxation of a business, the standard policy approach is that it should be neutral vis-à-vis the institutional or legal form under which the business operates, whether a company, a co-operative or a sole propriety. However, in view of the adverse market and price conditions affecting sugar producers, especially small planters, and in view of the crucial role played by the Cooperative Credit Societies in the sector, we believe that a special treatment is warranted in this case. That is why in the Budget, we have restored income

tax exemption on the surplus generated from sugar operations by Cooperative Credit Societies (CCS).

Mr Li Kwong Wing: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, can the hon. vice-Prime Minister inform the House how many Sugar Cooperative Societies have been paying taxes? We have heard the amount collected, but how many are paying taxes?

Mr Jugnauth: Well, I don't have the figures with me, I have the figures with regard to those which the hon. Member has asked, that is, those who have not paid taxes.

Mr Li Kwong Wing: Is the hon. Minister aware that there are a lot of these sugar planters who are also members of other sugar related cooperatives, which are not necessarily Cooperative Credit Societies (CCS) and that they will still be liable to pay tax? Would he agree that this is very discriminatory because if we are exempting sugar planters from tax, why should he not pay tax when he is in a credit society, but pay tax when he is in a water users society, in a marketing society and other societies?

Mr Jugnauth: I am aware that there are members who can be members of the CCS and members of other cooperative societies, but this measure is specific to the small planters of the sugar sector as I have explained. It's because the situation with regard to the sugar sector has become very difficult and that is why we have decided and I perfectly agree that it is discriminatory because we are applying one exemption with regard to specific cooperative society in the sugar sector and not to others. But, as I say, the situation is such that we wanted to help those small planters who form part of the CCS and who find themselves in a really very difficult situation.

Mr Li Kwong Wing: Would the hon. Minister also not agree that there is another type of discrimination against those people who are not in sugar credit societies? Maybe, they are in potato credit societies or other credit societies which are being discriminated. So, is it based on credit or is it based on sugar because when you consider it on sugar you will find that he is planting sugar but when he is in a water user's society, he still pays tax? Is it on the basis of credit for planting sugar? Then he is still paying tax when he is taking credit from other societies?

Mr Jugnauth: I have said, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that I agree there is discrimination, but that measure was specific with regard to sugar cultivation. In fact, what we wanted also to do with regard to the small planters is try as far as possible, not only with this measure - but the hon. Member will appreciate – a number of other measures to motivate the small planters to remain in business, as far as we can, of course.

GDP GROWTH

(No. 1B/770) Mr K. Li Kwong Wing (Second Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to the proposed development goal in the 2011 Budget Speech to attain a GDP of one trillion rupees and an income per capita of USD 20,000 by the 2020's, he will state the -

- (a) year in which that goal will be achieved at the same average GDP growth rate as in the current decade 2000-2010 ;
- (b) GDP growth rate required to achieve the goal before the end of the 2020's, and
- (c) contribution to the required growth rate by each major industry group, specifying the main drivers of the GDP growth and the reasons thereof.

The vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development (Mr P. Jugnauth): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as one of our main long-term macroeconomic objectives, we are aiming to attain the development goal, the hon. Member is referring to, at the earliest possible, in the 2020s.

In this respect, we are taking timely and appropriate measures to consolidate existing sectors, to give a boost to new emerging drivers to growth and to minimise impact of any external shocks on growth by addressing sectoral vulnerabilities.

Our broad programme and policies for the short-term, medium-term and long-term have already been spelt out in the 2010-2015 Government Programme. In addition, in the Economic Restructuring and Competitiveness Package (ERCP) presented in August 2010, we clearly indicated the measures that are being adopted by this Government to address not only the euro crisis but also to prepare Mauritius for the rebound in global economic activity and for global rebalancing. The 2011 Budget has, in fact, been drawn within this framework and is consistent with the policies that are adopted for meeting our macroeconomic objectives, including that of

increasing our gross domestic product (GDP) to one trillion rupees and our *per capita* income to USD 20,000 in the 2020s. This development goal is within reach and Mauritius has the capacity to meet the target within the next twenty years. The question is just one of timing.

To come to the question of the hon. Member, I wish to inform the House that our nominal Gross Domestic Product (GDP) at market price grew, on average by 9.2 per cent annually between the period 2000 and 2010. The *per capita* income, as measured by the GDP, at market price per head of population, grew on average by 8.4 per cent annually, in rupee terms, during the same period.

Assuming the same average growth rate is recorded for period 2000 to 2010, the nominal GDP, which is today around Rs290 billion, will attain one trillion rupees by mid 2020s - more precisely by 2024. Taking this into account and assuming that our population will grow on average by around 0.8 per cent annually, which is also the average growth in population recorded over the period 2000 to 2010, our *per capita* income will exceed USD 20,000 over the same period. However, we will not realise a growth rate of 9.2% if we just sit down and merely assume that we shall reach our target. To meet our objective, we have to act decisively and that is what this Government is doing with imagination and foresight.

As regards part (c) of the question, the contribution to the required growth rate by each major industry group will change as the economy grows and diversifies. In a static world we can expect the same contribution to growth by the major industry group as in the past ten years. But our economic is not static. The target of Rs1 trillion and the GDP *per capita* of USD 20,000 are set on the basis of the various policies and measures taken by this Government to rebalance growth and to make a great leap on productivity. These targets have also been set on the basis of a plan for an intensive diversification of the economy. This new plan will put the economy on a higher and more diversified growth path where the contributions to GDP growth will be different from what they are now. However, given past experience, it is expected that the contribution of the different sectors will vary with market conditions.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it is a fact today that global economic environment is prone to fast changes. It is, therefore, impossible to predict with accuracy the impact of these changes on the performance of the drivers to growth. Therefore, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, at this stage, it would not be pragmatic to make any detailed forecast as regards the contribution of the different

sectors of the economy to the GDP growth. However, overall, we are confident that we shall reach the targeted GDP in the 2020s with imaginative endeavours, foresightedness, proper planning and monitoring. This is what managing the economy all is about.

Mr Li Kwong Wing: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, since at the same average nominal growth rate, the Minister has said that we are going to reach Rs1 trillion in the year 2024, can we get some clarification from the Minister as to how this qualifies as a Mauritian dream?

Mr Jugnauth: Well, in the context that we are living today and from what we have seen recently, we have had the great financial recession, we are now facing the euro crisis and we do not even know how long it will take for the European countries to recover, how long it will take for America also to recover, and what is in store ahead. Therefore, as I have said in my answer, no economy is on an automatic mode. Just because we have had growth in the past does not mean to say that if we sit down and relax and do not do anything and do not take any initiative, we are going to have the same kind of growth that we have experienced for the past 10 years. Therefore, because the world economy is so dynamic, we should come with new measures and that is what we are doing and that is why we have a Budget and in the course of our mandate, we will be called upon to take other additional measures to see to it that we have a reasonable growth so that we reach that dream.

Mr Li Kwong Wing: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in fact, the average growth rate in the years 2000 and 2010 has already been severely dampened by the worst recession that we have had in the world in the last 50 years.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Member must put his question.

Mr Li Kwong Wing: So, whatever will come in the future should be better than that. Could I know from the Minister of Finance, since these are his two pet projects, the *métro léger* and the duty-free island, what is he expecting them to be contributing to the growth in the future?

Mr Jugnauth: I do not agree with the first part of the question of the hon. Member because we have experienced the great financial recession as from 2008. So, it is not for the past 10 years. Now, we are faced with the euro zone crisis. He has his own opinion which I quite understand, but we do not agree on that.

Secondly, with regard to the *métro léger*, the hon. Minister has given a reply this morning, we are going ahead and as far as the duty-free island is concerned, that is also being worked upon. I think, on a number of occasions, I have replied to questions in the House, but it is not something that can be done overnight. I have explained in the past that it entails a number of sectors of the economy, it entails the fact that we need to be able to welcome more foreigners to Mauritius. We need to have more bed capacity to welcome those foreigners. We need to have a more modern system of public transport. We need to have shopping malls and so on and so forth. That is why, the Blueprint that we had prepared at that time, since 2004, not only has to be updated, but we need to have a consultant to be able to work with us and to advise us on what is the best process to move forward to reach that dream.

Mr Uteem: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we have heard the hon. Minister mentioning several times the diversification of the economy. May I know from him, as at to date, other than the existing sectors of activities, whether there are new sectors of activities that he is thinking of when he talks about diversification of the economy?

Mr Jugnauth: Just to name a few, we want to make Mauritius a centre of excellence. We want to make Mauritius a centre for knowledge for education and I can cite we have put in place the Regional Multi-Disciplinary Centre of Excellence. With the support of the IMF, we are setting up the South Afritac, another centre for training. We are now trying to get the support of the World Bank and the IMF to have another institution to be set up for training purposes for the region as from next year.

My colleague, hon. Minister for Tertiary Education, is working on schemes of how to attract foreign educational institutions, to come and set up campuses in Mauritius. We are looking also at making Mauritius a medical hub. We are moving in terms of the financial sector, that is, the reason why in the Budget we have open up now and allow the JBC 1 Company, not only to be trade with the JBC 2, but to be able to carry on onshore activities, of course, with the same taxes that prevailed for the onshore companies here. I can go on and on. There are a quite number of other measures that are being taken in order to broaden and to diversify the economy.

HOTEL ROOMS - SALE

(No. 1B/771) Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to the existing hotel rooms, he will state if foreigners and Mauritians are being allowed to purchase same for investment purposes and if so –

- (a) when the decision was taken;
- (b) the reasons therefor, and
- (c) the number thereof purchased, indicating the name of the hotels and value of the sales.

The vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development (Mr P. Jugnauth): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the 2009 Budget Speech introduced the setting up of an alternative financing approach, which allowed foreign and Mauritian investors to acquire hotel rooms and villas, which they must obligatorily lease back to the hotel operator. The rationale behind this measure was -

- (i) to accelerate the creation of new hotels and create jobs in the wake of the global economic crunch, which constrained the traditional financial capacity of hoteliers and as a result of which hotels site were lying undeveloped, and
- (ii) to broaden the circle of opportunities in the tourism industry.

Implementation of this measure was carried out under the ambit of existing legislations and through the Investment Promotion (Real Estate Development Scheme) Regulations 2007 where the Invest-Hotel Scheme was added to the Integrated Resort Scheme and Real Estate Scheme.

The decision to extend the provisions of the Invest Hotel Scheme to existing hotels in operation and which have an approved restructuring plan was announced in August 2010 under the ERCP (Economic Restructuring and Competitiveness Program) as part of a gamut of measures initiated to support hotels to overcome cash flow problems . This decision has been taken as -

- (i) this scheme is consistent with the sales and leaseback facility that are available to manufacturing enterprises, and
- (ii) it is an important instrument to enable small hotels to mobilise finance and broaden their equity base to deleverage.

As the House is aware, the sale and purchase of these hotel rooms are subject to the standard acquisition and transfer taxes and the sales of rooms are to be contained to a maximum of 30% of the total.

The Investment Promotion (Real Estate Development Scheme) Regulations 2007 were therefore amended to extend the Invest Hotel Scheme to existing hotels in operation as at 31 August 2010. The regulation in fact, came into effect on 16 October 2010.

The Invest Hotel Scheme, for a hotel in operation, makes provisions for a hotel whose restructuring plan has been approved on or before 31 December 2011 by the ERCP Committee, to qualify under the IHS on the additional conditions that the hotel was in operation as at August 2010.

As regards part (b) of the question, it is important to mention that hotel development in Mauritius has traditionally been carried out on State land by hoteliers, who had the financing capacity to undertake such investment. Development of a typical 5-star 150-rooms hotel may require a minimum investment of Rs2 billion and which is financed by equity and debt financing. The fallout from the sovereign debt crisis and its potential contagion that threatens to destabilise economic growth within and beyond the Eurozone has exposed the possible risks to the tourism industry in the short term.

Hotel developers who have invested massively in the construction or refurbishment of their hotel infrastructure in the last decade have been scathed and significantly affected in the last 2-3 years as a result of the -

- (i) direct damage related to the subprime implosion and financial crisis;
- (ii) subsequent global economic fallout;
- (iii) decline in tourism receipt as occupancy level of hotels have plummeted, and
- (iv) Euro zone crisis that is casting its shadow on the hospitality sector.

The crisis has strained hard on the exporting arm of Mauritius with the textile and tourism sectors being the most badly hit ones. Besides the dwindling demand, a depreciating euro vis-à-vis the rupee has further squeezed on the profit margins of the hotels. Under such a situation, hotels cash flows have been critical and have been reported to face problems to service their debts and finance their day to day expenses.

In the light of these, it was imperative to look at alternative means of providing finance to existing hotels so as to moderate the impact of the current downturn in tourism receipt. The best way to weather the storm of the financial crisis was to extend the Invest Hotel Scheme, to existing hotels that will allow individual equity investors (locals and non-citizens), to participate in the financing of hotel projects. This measure forming part of the ERCP is thus aimed to foster and support long-term restructuring, while providing short-term breathing space, especially on cash flow problems and financing requirements by not discriminating the IHS, which is an alternative financing tool, to only new hotel developers.

With regards to part (c) of the question, I wish to inform the house that since the coming into force of the regulations on 16 October 2010, no IHS certificate has been issued to existing hotels as of date. Hence, no hotel rooms have been sold.

Mr Ganoo: Can I ask the hon. Minister if there is a minimum price at which these promoters can sell their hotel rooms?

Mr Jugnauth: In fact, they will have to make their application under the ERCP and that will be also considered on a case to case basis. It is not just an automatic right, but as I said, these are the guidelines.

Mr Ganoo: Can I ask the hon. Minister what will be the registration duty? Will it be 5% or like the case of the IRS village?

Mr Jugnauth: It will be as per the law as it states insofar as the taxation of registration duty is concerned.

Mr Bhagwan: Can the hon. Minister inform the House whether there is any application which is being processed these days?

Mr Jugnauth: As at today, I am informed that there is no application.

**NEOTOWN, LAND BASED OCEANIC INDUSTRY, BINANI CEMENT
FACTORY (MAURITIUS) LTD, BAGATELLE CITY & AIRPORT PROJECTS –
ELECTRICITY SUPPLY**

(No. 1B/772) Mr G. Lesjongard (Second Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to the “Neotown”, the Land Based Oceanic Industry, the Binani Cement Factory (Mauritius) Ltd., the Bagatelle City and the Airport projects, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Central Electricity Board, information as to if the Board has received requests from the promoters thereof to be supplied with electricity and if so, indicate in each case –

- (a) when electricity is required to be supplied, and
- (b) how the Board proposes to supply same.

The Deputy Prime Minister: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed that the additional power requested by the five projects mentioned, amount to a total of 150 MW by 2017, and is phased subject to the timely implementation of the projects combining all requests received as follows –

For the years -

2011	5.7 MW
2012	36 MW
2013	73 MW
2014	117 MW
2015	143 MW
2016	143 MW
2017	150 MW

I am tabling the information regarding the request for each project.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Central Electricity Board that its generation capacity expansion plan is as follows -

- Redevelopment of Fort Victoria, Phase II, for total installed capacity of 60 MW. Consequently, 30 MW will be commissioned in 2011 and another 30 MW in 2012;
- Proposed construction of a 110 MW coal fired power plant at Pointe aux Caves, subject to EIA license and way leaves for transmission lines being obtained;
- An additional 30 MW generating capacity will be available from renewable sources, i.e. wind and solar by 2013-2014, and
- With the optimisation of existing inefficient low pressure co-generation unit, an additional 50 MW generating capacity could be available.

In case of further administrative delays, the CEB will have no other option than -

- (i) to proceed with a feasibility study and a formal tendering process for some 100 to 150 MW capacity to be commissioned as from 2014;
- (ii) The rating capacity could be available. In case of further administrative delays, the CEB will have no option than to proceed with a feasibility study and a formal tendering process for some 1250 megawatt capacity to be commissioned as from 2014, to carry out a feasibility study to redevelop the old St Louis Power Station by the replacement of all engines by new and more efficient generating units. I have been informed by the CEB that it is also planning to reinforce its transmission and its distribution network to ensure supply of electricity to these new projects.

Mr Lesjongard: Can I ask the Deputy Prime Minister what is the effective actual capacity which is available right now in order to meet the demand?

The Deputy Prime Minister: I will circulate the information, but I can assure you that it is adequate.

Ms Deerpalsing: Can the hon. Deputy Prime Minister inform the House whether there is still possibility to negotiate with the Jin Fei operators to impress upon them to use their own renewable energy operations like photovoltaic or others?

The Deputy Prime Minister: We are looking into this possibility.

Mr Lesjongard: In a reply given by the Deputy Prime Minister, he has stated that for the past three years, the capacity to meet demand has been 504 megawatt. Can we know what will be the capacity to meet demand in 2011 and 2012 with regard to only one project in the pipeline right now?

The Deputy Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, this is another question; I will supply the information when you ask a PQ next time.

SAHRAWI ARAB DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC – AMBASSADOR

(No. 1B/773) Mr. S. Obeegadoo (Third Member for Curepipe & Midlands) asked the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade whether, in regard to the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic, he will state if a request for accreditation for a new ambassador to Mauritius has been submitted to Government and if so, indicate the -

- (a) date, and
- (b) outcome thereof.

(Withdrawn)

JIN-FEI RICHE TERRE PROJECT – AMOUNT EARMARKED

(No. 1B/774) Mr A. Ganoo (First Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to the Jin Fei Riche Terre Project, he will state-

- (a) the amount earmarked therefor, giving a breakdown of the disbursements effected as at to date for the -
 - (i) utilities services and;
 - (ii) new infrastructural projects;
- (b) the exact extent of land therefor;
- (c) if new partnerships have been entered into, and
- (d) the number of Chinese Nationals who are presently in Mauritius in connection therewith.

The vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development (Mr P. Jugnauth): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the amount earmarked for the Jin Fei project for offsite infrastructure works is about Rs603 m. out of which some Rs132.6 m. has been disbursed as at date as follows -

Wastewater	-	Rs37 m.
Water	-	Rs18 m.
Access Road	-	Rs73.9 m.
CEB	-	Rs3.7 m.

The Mauritius Jin Fei Economic and Trade Cooperation Zone is being developed at Riche Terre on 211 hectares of State land leased to the promoters.

As regards part (c) of the question, I am given to understand that the project promoters have concluded a number of agreements for the development of education, residential and business services and restaurant projects.

With regard to the number of Chinese nationals presently in Mauritius in connection with the Jin Fei Project, I am informed that 21 persons are directly employed by the Mauritius Jin Fei Economic Trade and Cooperation Zone Co. Ltd. These persons form the senior management, middle management and engineering team of the company which is responsible for the development of the Mauritius JinFei Economic and Trade Cooperation Zone at Riche Terre.

Jin Fei is presently developing the infrastructure facilities that include the road network as well as the basic utilities (power, water and wastewater). For the development of these infrastructures, there are, in fact, between 20 to 100 Chinese workers involved in the zone depending on the scope of the work. At the same time, some 200 to 300 Mauritian workers are also employed therein.

Mr Ganoo: Can I ask the hon. vice-Prime Minister whether he can indicate to the House, whether, so far the promoters have already leased or sold land to other enterprises and, if so, whether it has been done on a lease basis or on a sale basis and in the profiles of these new partners whether they are in trade or in which sector are they?

Mr Jugnauth: As I have said in my answer, from what I have been informed, there are developments with regard to education, residential and business services and restaurant projects. I don't know about details, I can circulate the information.

Mr Ganoo: Can the Minister give us an indication as to when these new operators will be moving in?

Mr Jugnauth: I cannot say because it will depend on the works that have to be completed. For example, there are civil works and installation of pipes that have to be completed with regard to water, just to give you one example that will be completed by June 2011. The works have already started and with regard to other services that I have mentioned works are ongoing.

Mr Guimbeau: Mr Speaker, Sir, we would like to avoid a second Diego Garcia, if you heard the President of the Republic, he stated: Diego was going to be used for communication purposes...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Sorry, we are not concerned with Diego, we are concerned with JinFei. Put your question for JinFei, please!

Mr Guimbeau: I see the same thing coming in Mauritius now...

The Deputy Speaker: Put your question and don't make statement please!

Mr Guimbeau: I am putting my question, Sir. There is 500 *arpents* of land which has been given to JinFei and up to now we still don't have the framework agreement. We would like, in the name of the nation, to know what is going to happen there. Is it going to be a new military base in Mauritius?

Mr Jugnauth: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I think the hon. Member is joking, I must say! How can he state to the House if there is going to be a military base? Clearly not! You have to be more responsible, it is with regard to economic zone. We want to promote, of course, foreign companies to come and invest in that zone.

**UNION SPORTIVE BEAU BASSIN/ROSE HILL MEN HANDBALL TEAM –
COUPE DES CLUBS CHAMPIONS DE L'OCEAN INDIEN**

(No. 1B/775) **Mr F. Quirin (Third Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière)** asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether, in regard to the participation of the Union Sportive Beau Bassin/Rose Hill Men Handball team, winner of the National Championship 2010, in the Coupe des Clubs Champions de l'Océan Indien to be held in December 2010 in Réunion Island, he will state the facilities put at their disposal.

Mr Ritoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Union Sportive Beau Bassin/Rose-Hill Man Handball team was provided with all facilities usually put at the disposal of sports club through their respective federations. As such, the clubs were provided with all logistics, infrastructural and medical facilities and sports materials for the smooth training and preparation for the competition. Transport facilities for airport transfer were also provided.

On 20 September 2010, the Mauritius Handball Association made a request to my Ministry for financial assistance in respect for the participation of a delegation of 40 persons in the *Coupe des Clubs de l'Océan Indien* to be held in Réunion Island from 05 to 10 December 2010.

My Ministry provided an amount of Rs150,000 over and above the normal budget of the federation to enable participation.

Mr Quirin: M. le président, le ministre peut-il nous dire dans ce cas pourquoi son ministère n'a déboursé que pour douze billets d'avion alors que toute l'équipe avait aussi besoin d'être hébergé et nourri à la Réunion ?

Mr Ritoo: Following discussions with the representatives of the federation, I have a letter where the President of the Federation agrees that only one team will participate. He accepted at the end because he has already exhausted the entire budget. I think I have already informed the hon. Member on various questions put to me that each federation is allocated a budget upon consultation with respective federation to run its business. When the budget is exhausted, we don't have any addition funds and in this case this federation – the Handball Federation had a budget of Rs900,000 and has already an excess of Rs400, 000.

Mr Quirin: M. le président peut-on connaître du ministre la politique de son ministère par rapport au déplacement des disciplines collectives à l'étranger ?

The Deputy Speaker: No. This is a general question. We are here with one specific theme!

MINISTRY OF YOUTH & SPORTS – YOUTH ACTIVITIES

(No. 1B/776) **Mr F. Quirin (Third Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière)** asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether, in regard to youth activities organised by his Ministry, he will state the -

- (a) actions taken to ensure a better marketing thereof, and
- (b) budget allocated for the advertising and the marketing thereof for 2010 and 2011, respectively.

Mr Ritoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with regard to part (a) of the question I wish to inform the House that my Ministry has recourse to different public relations tools for the marketing of its youth activities. These include –

First, distribution of a by-annual calendar of activities to young people and other stakeholders;

Second, press conferences to provide information about major activities and events organised by my Ministry such as *Special Vacance*, Youth Excellence Award and the National Youth Day;

Third, media coverage through the Government Information Services;

Fourth, issue and distribution among the youth of magazines, newsletters and pamphlets;

Fifth, advertisement in newspapers inviting participation in competitions, awards and training courses organised by my Ministry;

Sixth, promotion of youth activities through the programme *Info Jeunes* on MBC/TV;

Seventh, posting of related information on my Ministry's Website;

Eighth, broadcast of clips on youth activities in collaboration with the Mauritius College of the Air and the Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation;

Ninth, my Ministry proposes to set up a one stop shop for the youth whose functions would be to provide information pertaining to youth activities, providing guidance to young people and serving as a research and documentation centre amongst others.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, regarding part (b) of the question, it is good to note that not all of our PR and marketing tools have a financial implication. For example, we do not pay for media coverage of youth activities in newspapers, radio and television. In 2010, an amount of Rs631,000 was provided in the Budget, under item Publications and Stationery, while the amount for 2011 stands at Rs661,000.

Mr Quirin: M. le président, j'ai constaté dans les *estimates* du budget 2011, qu'on parle de *lack of interest* par rapport aux activités concernant la jeunesse en particulier. Le ministre peut-il nous donner les raisons de ce qui est spécifié?

Mr Ritoo: That's why I stated that we are putting a one-stop shop to provide information pertaining to youth activities and providing guidance to young people, serving as a research and documentation centre, so that they can participate in all the activities of the youth.

Mr Bhagwan: *Le ministre peut-il nous dire le succès derrière la base de ces youth centres? Je me rappelle qu'à l'époque de Michael Glover, il y a eu la création de ces youth centres. Le succès dépend du youth organiser or youth officer of that particular youth centre. I take, for example, the Barkly Youth Centre, where there is no activity; where the officer is not present. So, can the hon. Minister inquire and give a reply to the House as to whether all the youth centres have an attached youth officer to them? Is an assessment being done on the performance of the youth centres, in terms of motivation, mobilising the youths, especially during vacation period?*

Mr Ritoo: Normally, the person in charge of the youth centre should be someone very much motivated. He should himself serve as a model, and should come and inculcate among the youths of his vicinity to participate in all the activities. So, normally this is the job of the Youth Officer, and I will see to it that this is done correctly.

FESTIVAL MONDIAL DES ARTS NEGRES – MAURITIAN DELEGATION

(No. 1B/777) **Mrs F. Labelle (Third Member for Vacoas & Floreal)** asked the Minister of Arts and Culture whether, in regard to the third edition of the *Festival Mondial des Arts Nègres*, which is being held in Dakar and St Louis, in Senegal, as from 10 December 2010, he will state if a Mauritian delegation is attending thereto and, if so, indicate the composition thereof and, if not, why not.

Mr Choonee: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, a Mauritian delegation, headed by Mr Alain Gordon-Gentil, Senior Adviser at the Culture and Avenir Unit of the Prime Minister's Office, and comprising of Mr Lewis Dick, sculptor, is participating in the *Troisième Edition du Festival Mondial des Arts Nègres* to be held in Senegal as from 10 December 2010.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Minister whether any action has been initiated to encourage artists to participate in this *Festival Mondial des Arts Nègres*? We have sent an adviser, but what about the artists themselves? How many artists have benefited from this?

Mr Choonee: There is one artist.

Mr Bérenger: Is the hon. Minister, straight-faced, telling us that the Mauritius delegation comprises of one adviser and one artist? That's it?

Mr Choonee: This is the information I have.

Mrs Labelle: Must I take it, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that nothing has been done to encourage our artists to participate in this festival?

Mr Choonee: The fact that an artist is accompanying the adviser is already an indication that there is an artist accompanying, and that something has been done for the artist to participate.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order!

Mr Bérenger: Is the hon. Minister aware that there is another artist participating? In fact, she is putting up an artistic show relating to the Chagossians. Is he aware of that? Has she been helped in any way?

Mr Choonee: I do not have this information, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

**MEDICAL BOARDS - MEDICAL PRACTITIONERS - EMPLOYMENT ON
SESSIONAL BASIS**

(No. 1B/778) **Dr. S. Boolell (Second Member for Curepipe & Midlands)** asked the Minister of Social Security, National Solidarity and Reform Institutions whether, in regard to the doctors employed by her Ministry, she will state the criteria for -

- (a) the selection thereof to -
 - (i) sit on the Medical Board, and
 - (ii) effect home visits, indicating the composition of the selection panel, and
- (b) their postings.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with regard to part (a) of the question, the House may be informed that my Ministry employs medical practitioners on a sessional basis to form part of the Medical Boards in various regions of the island, and to effect home visits to severely disabled persons aged 75 or more and elderly persons aged 90 or more, as well as bedridden beneficiaries of basic pensions. The medical practitioners are recruited from outside the Public Service, and the criteria for selection are that they should be registered under the Medical Council Act to practice in Mauritius, and should not have reached their 70th birthday by the closing date of the submission of their applications.

The applicants are expected to have the relevant experience, especially in dealing with disabled or elderly persons and other vulnerable groups. The recruitment exercise is carried out by my Ministry, under delegated powers from the Public Service Commission, and applications are received in response to a press communiqué issued by my Ministry. The interviewing exercise is carried out by a panel, chaired by the Permanent Secretary of my Ministry and consisting of the Director of the Medical Unit of my Ministry, along with a representative of the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life. The selected list of applicants is ultimately submitted to the Public Service Commission for approval.

With regard to part (b) of the question, the Medical Director schedules medical boardings or visits in places outside their area of residence and where they do not have their private

practice. Changes in the regions assigned for medical boards and visits are also made at regular intervals.

Ms Deerpalsing: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Minister whether she is aware that, precisely because the Medical Board is on sessional basis for the doctors, the 'judgment' they give is very erratic, that is, the same person could go to a Medical Board where there are some other doctors, and get a different opinion. So, is the hon. Minister aware of this disparity?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: In fact, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in case someone feels that, for one reason or the other, he has not been treated fairly, there is always the possibility to go to the Medical Tribunal for an appeal. A Magistrate chairs the Tribunal which is composed of two other members – a specialist and a medical practitioner.

VETERINARY SCHOOL - SETTING UP

(No. 1B/779) Dr. S. Boolell (Second Member for Curepipe & Midlands) asked the Minister of Tertiary Education, Science, Research and Technology whether, in regard to the veterinary services, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Tertiary Education Commission, information as to if it has received any application for the setting up of a veterinary school and, if so, indicate -

- (a) the names of the promoters thereof and of their local partners, if any
- (b) if this institution will be recognised internationally, including by the Indian Veterinary Council, and
- (c) if a survey has been carried out to assess the needs for veterinary services locally and regionally.

Dr. Jeetah: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with regard to part (a), I am informed by the Tertiary Education Commission that, at present, there is no veterinary school operating in Mauritius. On 13 July 2010, the Commission received an application from the JIS Group, which was set up in 1948, and is based in Kolkata, India, for the setting up of a tertiary education institution to offer an undergraduate programme in veterinary services. The Group has diverse interests in education, health services, dairy products, animal and poultry feeding.

The promoter had approached the University of Mauritius to be the awarding body, and the matter is under consideration by the institution. No local partners are associated with the promoter so far.

The Board of Investment is assisting the promoters to set up their institution.

With regard to part (b), at this stage, the issue of recognition does not arise, since the institution that would be the awarding body has not yet been finalised. In the event that it is the University of Mauritius, the academic programme will be recognised. However, in order to practice as a veterinary surgeon, the graduate will have to register with the relevant Professional Council, that is, the Veterinary Council of Mauritius for Mauritian students, or the Indian Veterinary Council for Indian students. This will be possible only after the first cohort of students has graduated from the institution, which is the normal practice worldwide.

As regards part (c) of the question, the House may wish to be informed that veterinary science is included in the list of Indicative Priority Fields of Study, which is worked out every two years by a Working Group, after wide consultations. The Working Group is constituted of representatives from both the public and private sectors, and the last list was worked out in 2009. Representatives of the public sector comprised the Tertiary Education Commission, the Ministry of Education and Human Resources, the Central Statistical Office, the Ministry of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment, the MRC, the UTM, the University of Mauritius, the HRDC, the BOI, and the Financial Services Commission. The private sector was constituted of the MEF and *l'HRIM*.

Several initiatives have already been taken to diversify the panoply of programmes offered in the tertiary education sector. In the same vein, it is considered high time for veterinary science to be introduced in the sector.

The House may wish to know that the MSPCA has raised no objection to the setting up of the Veterinary College in Mauritius.

Dr. S. Boolell: Could the hon. Minister be in a position to say whether, at this stage, a certain number of seats would be reserved for local students or are there open admissions?

Dr. Jeetah: No, we do not have restrictions imposed as yet, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, but I must say that this is a priority for Mauritius to be in a situation where we have a Vet school locally.

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I did not hear very clearly the first part of the answer. In the event that such a school is promoted by an independent private organisation from overseas, may I know whether the pre-existing rule that such a degree awarding body must already be in operation and recognised in its country of origin? Does that rule still hold?

Dr. Jeetah: I think the question here is for them to satisfy the conditions of the universities wishing to collaborate with them locally.

Mr Obeegadoo: My question is very clear, since we know what problems we experienced in the case of the Dental School where the group was not even recognised by the University Grants Commission in India. My question to the hon. Minister is: does that rule still apply? If it is a foreign group, a foreign entity seeking to establish in Mauritius to award degrees, then that entity must already be operating in its country of origin and must be recognised by the competent authorities there.

Dr. Jeetah: From my understanding they are not offering the course as yet in their country.

Mr Obeegadoo: My question again one last time: does that rule still stand that no entity will be allowed to operate in Mauritius unless it is already recognised and operating as such in its country of origin?

Dr. Jeetah: I thought, I answered Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. Since, they are not offering the course from whatever country they are coming from, therefore, the question does not apply.

The Deputy Speaker: We can't insist. Next question, hon. Ms Deerpalsing!

INSTITUTE FOR JUDICIAL AND LEGAL STUDIES – SETTING UP

(No. 1B/780) Ms K. R. Deerpalsing (Third Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes) asked the Attorney General whether, in regard to the setting up of an Institute for Judicial and Legal Studies, he will state where matters stand.

Mr Varma: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I thank the hon. Member for this question. As stated at paragraph 290 of the Government Programme 2010/2015, Government is committed to the setting up of a fully-fledged institute for the continuous training of Judges, Magistrates and law officers. And, as recently announced by the Minister of Finance in his Budget Speech, Government is, indeed, and true to its words, 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.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I wish to inform the House that my Office has, for some time now, been working on a Bill to provide for the establishment of the above Institute. I must point out that this Bill will be introduced together with another Bill, namely the Law Practitioners (Amendment) Bill, since the two Bills will be dealing with interrelated matters.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I can today say that the Bills will be finalised shortly, and introduced in the National Assembly after Government approval is obtained in relation thereto.

Ms Deerpalsing: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, can the hon. Attorney General inform the House whether the legislation that is being prepared will made provisions for compulsory induction courses for judicial officers and for continuous development courses for all law practitioners?

Mr Varma: This is what is being envisaged too, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

Mr Obeegadoo: Do we understand from the hon. Minister that this Institute is to be set up in time for it to take over the practical organisation of the next Bar Vocational Examinations?

Mr Varma: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as I have stated in my reply, this Bill has to go together with the Law Practitioners Amendment Bill. The Institute for Judicial and Legal Studies will be set up for the compulsory induction courses for all prospective judicial officers and for the continuous professional development courses for law practitioners.

Mr Seetaram: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, concerning the setting up of the Institute of Judicial and Legal Studies, can the Attorney General inform the House whether his Ministry has sought advice in conjunction of the setting up of the Institute with countries like France or the *Ecole de la Magistrature*, for example?

Mr Varma: Indeed, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I spoke to his Excellency the French High Commissioner, Mr Dobelle, and he has promised his help.

Mr Bérenger: I would like to go back to the question which hon. Obeegadoo asked. We heard the hon. Attorney General say that he wants the two Bills to move together, therefore, the Law Practitioners Bill; but, we know that young people have gone through several years d'*enfer*. The question was: will the Bill concerning law practitioners have been voted and structures put in place in time for the next exams?

Mr Varma: Well, as I have stated, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as soon as Government approval is obtained the Bills will be introduced in the National Assembly. I do agree that time is of the essence but, as the hon. Leader of the Opposition will know, the enrolment for the next year has already taken place as far as the courses being run by the Counsel Legal Education are concerned. It seems that it won't be for year 2011, but rather for the following year.

Mr Uteem: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in respect to the Judicial and Legal Studies Institution that is being set up, may I know from the hon. Attorney General whether, in respect to continuous education to law practitioners and judges -

- (i) will these be compulsory;
- (ii) who will dispense the courses, and
- (iii) what will be the charges, if any.

Mr Varma: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the hon. gentleman should be patient. The Bill will be before this National Assembly and we will have ample time to debate on the Bills, but it is being envisaged for CPD to be compulsory.

Mr Seetaram: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in the mean time, will the hon. Attorney General consider that the Institute runs seminars, workshops for legal employees of the law practitioners and for court officers?

Mr Varma: Again, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this is what is being envisaged.

Mr Ganoo: Is the hon. Attorney General aware that, in fact - as far as I remember - no provisions were made in the estimates concerning this Institute?

Mr Varma: Actually, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we have contacted the Ministry of Finance in that respect. It will fall under administration of justice.

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, if I may go back to the issue of the vocational examinations, given the earlier commitment of the Minister to review the whole matter, including curriculum, teaching, lecturing and practical organisation of the examinations, may I appeal to the hon. Attorney General that even if this Institute and the related legislation is not ready in time, that students be not subjected to the same experience that they have known over the last two years?

Mr Varma: I don't get the point raised by the hon. gentleman, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, because the courses are currently being run by the council of legal education and they had a date when the enrolment should have been done. The students have enrolled themselves for the course to be run next year. As I informed the House, the Bills are almost finalised and I do agree that the system should be changed. I gave a commitment to this House and I have to honour that commitment that I have given. We have to finalise the Bills and, as soon as Government approval is obtained, we will introduce the Bills and then, as I said, the courses will be run thereafter. What is being envisaged is by another institution but we have to finalise the Bills, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

JUDGES RULES

(No. 1B/781) Ms K. R. Deerpalsing (Third Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes) asked the Attorney General whether, in regard to the Judges Rules, he will state if Government proposes to bring changes thereto, and if so –

- (a) when, and
- (b) give details thereof.

Mr Varma: Again, I thank the hon. Member for her question.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Judges Rules, in the form that we know them now, date back to 1965. In Mauritius, the Police and other bodies investigating offences are still governed by the Judges Rules. The Rules were issued as a guide to Police officers conducting investigations, particularly for questioning suspects in relation to criminal offences and it is arguable that changes in this area are long overdue.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in the Government Programme, at paragraph 288, the following is stated -

“The evidential rules, in particular, the Judges Rules relating to criminal evidence and procedure, will be reviewed and new legislation will be introduced to take into account developments in the law, in particular the reinforcement of human rights, be it for the accused or the victims.”

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have to highlight that, in July 2010, the Law Reform Commission, which operates under the aegis of my office, published a Paper entitled “Criminal Investigations, Reform of Police Procedures and Practices.” In this Paper, the Law Reform Commission stated -

“The Commission is of the opinion that the adoption of legislation and codes of practice for Police and other Law Enforcement Officers on same line as in 1984, UK Police and Criminal Evidence Act or Jersey Police Procedures and Criminal Evidence Law 2003 is the way forward for greater professionalism and transparency in the conduct of criminal investigations.”

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I wish to inform the House that my office is working closely with the drafting Consultant to bring appropriate reforms in relation to the Judges Rules to take into account the Mauritian realities and to ensure that the rights of suspects and victims are respected.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, my office will be coming with a new legislation which will replace the Judges Rules. The new legislation will not be limited to replacing the Judges Rules. We will, in fact, be reviewing the law of investigation, criminal procedure and evidence.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, a draft Bill is ready and consultations with stakeholders have already been planned. We are planning to finalise the Bill during the course of next year.

Ms Deerpalsing: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Attorney General whether the Judges Rules have force of law or whether, according to what he has answered, the new, whatever will replace it, will have force of law?

Mr Varma: Actually, as the Judges Rules are, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, they do not have force of law, they are only practice directions.

Mr Uteem: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, may I know from the hon. Attorney General whether the idea of coming along with the concept of *Juge d'instruction* is still on board or not?

Mr Varma: Actually, it was a very good idea which was initiated by the former Attorney General. We have given due consideration to that idea, but I think the Mauritian concept of *Juge d'instruction* is behind us.

Mr Obeegadoo: May I know from the hon. Minister whether the draft Criminal Evidence Bill has been communicated to the Bar Council on the one hand and to relevant NGOs such as Amnesty International on the other?

Mr Varma: I stated earlier on in my reply, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that the draft Bill is ready. We have planned a series of consultations which will take place during the course of next year.

Mr Seetaram: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the hon. Attorney General mentioned the new PCEA, that is, the Police and Criminal Evidence Act, Mauritian version, that is to be planned as recommended by the Law Reform Commission. Would the Attorney General consider all aspects of the UK PCEA, that is, the UK Police and Criminal Evidence Act or there would be a sort of hybrid system including all Commonwealth Jurisdiction and whether studies have been carried out for all Commonwealth Jurisdiction and that of Mauritius as well?

Mr Varma: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we are, in fact, drawing inspiration from the UK legislation, that is, the Police and Criminal Evidence Act, but we will be moving one step further, because the new legislation that is being prepared will encompass investigation, procedure and evidence.

Mr Ganoo: Can the hon. Attorney General tell us who are the stakeholders that the Ministry or himself intends to consult and whether he intends to consult also the Chairperson of the National Human Rights Commission?

Mr Varma: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the hon. gentleman, on the other side of the House, knows that I am for the process of consultation; they have been consulted on a number of issues. It is quite normal that when the consultation process takes place we consult the Judiciary, the DPP, the Bar Council, the Law Society, if necessary, the Chamber of Notaries, the Human Rights Commission, the Law Reform Commission and the Commissioner of Police. All the stakeholders will be consulted; even the Opposition will be consulted.

LE CORNU, STE CROIX - WATER ACCUMULATION

(No. 1B/782) Ms A. Perraud (Fourth Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue) asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping whether he is aware of the problem of water accumulation at Le Cornu, Ste Croix, which occurs during heavy rainfalls, thereby causing flooding and compelling the closing down of the secondary school found thereat for several days and if so, will he state if it is proposed to put up drains in the region.

Mr Bachoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the National Development Unit has been requested to look into the issue and to initiate appropriate action.

Mrs Perraud: Pourrais-je demander au ministre quand est-ce que les travaux vont débiter, parce que c'est une situation qui dure depuis des années et c'est un gros problème pour le collègue en question et les régions avoisinantes ?

(Interruptions)

Mr Bachoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as at now, NDU does not have any contractor in Constituency No. 1. I am awaiting the appointment of contractors. Once contractors are appointed, the work should start.

LONG MOUNTAIN VILLAGE COUNCIL – ELECTRICITY SUPPLY

(No. 1B/783) Ms A. Perraud (Fourth Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue) asked the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether he is aware that the Long Mountain Village Council is not being provided with electricity and if so, will he, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Pamplemousses/Rivière du Rempart District Council, information as to since when this situation is prevailing, indicating if remedial measures will be taken in relation thereto.

Mr Aimée: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Pamplemousses-Rivière du Rempart District Council that the Long Mountain Village Hall is provided with electricity supply.

Mr Lesjongard: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I thank my colleague for asking this question, because some months ago we had a meeting, there was no electricity supply in the village council. Can I know from the Minister when they had paid their bill and when the electricity was released?

Mr Aimée: The only information I have is that now there is electricity. At a certain time, maintenance work was being carried out at the village hall. I think one or two weeks before.

CHITRAKOOT GOVERNMENT SCHOOL - LAND EROSION - STUDY

(No. 1B/784) Ms A. Perraud (Fourth Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether, in regard to the Chittrakoot Government School, he will state the date on which the study that was commissioned to look into the land erosion problem thereat started, indicating the conclusions thereof.

The Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping (Mr A. Bachoo): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I would like to answer this question.

The contract for a preliminary phase of geotechnical investigations at Chittrakoot was awarded in September 2005. The investigations comprised the drilling of boreholes in order to acquire critical data and to enable determination of the scope for a further phase of investigations.

The contract for the second phase of investigations was awarded to Sotramon Ltée on 05 February 2007. The scope of works under the contract included the drilling of 18 boreholes, installation of piezometres, that is, instruments to monitor ground water level, soil testing and installation of instrumentation for the monitoring of ground movements, both at ground and sub-surface levels.

The investigations have been completed. The report being highly technical, action is being taken to examine and interpret the report by geotechnical experts and thereafter identify and design stabilisation measures, implement stabilisation works and carry out post stabilisation monitoring and analysis.

In the meantime, corrective measures have been taken to restore damaged infrastructure and the works have already been completed.

Constant monitoring is being carried out and according to on-site visual data collected by my Ministry, it has been observed that there have been no signs of further ground displacement despite adverse climatic conditions including ex-Lola flooding.

Mr Obeegadoo: Without being a specialist, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, may I ask the Minister to provide some explanation as to why this study which he rightly said was initiated by the MSM/MMM Government in 2005 has not yielded any concrete action six years later?

Mr Bachoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I just mentioned this is a monitoring exercise which is being conducted, it is a highly technical issue and in Mauritius we have hardly one geo-technical expert. We have approached the Japanese authorities for the past so many years and, unfortunately, till now we have not received any such expert. Ultimately, what we have decided, now, we have gone towards India, we have advertised the post to recruit a geo-technical expert and I hope that once we get the experts we will be in a position to assess the situation and, if we can, go a bit faster than that.

Mr Lesjongard: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, can I ask the hon. Minister whether he is aware that some of the houses located within the danger zone of the soil erosion have still not been vacated?

Mr Bachoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we have made proposals and that dates back to 2005/2006. Since that time onwards, we had been requesting them to vacate. If I am not mistaken, we have offered them alternative sites. The PPS of that region is fully aware of the situation. We had gone to them, we had spoken to them and we had requested them to vacate. We had given them alternative sites, but they want to stick to the same place and, unfortunately, that is very costly; we will not be able to afford to take any corrective measures there.

MUNICIPAL COUNCIL OF VACOAS/PHOENIX - MAYOR'S FUND - DISBURSEMENTS

(No. IB/785) Dr. R. Sorefan (Fourth Member for La Caverne & Phoenix) asked the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the Mayor's Fund, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Municipal Council of Vacoas/Phoenix, a breakdown of the disbursements therefrom, since October 2005 to date, indicating, in each case, the -

- (a) names of the beneficiaries;
- (b) quantum thereof, and
- (c) purpose therefor.

Mr Aimée: Mr Speaker, Sir, the information requested by the hon. Member is being compiled by the Municipal Council of Vacoas/Phoenix and will be placed in the Library as soon as same will be made available.

FIRE SERVICES - VEHICLES

(No. IB/786) Mr D. Nagalingum (Second Member for Stanley & Rose Hill) asked the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the vehicles of the Government Fire Services, aged ten years or above, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from Fire Services, a list thereof, indicating -

- (a) where they are attached, and
- (b) if actions will be taken for the renewal thereof and if so, when and if not, why not.

Mr Aimée: Mr Speaker, Sir, the list of vehicles of the Government Fire Services which are aged above ten years together with information regarding type, make and their posting is being placed in the Library.

With regard to part (b) of the question, I am informed that contract for the acquisition of 5 new fire fighting and rescue vehicles has already been awarded and their delivery is expected by the end of year 2011. Government has taken a decision that the Fire Services Department should acquire a Turntable Ladder with an articulated boom and platform which will be capable for operations in tight access areas and high rise buildings.

I wish to inform the House that the Government Fire Services also proposes in line with its vehicle replacement policy to acquire 20 semi-urban mobile firefighting vehicles in the near future.

The Deputy Speaker: Time is over!

MOTION**SUSPENSION OF S.O.10 (2)**

The Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities (Dr. R. Beebeejaun): Mr Speaker, 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 vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development rose and seconded.

Question put and agreed to.

PUBLIC BILLS*First Reading*

On motion made and seconded the following Bills were read a first time –

- (a) The Finance (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill (No. XX of 2010);*
- (b) The Additional Remuneration (2011) Bill (No. XXI of 2010)*

Third Reading

On motion made and seconded the Appropriation (2011) Bill (No. XVII of 2010) was read a third time and passed.

At 3.53 p.m. the sitting was suspended.

On resuming at 4.35 p.m. with Mr Speaker in the Chair.

*Second Reading***THE ADDITIONAL REMUNERATION (2011) BILL****(No. XXI OF 2010)***Order for second reading read.***The Minister of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment (Mr S. Mohamed):**

Mr Speaker, Sir, I move that the Additional Remuneration (2011) Bill (No. XXI of 2010) be read a second time.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the object of this Bill is to provide for the payment of an additional remuneration to employees of the private sector drawing a monthly basic wage or salary of Rs30,000 or less as a measure of compensation for the increase in the cost of living for the last financial year.

As announced in the Government Programme 2010-2015, the National Pay Council which determined the quantum of the salary compensation for the years 2007 to 2009 has been phased out and replaced by a sub-committee of the National Tripartite Forum set up on 25 of October 2010. The sub-committee of the National Tripartite Forum, Mr Speaker, Sir, is operating under the aegis of my Ministry. The quantum of the salary compensation for year 2011 has been decided following discussions with both workers' and employers' organisations at the level of the sub-committee and at a meeting chaired by the vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Finance and Economic Development. It has been decided that for 2011, the salary compensation will not be given across the board and that –

- (a) a salary compensation of 3.2% be paid to employees drawing basic salary of up to Rs5000 per month;
- (b) a salary compensation of Rs175 be paid to employees drawing above Rs5000 up to Rs12,000 per month, and
- (c) a salary compensation of Rs190 be paid to employees drawing above Rs12,000 up to Rs30,000 per month.

Mr Speaker, Sir, contrary to the criteria used by the National Pay Council to determine the quantum of the annual salary compensation since 2007, inflation rate has been the only

criterion used this year. Despite the fact that the inflation rate is only 2.7% in 2010, Government has made a special effort to compensate workers at the lowest rung of the ladder by giving them 3.2% increase. In addition, the minimum salary on which full compensation will be paid has been raised from Rs4000 per month to Rs5000.

Government's decision in approving the payment of the above salary compensation strikes the right balance between responding to the current economic imperatives and providing workers with the best possible compensation that could be afforded in these difficult times when the international and financial crisis is still persisting. We all know what is happening in Europe. The United Kingdom is facing its worst unemployment crisis, when the Republic of Ireland, a hallmark of success in Europe, has just received 85 billion Euros of bail-out from the EU and the IMF. Spain is under the employment rate of 17% and thousands of Italians are protesting against bleak job prospects, reduced welfare and education. France, on its part, is facing a lot of uproar because of pension reforms.

In the United States, unemployment has surged to 28% this year and President Obama has just announced a two-year pay freeze for civil servants.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I have to lay stress that reckoning with the fact that -

- the Additional Remuneration legislation makes provision for the payment of salary compensation to private sector workers;
- enforcement of the said legislation lies with my Ministry, and
- Remuneration Orders Regulations will have to be amended accordingly by the Ministry of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment; it has been the practice these past years for the Minister to whom the portfolio of labour has been entrusted, to present the Additional Remuneration Bill to this August Assembly.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I wish to seize this opportunity, to reassure the House that although the Bill is meant for private sector workers, the same rate of compensation will also be applicable to employees of the public sector.

The payment of the salary compensation is expected to cost around Rs1.345 m. to the economy – Rs640 m. for the public sector and Rs707 m. to the private sector. 86,700 employees in the public sector, representing 87% of the total number of employees will benefit from the salary compensation, while in the private sector, some 308,000 employees representing 95% of

the total workforce will benefit there from. I would like to earnestly appeal to employees who will not benefit from the salary compensation this year, to accept this decision in a spirit of solidarity with the more vulnerable segments of the population.

Once enacted, Mr Speaker, Sir, the Additional Remuneration Bill will impose a legal obligation on all employers in the private sector, whatever be the status of their finances or whether they are in the formal and informal sector, to pay the prescribed minimum compensation to their employees. I would like to have made here, Mr Speaker, Sir, a second appeal and this one a special one. A special appeal to all enterprises which can afford to pay a higher compensation, to do so is indeed a gesture of solidarity. It is an undoubted fact, Mr Speaker, Sir, that there are lot of enterprises out there which are performing well and may, therefore, have the capacity to pay more. Once again, I say: that this appeal is a special one because it is incumbent upon them, to show this gesture of solidarity and they have to do it.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I have to draw the attention of the House that following the coming into operation of the Employment Relations Act since 02 February 2009, there is also the possibility for employers and workers to negotiate at industry level and even at enterprise level on any additional compensation to be paid. This can be done through the collective bargaining process, which is one of the prominent features of the Act. To promote collective bargaining, the new legislation sets out in a structured manner the conditions for its harmonious development that is why they should not be ignored.

With these words, I wish to commend the Bill to the House.

Dr. Bunwaree rose and seconded.

(4.44 p.m.)

Mr P. Bérenger (First Member for Stanley & Rose Hill): Mr Speaker, Sir, the facts are there and instead of speaking only on the year that is behind us, 2010 and the forthcoming 2011, we have to start with the fact that the employees and even more so, *les pensionnés, les veuves et les orphelins*, have lost their purchasing power between 2005-2010. I am not going to repeat arguments that we have gone over on several occasions recently, including Budget time. But, this is a fact, employees, *les pensionnés, les veuves et les orphelins* have lost their purchasing power between 2005-2010. This year 2010 is coming to an end - something around 20%. The present Minister of Finance, in his by now famous December 2009 speech, when he was still in the Opposition, quantified the loss of purchasing power at 17%. So there has been this loss of purchasing power.

Then there is the figure for inflation for 2010. The hon. Minister of Labour has repeated the figure contained in the Budget Speech, that is, for year 2010 till the end of 2010, inflation will have increased by 2.7%. We know that this is already behind us, Mr Speaker, Sir. With that figure of 2.7% inflation in 2010, Government proposed and imposed a wage compensation of 1.3% average with 3.2% up to Rs5,000 and nothing above Rs30,000, an upgraded scale as in the past, Mr Speaker, Sir. But all these are already behind us, since the hon. Minister of Finance referred to a 2.7% inflation rate for 2010, we know what has happened. *Une cascade d'augmentation de prix et de tarif*. It is as if Government waited for the wage compensation to be decided upon and for the Budget to go through Parliament and immediately after, *une cascade d'augmentation*.

The inflation that we are seeing now is policy induced. It is not imported inflation. It is not inflation because the US dollar is behaving this way or the other, no. It is policy induced inflation. *La cascade d'augmentation de prix que nous sommes en train de vivre ces jours ci, est dûe, soit à des décisions du gouvernement d'augmenter l'électricité, le transport ou des décisions contenues dans le budget*. But, the end result is what it is, *une cascade d'augmentation de prix*.

Across the board, 10% increase in electricity tariffs, 20% increase in bus transport fees, increase in the price of a lot of products; *farine, l'huile comestible, yogourt, poulet, fertilisant* because we now have value added tax on the *intrans* going into these locally manufactured or produced products like the increase in excise duties and increase in user fees. All these have been happening since the presentation of the Budget, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Therefore, it is totally unacceptable to stick to that figure of 2.7% inflation rate for 2010. *C'est complètement dépassé, M. le président.* Indeed, what did we read these recent years? That the Bank of Mauritius - on the basis of the policy induced, increases in prices, tariffs - now expects that the inflation rate for year 2010 ending at the end of this month, for the year 2010. The Bank of Mauritius re-estimates that the rate of inflation will be 5.7%, Mr Speaker, Sir, with more to come, with the projection that by the end of June 2011, the rate of inflation will be above 7%. These are figures put forward by the Bank of Mauritius. I don't think it is proper for the hon. Minister to simply ignore the new figures put forward on the basis of the present on-going increases in prices and tariffs, Mr Speaker, Sir. Not only that, *il y a déjà cette cascade d'augmentation* and there is more to come, an increase in the water rate has already been announced. Inevitably, next time, prices of diesel, *l'essence* and petroleum products are looked at and they will increase also. So, all that have taken place since Budget time and we have more to come. CWA rates, diesel, *l'essence* and so on.

Therefore, the Bank of Mauritius had a fresh look at its figures, and estimates that the rate of inflation 2010 will be 5.7%, and expects that it will rise to above 7% in the course of the following six months, that is, by end of June. Therefore, la compensation salariale proposée aujourd'hui, comme hier, est totalement dépassée. Cette compensation salariale de 3.2%, *up to* R 5,000 par mois, a été déjà complètement avalée, engloutie par la cascade d'augmentation de prix que nous avons eue depuis la présentation du budget il y a quelques semaines de cela.

That is why I have circulated an amendment, which is not what the trade unions request. But, in a way, *on ne peut pas être plus royaliste que le roi.* We go by the figure with which the Bank of Mauritius has come forward. I have circulated an amendment to the effect that, instead of a wage compensation of 3.2% up to Rs5,000 per month, the figure of 3.2% be replaced by 5.7%, that is, the rate of inflation estimated by the Bank of Mauritius, and for employees above Rs5,000 up to Rs12,000, instead of Rs175 - it is an automatic adjustment - Rs310, and above

Rs12,000, instead of Rs190, Rs340. The basic idea behind this amendment is a minimum wage compensation and, therefore, *une augmentation des pensions, des allocations sociales de 5.7%, au lieu de 3.2%, au bas de l'échelle.*

As I said, I have refrained from proposing and giving more than that. We have refrained from proposing something for those above Rs30,000; we have refrained from proposing something special for our brothers and sisters in Rodrigues and Agalega who deserve a special treatment, especially this year. Therefore, I have circulated this amendment, Mr Speaker, Sir, and, at Committee Stage, I will move for that amendment.

To conclude, the wage compensation proposed today, which is the same as was proposed some weeks back, *est complètement dépassée, complètement insuffisante.* The wage compensation, through the amendment I have circulated, *n'est pas suffisante, mais c'est un pas en avant.* I hope that the House will give due consideration and approve the amendment, which I have circulated.

Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir.

(4.53 p.m.)

The vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development (Mr P. Jugnauth): Mr Speaker, Sir, the debates on the Additional Remuneration (2011) Bill give me the opportunity to explain, once again, Government's position and Government's philosophy, and the decision that we have taken as regards to salary compensation that is payable to workers as from January 2011 but also, at the same time, to react to the remarks that have been made by the hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Let me, Mr Speaker, Sir, say, right at the outset, that there are certain fundamental issues, certain fundamental principles that have been, and that have guided all governments throughout the years. I say all governments; whoever has been in power, whoever has been in government, has gone along a number of guiding principles. Salary compensation, under the tripartite mechanism, for a particular financial year, has always been paid with respect to the rise in the cost of living, which is measured by the rate of inflation and also with regard to other economic factors that have been prevailing for the past year.

Of course, one can argue, depending on who has been presiding over the tripartite mechanism, whether one has taken only inflation rate, whether one has also taken other economic factors. That is a matter, and I leave it for the appreciation of each and everyone, every time that the tripartite has sat and has decided on salary compensation.

The second thing that has guided all governments throughout is that the maximum percentage of salary compensation has always applied to those workers at the lowest rung of the ladder. Of course, depending on what ceiling each government would have applied but, with regard to that ceiling at the lowest rung of the ladder, the maximum compensation rate has always applied.

Third, no government, since independence, has ever given any compensation for what we call *rattrapage*, in terms of inflation that is not accounted for in previous years. This is very clear, Mr Speaker, Sir. These are the principles that have always been applied, as I said, and I must repeat it again, because I see, time and again, the same criticisms are being levelled not only by the Opposition but by some members of the trade unions also. That is why I am putting clearly these fundamental principles that have been followed by all governments up till now.

Mr Speaker, Sir, this Government is committed to dialogue, and believes in tripartism; in fact, as a basis for a fair distribution of income, to try, as I said, to provide the workers with the best compensation that the country can afford. This is very important. Standing and saying that we would wish that workers be compensated is easy, but one must always, especially when you are in a position of responsibility, take into account all the factors that prevail, particularly the economic factors, and also what the country can afford, in order to try to strike the right balance and compensate the workers of this country, whilst creating also, at the same time, the necessary conditions for economic growth. Because it will be economic growth that will definitely support employment creation and that will also go towards an increase in purchasing power of employees in the future.

I must say that we, in Government, have lived to the promises that we took in the electoral manifesto that we have published, and have lived to our promises in the Government Programme. In Government, we are proud, as has been stated by my colleague, despite the difficult economic situation that is prevailing. My colleague has rightly stated the situation that is prevailing in Europe. Why do we emphasise on Europe? It's because the Mauritian economy

is so much dependant on the European economy. Just to give you an idea, by taking three examples, most of our tourists come from Europe; most of our exports, in terms of the manufacturing sector, go to Europe; our sugar is exported to Europe, and we are paid in Euro.

This morning, I answered a question that was put. The fact that the Euro has been so volatile and has been more depreciating than appreciating, has made some of our sectors, in fact, prominent sectors of the economy, namely the tourist industry, the textile industry, the export, the manufacturing industry, have been hit by the negative situation that is prevailing in Europe. Therefore, taking that into consideration, Mr Speaker, Sir, we have given a salary compensation that is well above the inflation rate to workers at the lowest rung of the ladder. I still say - because we go according to the statistics - the rate of inflation that has been calculated for this year is 2.7% and the salary compensation for workers earning up to Rs5,000 a month is 3.2%, that is, 0.5% higher than the official inflation rate.

Let me, again, say - because there might still be a misinterpretation of what I am saying - when I presided over the tripartite, together with my colleagues, I stated in that meeting, towards the employers and towards the Trade Unionists that we are taking into consideration not only the rate of inflation, but the different economic factors that affect employment and that affect wages altogether, to come to that figure of 3.2%. In fact, we have heard criticisms from the Opposition. But there is one thing I have not heard the Opposition saying, when we increased the threshold for obtaining full 3.2% compensation from up to Rs5,000. I have not heard a single word from the Opposition, saying, at least, this is a good move and that we have increased the threshold.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I do not want to repeat what my colleague has said but, in other European countries, there are not only salary freeze but salary decrease. They are decreasing the number of employment of employees in the Civil Service. Here, we have taken the decision in the Budget, that we are increasing and we are going to recruit 2,000 youngsters in the Public Service. We are not laying off employees. In fact, we have demonstrated our consideration for the workers who produce the wealth of this country. As I said, I have presided over the Tripartite Meeting to give the signal that salary compensation is important for this Government, and that we cannot ignore the expectations of the working class, even in difficult times.

M. le président, l'honorable *Leader* de l'opposition a fait référence, encore une fois, à mon discours du 07 décembre 2009, surtout par rapport au rattrapage. Laissez-moi dire que,

quand on lit mon discours du 07 décembre 2009, je le répète, à aucun moment et aucune part, j'ai préconisé la compensation salariale par rapport au rattrapage, même pas le principe de rattrapage. J'ai dit que, chaque année, il y avait une perte du pouvoir d'achat - c'est ce que j'ai dit lorsque j'étais dans l'opposition - mais à aucun moment, lors des débats, je ne suis venu dire qu'il fallait rattraper toutes les années perdues. J'espère que le *Leader* de l'opposition – j'en suis sûr - a lu les deux autres discours que j'ai faits, toujours sur le *Additional Remuneration (No, II) Bill of 2009*. Là aussi, j'ai parlé longuement sur la question de compensation salariale. J'ai dit, clairement, dans ce discours, que –

« *compensation relates to the loss of purchasing power already encountered during the previous financial year* ».

Et, dans le *Additional Remuneration Bill* du 07 juillet 2009, et je vais citer aussi trois endroits, où je parle de la compensation, parce que c'est important pour que la population puisse savoir -

« M. le président, la compensation que l'on apporte aux travailleurs de ce pays n'est pas de l'aumône, ce n'est pas de la charité; c'est un dû pour compenser la perte du pouvoir d'achat qui a déjà été encourue durant l'année financière passée ».

Et, de plus, lorsqu'on va plus loin dans le discours, je dis and, *I quote* –

« La compensation salariale vise avant tout à rétablir le pouvoir d'achat que les travailleurs ont déjà perdu durant l'année financière écoulée et cette perte de pouvoir d'achat est reflétée par le taux d'inflation. »

Voilà, ce que j'ai dit, M. le président. Je continue le même discours où, j'ai dit, 'au nom de la population', et toujours quand j'étais dans l'opposition. Je lui fais rappeler que le Premier ministre était le Premier ministre à ce moment-là, et je faisais un appel au Premier ministre, et j'ai dit, *and I quote* –

« Au nom de la population, au nom de la justice sociale, au nom d'un nécessaire et urgent début de réconciliation entre l'économie et le social, je fais un pressant appel au gouvernement pour sérieusement considérer d'augmenter le taux de

compensation salariale 2009 de 5.1% à 7% soit l'équivalent du taux d'inflation officiel. »

M. le président, le taux d'inflation pour 2009 était de 7%. Le gouvernement d'alors avait donné une compensation maximum de 5.1%. Si, moi, j'avais préconisé une politique de rattrapage, qu'est-ce que j'aurai suggéré dans cette Chambre? Je n'aurai pas dit, écoutez, le taux d'inflation est de 7%, donnez 7%.

J'aurai dit : donnez beaucoup plus que 7% - si j'avais en tête, et si je voulais appliquer le principe de politique de rattrapage. M. le président, si on est honnête, si on regarde le discours, et si on le lit attentivement, ceci est la preuve que, jamais, à aucun moment, j'ai préconisé une politique de rattrapage.

M. le président, je l'ai dit, et je le répète encore une fois, l'autre jour j'ai montré à la Chambre ce que j'ai dit et *I stand by what I have said in the past*. Mais si l'honorable Chef de l'Opposition, qui parle de rattrapage - il vient de dire, 'j'ai noté que pendant 2005 à 2010, *the employees have lost their purchasing power*' and so on and so forth. Il sait déjà - d'après lui - que *they have lost their purchasing power*.

En 2010 on est allé à une élection générale, on a fait campagne. Il savait déjà que *they have lost their purchasing power and that there should be a* politique de rattrapage - d'après lui. Il a publié son manifeste électoral; il est venu et il a fait campagne. Aujourd'hui, c'est bon de préconiser le rattrapage ! Mais pourquoi, à l'époque, il n'a pas parlé et il n'a pas pris un engagement dans son manifeste électoral pour le rattrapage ?

Laissez-moi citer, M. le président, ce qu'ils ont dit dans leur manifeste de l'Alliance du Cœur, à la page 3, parmi les 12 mesures prioritaires –

« Stimuler le pouvoir d'achat des salariés et des pensionnés avec les tripartites pour une compensation annuelle en fonction de l'inflation. »

Cette même promesse électorale est reprise à la page 7 se rapportant à l'économie et les finances, et je cite –

« Une compensation salariale sera payée en fonction de l'inflation et de l'augmentation du coût de la vie. »

Voilà un engagement qui a été pris par l'opposition et *they have to be consistent with Members, they have to be fair!* Comme je l'ai dit, c'est tout ce que l'opposition avait préconisé. Et si l'opposition était sérieux, déjà à l'époque, sachant, d'après eux, comme ils ont dit, il y avait une perte de pouvoir d'achat 2005/2010, ils auraient mis dans leur programme *what they are going to do if they were serious*. Alors quand on est dans l'opposition, c'est trop facile de venir dire qu'il faut faire une politique de rattrapage.

En passant, je sais qu'il y aura l'honorable Li Kwong Wing qui va parler après moi; je répète, il a déjà fait le point à plusieurs reprises. Il a dit: "*the average compensation rate across all salary brackets when taking the salary compensation of 3.2% is, I think, 1.5% according to calculation throughout.*"

Again, Mr Speaker, Sir, I agree, but this is not new, this has always been the case. Always! And let me repeat again: *en 2000/2001, l'inflation était 4.4%*, average compensation across all salary brackets 2.7%; *en 2001/2002 l'inflation était de 6.3%*, average compensation across all salary brackets 2.7%; *en 2002/2003 l'inflation était de 5.1%*, average compensation across all salary brackets was 3.6%. D'ailleurs, j'espère que l'honorable membre qui va parler après moi va confirmer ces chiffres et si tel est le cas, M. le président, la question que je me pose est : qui était le ministre des finances pendant ces périodes ? C'était l'honorable *Leader* de l'opposition qui était le ministre des finances ! So, what applied at that time should not apply now! C'est cela la politique de deux poids deux mesures. What applied in the past should also apply now.

C'est une occasion pour moi de clarifier - puisque le *leader* de l'opposition est là - comment on est arrivé à ce mécanisme. On a présenté un *Discussion Paper* aux syndicats et aux employeurs. Les syndicats n'étaient pas d'accord, même les employeurs n'étaient pas d'accord, avec certaines parties du *Discussion Paper*. Ils ont fait connaître leur point de vue au gouvernement. Nous avons discuté des propositions qu'ils ont faites au niveau du gouvernement et nous avons modifié le *Discussion Paper* et, à un certain moment, on est tombé d'accord.

Et après que j'ai répondu à une PNQ pour dire que *the Discussion Paper emanates from Government*, qu'est-ce que le *Leader* de l'opposition vient dire ? Je cite -

« Il y a aussi, M. le président, le fameux *Discussion Paper* qui clairement a été introduit par le ministre des finances sans être passé par le conseil des ministres,

mais même pas avec le *green light* du Premier ministre. Il y a eu donc en dernière minute une catastrophe. »

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: No, the vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Finance had the opportunity to rebut that point when he summed up the debate. Now, we have to look at the compensation. There is no need to go back.

(Interruptions)

Order!

Mr Jugnauth: Mr Speaker, Sir, I heard the hon. Leader of the Opposition say '*ti l'esprit*'.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Please, order! Let the Minister ...

Mr Jugnauth: For him, everybody is '*ti l'esprit*'.

Mr Speaker: Please, carry on!

Mr Jugnauth: There is only one great mind in this country.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Carry on!

(Interruptions)

Order!

Mr Jugnauth: So, I had made this point because I must say we have gone through procedures. The Discussion Paper, when I said it emanates from Government, Government is Government; Government is not the Minister of Finance alone; Government is the whole Cabinet and this is what, in fact, we considered at that time.

M. le président, quand je dis que nous avons accordé un taux de compensation de 3.2%, laissez-moi venir sur ce que l'honorable *Leader* de l'opposition vient de dire, que ce n'est pas suffisant. Je me demande - et j'avais dit cela - quand, lui, il critique la politique monétaire de la banque centrale, il dit que la compensation qu'on a donné n'est pas suffisante, il parle de cascade

d'augmentation de prix. Lui, qu'est-ce qu'il préconise? Premièrement, il commence à flatter le gouverneur de la banque maintenant, mais il a critiqué le gouverneur de la banque pour dire que la politique monétaire qu'a adoptée la banque centrale n'est pas correcte parce qu'il y a une politique de roupie forte. Et il vient dire que la roupie est trop forte. En vérité, qu'est-ce qu'il vient dire ? Qu'il faut déprécier la roupie! Et nous savons que déprécier la roupie, cela veut dire que les prix des produits qui sont importés vont automatiquement être plus chers. Est-ce que c'est cela qui est dans l'intérêt des travailleurs et des consommateurs ?

C'est la même demande que certains, au niveau du secteur privé, avaient demandé à l'époque, qu'il fallait revoir l'*exchange rate* et qu'il fallait déprécier la roupie. Donc, nous voyons qui défend quel intérêt!

Mr Bérenger: On a point of order, Mr Speaker, Sir. He cannot impute motives that I am defending - *quel intérêt!* Shame!

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Exactly.

(Interruptions)

Order! Let me do my work! Yes, the Leader of the Opposition criticised the monetary policy of the Government. I thought that the Minister should connect that statement with the rate of inflation, i.e. inflation would go, etc. I don't think that he should say that...

(Interruptions)

Yes, but there is no need for the hon. Minister to compare.

Mr Jugnauth: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am saying that there has been a request by some people in the private sector to depreciate the rupee.

Mr Speaker: Yes, and then the hon. Minister said that we know who is defending what interest.

(Interruptions)

That is not fair!

(Interruptions)

Mr Jugnauth: I leave the people of this country to conclude.

Mr Speaker: That is a different matter. Let people draw up their own conclusion!

Mr Jugnauth: Mais, M. le président, je suis sûr que le peuple, les syndicalistes et les travailleurs n'ont pas oublié. Le *leader* de l'opposition devient le champion des travailleurs aujourd'hui lorsqu'il est dans l'opposition. Mais il ne faut pas oublier que ce qu'il est en train de prêcher aujourd'hui il faut aussi voir ce qu'il a fait dans le passé, comment il avait traité les syndicalistes.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: That has nothing to do with the debate.

(Interruptions)

Order! This debate concerns inflation, increased compensation and salary and there is an amendment which has been put forward. I think the debate should be restricted to these three issues.

Mr Jugnauth: Let me come to the *cascade d'augmentations* que le *Leader* de l'opposition parle. Il vient dire que maintenant le gouverneur de la banque central a estimé le taux d'inflation à 5.7% pour cette année-ci. *Totally wrong!* Je lis –

“La banque centrale, bien sûr, s'est inquiétée sur la montée de l'inflation et le taux annuel à fin juin 2011 devant, selon les prévisions de la banque central, dépasser les 5%.”

Ils ne parlent pas de taux d'inflation jusqu'à fin 2010.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: The Minister is making his point. There is a point which has been made by the Leader of the Opposition that the Governor of the Bank had made a statement that inflation will be estimated at 5.7% December this year and the Minister is saying that is not correct.

(Interruptions)

That is his interpretation! Let him make his point.

(Interruptions)

Order!

Mr Jugnauth: I repeat again, Mr Speaker, Sir: the Bank of Mauritius has predicted a rise in inflation rate for 2011- not 5.7% that the Leader of the Opposition is saying for 2010.

(Interruptions)

Yes, the Leader of the Opposition might not agree. He made his point.

Mr Speaker: That is different. The Minister is making his point. Let him make his point and defend his position.

(Interruptions)

I do not know. There is no document on the Table for the Chair to assess. If the statement has been made outside I do know who made the statement and what is the statement.
Order!

Mr Jugnauth: In fact, after listening to the Leader of the Opposition, I think there is another hon. Member who is going to speak after me, he can reply and he can table the official document from the Bank of Mauritius to say that the rate of inflation for 2010 ...

Mr Speaker: As far as I recollect, it was a statement made by the Governor of the Bank I do not know where. The hon. Minister of Finance is saying that it is not the fact and he has the right to do so.

Mr Jugnauth: Let me repeat again. I wish that the hon. Member who is going to speak after me will clarify and he will rebut or he will give further information.

Mr Speaker: Carry on! The hon. Minister has made his point.

Mr Jugnauth: In fact, the rate of inflation, I maintain, Mr Speaker, Sir, for the year ending 2010 is 2.7% and let me explain again so that it is clear. The Governor of the Bank of Mauritius has made a statement to say that, according to the Bank of Mauritius, the rate of inflation is likely to rise next year and he has been speaking for next year and not for the rate of inflation for this year. Therefore, the amendment that is being brought ...

Mr Speaker: The Governor should have waited for Christmas to go before making the statement.

Mr Jugnauth: Therefore, the amendment that is being proposed is based on an incorrect assumption. Totally incorrect assumption! That amendment, in fact, maybe should come at some other time next year.

Mais, M. le president, pour répondre à l'honorable Leader de l'opposiiton qui parle de cascade d'augmentation de prix, first of all, let me say that there has been a recent increase in the price of edible oil. I must say that this has got nothing to do with the Budget because the company that is involved in this business has, in fact, published a communiqué where it is said that the increase in the price on the local market is due to a rise in the prices of their input on the international market. That is beyond our control. If prices of raw materials are increasing, of course, there will be enterprises that will adjust to the local price.

Regarding electricity tariff, the CEB has acted, in fact, by taking full cognizance of its financial situation and further there are massive investments that are required to ensure that there is no shortage of electricity in the future. Of course, good governance dictates that we take courageous actions and the CEB has decided to act courageously.

The same principle, in fact, applies to the increase in the bus fares which the Leader of the Opposition has mentioned. Mr Speaker, Sir, how can an industry survive with losses? It cannot be, unless we are irresponsible ourselves.

Mr Speaker: I am sorry! Again, I have to intervene at this stage. The debate is not about good governance or bad governance at the CEB or in the transport industry. The issue is whether the tariffs have impacted on the inflation. That is the point.

Mr Jugnauth: I am just saying that there are reasons why they have come with an increase in tariff. I have been in Government with the hon. Leader of the Opposition in the past. There have been increases in price whenever it was Budget time, after Budget time. I won't go into the details of it. I have a list of them. But suffice it for me to say that increase in prices is something that occurs generally. What is important is that, of course, as a Government, we have to monitor, we have to see to it that there are no abuses and we have to see to it that whenever there are increases in price, they are, in fact, justified and let me say also that there are certain

circumstances that are beyond the control of Government. No Government, in fact, even in the past, has been able to have control over these increases.

Let me end by saying, Mr Speaker, Sir, that this Government has, in fact, given due consideration to workers. Let me repeat again: the rate of inflation is 2.7%. We have made it such that not only they are compensated over and above the rate of inflation but, as I said, it is not a question of equating rate of inflation with salary compensation, it has also to do with taking into consideration all the economic factors that prevail in the country and thereby seeing what the country can afford. In such circumstances, I must say, we, on this side of the House, are proud that we have taken the right decision.

Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir.

(5.29 p.m.)

Mr K. Li Kwong Wing (Second Member for Beau Bassin and Petite Rivière): Mr Speaker, Sir, I rise to speak on this Bill and to react to a few of the arguments that have been put on the other side and also to support the proposed amendment to be moved at Committee Stage.

First of all, let me clear a few points which leave me perplexed. I heard the hon. Minister of Labour saying very clearly that this 3.2% increase in wage compensation is based on the rate of inflation and the rate of inflation is the only criterion used. This is what I heard very clearly. Now, I just heard the hon. vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance say that the increase in that wage compensation has been decided on the basis of the rate of inflation and other economic factors that affect employment and others. So, which is which? I think the hon. Leader of the Opposition was right when he says: “are you sure you have the clearance of Cabinet to come forward with the way you put forward any proposal?” That’s why the other thing which puzzled me also was when the hon. Minister of Finance ...

Mr Jugnauth: May I just intervene? Again, the hon. Member is saying whether I have got clearance of Cabinet ...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Are you going to give way? Is it a point of order? Listen, there is one fundamental principle. If a Minister comes to this House with a Bill or whatever proposal, it

must be presumed that he has gone to Cabinet and Cabinet has given its consent. The Manual to Cabinet is clear. A Minister has to have the *aval* of the Cabinet before coming to this House.

Mr Li Kwong Wing: That's why I was asking which is which? Which criterion was used? In the same way, the Discussion Paper said to be emanating from Cabinet made mention of two things. The first one is that there should be a delinking of private sector workers and public sector workers. The second one is that there is no material time to consider any other alternative. These two points raised in that Discussion Paper is really very far removed from the mantra of the Prime Minister which is *équité et modernité*. How can you divide workers and talk of equity and modernity, when you don't give workers and trade unions the time to discuss? What kind of a dialogue is that?

Mr Speaker: There is a Bill, the Bill is restricted. The hon. Member should speak on the Bill.

Mr Li Kwong Wing: I am sorry, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Let me come to a point that was raised concerning the decision to grant this increase where the hon. Minister of Labour, supported by the hon. Minister of Finance, said that we have to bear in mind that it is the best that we could have done in these very difficult times. True it is that the times are difficult, but we have just come out of a very severe world depression when in 2009 growth rates almost everywhere were negative. But we have come out of this very bad year of negative growth. 2010 is a year of recovery and this is no less than the Bank of Mauritius that said so. If you allow me, Mr Speaker, Sir, I will quote the latest report on inflation dated 29 October 2010 from the Bank of Mauritius. This is what it had to say and this is not Mr Bheenick. It is the official document of the Bank of Mauritius -

“The global economy continued to improve in the first half of 2010 driven mostly by robust economic expansion in emerging economies. Expectations of a gradual rather than brisk recovery in global demand firmed up in the second quarter of 2010.”

If we look at domestic activity, this is what it has to say –

“While there is gradual recovery, domestically, the economic activity has moderated in the first half of 2010 after growing at a vigorous space in the second half of 2009. “

The Bank also said –

“Buoyant net exports propped up the economy in the first half of 2010 compared to domestic demand which supported activity in the second half of 2009. Recovery in the tourism and textile sectors underscored the performance of the export sector and final consumption expenditure and investment both grew at a modest rate in the first semester of 2010. Growth prospects are expected to stay moderate.”

There is growth prospect. Now, let me come to the second part of 2010, again the Bank of Mauritius has this to say –

“In its October 2010 World Economic Outlook, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) had marginally upgraded the global growth prospects for 2010 (...)”

But the estimated growth prospects are no longer negative growth. Even that growth prospect of 2010 has been marginally upgraded. It has been increasing even more than what was expected. What it said is that –

“The most recent economic data had, however, been mixed. While third quarter 2010 national accounts data in the United States, euro area, and Britain pointed to a slowdown, purchasing managers indices and confidence indicators suggested that economic conditions in these countries were not as weak as anticipated earlier.”

We can't use this world crisis as an *épée de Damoclès* to make the workers get scared and to make them keep on tightening the belt. That's why I think it is not justified to use the world crisis as a pretext to say that we can't give adequate compensation to the workers. I need to come to that question of 5.7%, Mr Speaker, Sir, if you allow me, because it really shocks me that a Minister of Finance comes forward and says that the Bank of Mauritius has never forecast inflation rate to be 5.7% for 2010. Allow me to quote from the document of the Bank of

Mauritius - “Released at 13.00 hours on 13 December 2010”. It is a paper that sets out the monetary policy statement and, at page 5, this is what it has to say –

Mr Speaker: It is from the Bank of Mauritius report.

Mr Li Kwong Wing: It is a Bank of Mauritius report. This is what it says -

“The Monetary Policy Committee took note of the latest wage developments and also assessed the impact of recent budgetary measures as well as rising food and energy prices on the price level and economic growth.”

And it is not Mr Bheenick -

“The Bank forecast that the year-on-year CPI inflation would reach 5.7 per cent by December 2010 and would exceed 7.0 per cent by June 2011.”

This is what it said. And the paper says even more, Mr Speaker, Sir. It says –

“Several Members of the MPC observed that inflation might rise faster than anticipated at the September 2010 meeting (...).”

May I table this report which is a *désaveu cinglant* of the Minister about what has been purported to have been or not been said by the Governor of the Central Bank.

Allow me, Mr Speaker, Sir, to say a few words about the way the wage compensation has been decided and to show that what has been proposed is quite inadequate. Firstly, when the figure of 3.2% has been arrived at, it was based on an inflation rate of 2.7% of the CSO and we all know that this CPI index is a very imperfect and inadequate measure of the loss of purchasing power. This is one point to consider. The fact that you base your compensation on an inflation rate which is the CPI index which is itself a very imperfect measure of the rise in the level of prices tells you a lot about the inadequacy of this compensation.

The second point to note is that, as the CSO survey on household expenditure has shown, there have been an increasing number of poor families in Mauritius. That is the reason why the former Minister of Finance targeted a program called Eradication of Absolute Poverty, because there has been an increase in the number of poor people, plus also the CSO household...

Mr Speaker: Hon. Member, please, the debate is about inflation and compensation. If the hon. Member starts a debate about absolute poverty, we will never finish. The hon. Member

is talking of 5.7, he is justifying his position taking into account the inflation. He should not get into a long debate, please.

Mr Li Kwong Wing: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am talking about the whole background of determination of wage salary. An increase in salary should bear in mind that it should not only compensate for the rise in the cost of living, but also to try, as far as possible, in the name of social justice to reduce the income inequality and the gap between the rich and the poor. That is the purpose of the compensation. There is even more because the way that this compensation has been kept at an inadequate level will keep workers on a depressed real wage level and this is exactly what Mauritius should come out of, because we are in a model of economy where we depend on low wage for development. That is why, any increase in wage, as it is happening in a lot of Asian countries, is in fact a good thing because it will help to create the awareness among employers that they should re-skill their workers to raise productivity in order to justify that increase in wage rate.

The other reason for which this compensation is inadequate is that in Mauritius, we are following a policy of price liberalisation. Price control and price inspection are not on the high agenda of Government because of the need to have market friendly policies. In a context of market friendly policies, if we have no adequate compensation or salary, prices keep on going up, workers are not adequately compensated; they are on less pay and have less disposable income, so they go further down in the quality of goods that they consume. This is bad for the country as it is also bad for the productivity of labour.

The other thing is that, if we pay an inadequate compensation, people will start borrowing. Now, household debt is the second largest item of expenditure of the majority of low income groups, to such an extent that a lot of workers even borrow to be able to buy food. If you have less pay, people go on lower quality food and have to even borrow in order to be able to pay for their food purchases.

Another point which has to be borne in mind is that, a lower pay, an inadequate compensation is like a subsidy for the *patronat*. It is like a subsidy for the employers and the MEF because it means that the MEF, the *patronat* will keep to a perpetual depressed wage level to be able to survive, which is again not good for the country.

Mr Speaker, Sir, for all these reasons, I think that with the disastrous consequences that will arise from this Budget which I have already qualified as a pickpocket budget which is based on a lot of taxes, levies and user charges,...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order!

Mr Li Kwong Wing: This inadequate compensation, coupled with the policy induced inflation caused by the Budget, will further squeeze the workers. It is like the general public now in water stressed situation, having no water and having to starve and just survive.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I support the motion of the Leader of the Opposition to revise the rate of compensation from 3.2% to 5.7%, which is what exactly the Bank of Mauritius has estimated and I think that this is in fair, this is the name of social justice, of equity, *modernité* and all the principles that have been upheld by the Prime Minister. I hope the Prime Minister and the Government will be a caring one and will be open to this plea for the working poor of this country.

Thank you very much, Sir.

(17.45)

The Minister of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment (Mr S. Mohamed):
Mr Speaker, Sir, I have heard with a lot of attention the words spoken by the hon. vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Finance and, obviously, that of the Opposition as well. What the Opposition is asking us to do, this itself puts me in a very puzzled state. Had the Opposition done that in the past, whenever they had the opportunity because, at one point or the other, they have been in Government, the hon. Leader of the Opposition knows it well as he was himself Minister of Finance, had he done what he preaches now, I would have been less puzzled. Whenever the Opposition was in Government and whenever the hon. Leader of the Opposition was in Government, has it not been the case that after the presentation of the Budget, we had the Additional Remuneration Bill? Has it been the case that a few weeks after the presentation of the Budget, when one comes to the Additional Remuneration Bill, he comes to adjust what the inflation rate is, according to figures of the Bank of Mauritius? That has never ever happened. I say it again, when one preaches something, the least I expect is that this must have been done in

the past because it is a good formula. But, in actual fact, I have a document in my hand which are basically figures from the CSO that shows the inflation rate ever since 1981 until today and, never ever has any Government relied on any other figure than the figures from the Central Statistical Office as this Government is doing.

Having also listened to the hon. Leader of the Opposition, in a very able manner, I must admit, a very calm manner which I bow to, he said that he would not basically make much ado about the issue of *rattrapage* as such. But, in fact, he did speak about it while saying he would not. Once again, what I have to say, as I have said earlier on, has the Opposition, whenever they were in power, ever taken into account the issue of *rattrapage* in the formulation of the figure for salary compensation? Had this ever been done, I would have said fair enough, they are, at least, consistent with what they are preaching today, but no. I had said during my Budget speech and now I am duty bound to this august Assembly to say today, because the issue of *rattrapage* has been raised, Mr Speaker, Sir, in the days prior to the June 1982 elections, *rattrapage* was once again spoken about by the Opposition, but never implemented when the Opposition came into power. That is one issue. What I am saying here, Mr Speaker, Sir, is that the Opposition, at least, shows consistency in saying something when they are in the Opposition and, obviously, saying something else when they are in Government. That is why I am of the humble opinion, Mr Speaker, Sir, that the proposition of the hon. Leader of the Opposition for a motion to come up later on with an amendment should not be taken into account and should not be proceeded with. The reasons for which it should not be proceeded with are: at the time when the Central Statistical Office prepares its estimates for 2010 inflation and comes up with the figure of 2.7%, obviously, it takes into account the month of December and there is an extrapolation exercise, hence, they take into account issues of December and come up with a slightly increased figure of 2.7%.

This Government has taken into account that figure of 2.7%, and has not given a salary compensation of 2.7%, limited to exactly what the inflation rate is. On the contrary, what this Government has done is go as far to increase it by 0.5%.

Coming up with the salary compensation, Mr Speaker, Sir, is indeed an exercise that demands a lot of agility, and one has to be very careful about it. Yes, we have to take into account our inflation rate, but we also have to bear in mind our rate of unemployment. We have

to take the international economic factors into account. The hon. Member who just preceded me talked about the growth prospects internationally, and when I hear him say that the estimated growth prospects are being marginally upgraded, I have the impression, therefore, Mr Speaker, Sir, that my definition of marginal is not the same definition of that of the hon. Member. Marginal is exactly what it means. It is as though that, once upon a time, the world was in a hole. With the international economic crisis, the euro crisis, we find ourselves in a hole - the world at large - and we have to climb out of that hole. Climbing out of that hole takes time.

It is the first time that I hear any Member of the Opposition refer to the fact that, yes, there is a problem, but we have already come out of it. Had we already come out of it, I do not believe that the very explicit terminology of marginal would have been used. Marginal means we are gradually - because gradual was also the word he used - and marginally coming out of the hole; it means that we are not out of the woods. What the proposition of the Opposition is, Mr Speaker, Sir, is, in fact, to send us back to the woods, because it is exactly what they have done. Let us not forget the amount of workers that lost their jobs; over 50,000 workers lost their jobs in the manufacturing sector, at the time this Government was not in power, when the then Minister of Finance was the hon. Leader of the Opposition.

So, the recipe for success does not lie on the other side. The recipe of success lies on this side of the House, with the Leader of the House being Dr. Navin Ramgoolam, our Prime Minister.

Why do I also say that there is inconsistency on the part of the Opposition? Because in formulating his proposal, the hon. Member preceding me said something which is interesting. He recognises the good work of Dr. the hon. Prime Minister, the Leader of this House, and says he believes in him. So, how can you, at the same time, recognise the excellent work of this Prime Minister and criticise us from 2005 to 2010? That doesn't make sense. In my humble belief, Mr Speaker, Sir, the work done by this Government has taken into account that - when we came into power in 2005...

Mr Speaker: Please come to the Bill now!

Mr Mohamed: ...and when we came to the figure of 3.2% - we make sure that, whatever we are going to do, is not going to lead to a *cascade de perte d'emplois*. That is exactly what we are avoiding. In my humble belief, therefore, and in conclusion - the figure that has been

brought here - we have brought down unemployment rate to 7.5%, when in other countries it has gone to double figures. We are doing an excellent job. We have done an excellent job.

I commend this Bill to the House.

Question put and agreed to.

Bill read a second time and committed.

COMMITTEE STAGE

(Mr Speaker in the Chair)

THE ADDITIONAL REMUNERATION (2011) BILL

(No. XXI of 2010)

Clauses 1 to 11 ordered to stand part of the Bill

Motion made and question proposed: “that the Schedule stand part of the Bill.”

Mr Bérenger: Mr Chairperson, as far as the Schedule is concerned, I am moving for the following amendment -

“In the Schedule, in the second column, to delete the figures “3.2” “175” and “190” and replace them by the figures “5.7” “310” and “340” respectively.”

Amendment defeated.

The Schedule ordered to stand part of the Bill.

The title and enacting clause were agreed to.

The Bill was agreed to.

On the Assembly resuming with Mr Speaker in the Chair, Mr Speaker reported accordingly.

Third Reading

On motion made and seconded, the Additional Remuneration (2011) Bill (No. XXI of 2010) was read the third time and passed.

ADJOURNMENT

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that this Assembly do now adjourn to Friday 17 December 2010 at 3.30 p.m.

The Deputy Prime Minister rose and seconded.

Question put and agreed to.

Mr Speaker: The House stands adjourned.

At 5.57 p.m. the Assembly was, on its rising, adjourned to Friday 17 December 2010 at 3.30 p.m.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS**PUBLIC BODIES APPEAL TRIBUNAL – CASES**

(No. 1B/751) Mr V. Baloomoody (Third Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in regard to the Public Bodies Appeal Tribunal, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to the number of cases lodged, since its creation to-date, indicating the number of -

- (a) cases which have been heard, and
- (b) rulings delivered.

Reply: The Public Bodies Appeal Tribunal Act was passed in the National Assembly in May 2008 and the Tribunal was constituted in March 2009.

I am informed by the Public Bodies Appeal Tribunal that, since its inception to date, a total of 176 appeals have been lodged before the Tribunal. So far 35 appeals have been heard by the Tribunal, out of which 15 cases have already been determined.

I am further informed that 25 appeals have reached hearing stage while 28 others are still at preliminary stage. The Tribunal has not entertained 88 appeals for various reasons, e.g. they were either outside the jurisdiction of the Tribunal or they were made after the statutory time

limit or they were withdrawn by appellants before hearing. The Chairperson of the Tribunal has confirmed that there is no appeal that has been left unattended.

I would like to point out that prior to July 2010, aggrieved public officers who were making appeals before the Public Bodies Appeal Tribunal were not allowed to be assisted by their Trade Union's representative. Following representations made by the Trade Unions to my Office in that regard, the matter was taken up by Government with the Chairperson of the Tribunal who subsequently agreed to an appellant before the Tribunal being assisted by a member of his Union.

PRISONS SERVICES - VACANCIES

(No. 1B/752) Mr V. Baloomoody (Third Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in regard to the Prisons Services, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Prisons, information as to the number of vacancies on the establishment thereof, indicating the actions taken for the filling thereof.

Reply: I am informed by the Commissioner of Prisons that as at 9 December 2010, out of an establishment of 1072, there were 148 vacancies in the different grades in the Prisons Officers Cadre.

In its 2008 Report, the Pay Research Bureau recommended the merging of various grades in the Prisons Officers Cadre. As a result, the schemes of service of the posts concerned had to be revised before the filling of the vacancies.

So far, the schemes of service for 10 posts have already been prescribed and appropriate recommendations have been made to the Disciplined Forces Service Commission (DFSC) for the filling of 139 vacancies. The proposed Schemes of Service for two other posts have been forwarded to the Ministry of Civil Service Affairs and Administrative Reforms for prescription purposes. Once the relevant schemes of service are prescribed, appropriate recommendations will be made to the DFSC for filling of the vacancies.

I wish to point out that, pending the filling of the existing vacancies on a permanent basis, a large number of vacancies have been filled on a temporary basis by assigning the duties of the posts to officers from down the hierarchy. As a matter of fact, 88 Prisons Officers have been assigned duties in a higher grade against existing, consequential and other temporary vacancies.

**GOVERNMENT FIRE SERVICES - GENERAL ELECTION - DUTY
ALLOWANCES**

(No. 1B/787) Mr D. Nagalingum (Second Member for Stanley & Rose Hill) asked the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the Fire Officers of the Government Fire Services who worked during the last general election, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Fire Services, information as to if they have been paid their extra duty allowances and if so, when and if not, why not.

Reply: I am informed by the Chief Fire Officer that there has been a delay in the payment of the extra duty allowances to those Fire Officers who worked during the last general election due to the fact that the Departmental Warrant from the Electoral Commissioner's Office was only received on 18 November 2010.

I am informed that these allowances will be paid to these officers in their salaries for the month of December 2010.

STRAY DOGS

(No. 1B/788) Mrs J. Radegonde (Fourth Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Minister of Agro-Industry and Food Security whether he is aware of the presence of stray dogs on the streets in residential areas, public places and beaches and if so, will he, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Mauritius Society for the Prevention of Cruelty against Animals, information as to the –

- (a) measures that will be taken for the control thereof, and
- (b) present number of vans that are deployed daily for the catching thereof.

Reply: I am informed by the Mauritius Society for the Prevention of Cruelty against Animals (MSPCA) that the following measures are being taken to control stray dogs on the streets in residential areas, public places and beaches, namely -

- (i) Dog catching during week days and Saturdays: the number of dogs caught weekly is around 300;

- (ii) Sterilization of dogs is carried out by the MSPCA at their 3 hospitals namely Calodyne, Rose-Hill and Rose Belle and by the Division of Veterinary Services at Abercrombie, Rose Belle and Flacq. For the period January to November 2010, the number of dog sterilization conducted by the MSPCA and the Division of Veterinary Services is 600 and 1989 respectively.

A national campaign will soon be undertaken by the MSPCA next year in collaboration with my Ministry to sensitise dog owners on canine education and owners' obligation to keep dogs inside premises.

My Ministry is presently going one step further. We are working on a draft Dog Control Bill which will make provision, amongst others, for the care and control of dogs by imposing on the owners of dogs, obligations designed to ensure that dogs do not cause a nuisance to any person and do not injure, endanger or cause distress to any person.

As far as part (b) of the question is concerned, I am informed that the MSPCA owns 6 vans for the catching of stray dogs. For the period 2004 to 2010, some 95,000 dogs have been caught and disposed of.

PEOPLE (DISABLED) - RIGHTS

(No. 1B/789) Ms S. Anquetil (Fourth Member for Vacoas & Floreal) asked the Minister of Social Security, National Solidarity and Reform Institutions whether, in regard to people with disabilities, she will state the measures that are being taken to ensure that their rights are respected.

Reply: I wish to inform the House that following the ratification of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in January 2010, my Ministry has adopted a rights-based approach to the issue of disability with greater focus on abilities rather than on the disabilities of the person. The stress is laid on the fact that a person with disability has the same

rights as any other citizen and must have equal access to education, training, employment, sports and leisure.

In this connection, the following measures have been taken –

(1) **National Implementation and Monitoring Committee on UN Convention.**

A National Implementation and Monitoring Committee under my Chairmanship has been set up to monitor the implementation of the various Articles of the Convention by appropriate stakeholders.

The main objectives of this Committee are –

- (i) to create awareness on the provisions of the UN Convention;
- (ii) to align Government policies on the Articles of the Convention, and
- (iii) to assist in the preparation of reports to be submitted to the United Nations.

(2) **Database on Persons with Disabilities**

My Ministry is setting up, with the assistance of UNDP, a database on persons with disabilities which will help in policy-making and planning in the disability sector. The database is expected to be operational early next year.

(3) **Employment**

Regarding employment, my Ministry is presently working on the appropriate Regulations to enforce Section 13 of the Training and Employment of Disabled Persons Act 1996 which provides for every enterprise employing 35 or more employees to ensure that at least 3% of its workforce comprises people with disabilities.

The Ministry organised a '*Rencontre*' with the private sector. Out of 75 disabled persons who attended, 35 were offered employment.

Such '*Rencontres*' will be organised on a regular basis between trained disabled persons and employers to facilitate their integration in the world of work.

(4) **Education**

To promote inclusive education, my Ministry is working in close collaboration with the Ministry of Education and Human Resources to improve accessibility to primary schools to enable children with disabilities to have access to mainstream education.

My Ministry has provided an amount of Rs1 m. for retrofitting primary schools with ramps to improve physical accessibility.

(5) Accessibility

The Ministry of Social Security is also working closely with the Ministry of Local Government and Outer Islands, the Local Authorities and Ministry of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping to ensure that, in line with the Building Regulations 2005, all new public buildings, (i.e. buildings to which the public is deemed to have access) be provided with access facilities for people with disabilities.

(6) Sports and Leisure

In line with the UN Convention, my Ministry is providing the necessary support to persons with disabilities to enable them to participate in sports activities at national and international levels.

Further, children with disabilities are also being encouraged to engage in Artistic activities.

(7) Respite Care

To provide relief to parents of severely disabled children, my Ministry organises respite care programmes for their benefit. As from next year respite care programmes will be organised on a monthly basis in collaboration with NGOs working in the sector.

(8) Free Domiciliary Medical Visits

As from next year, as announced in the Budget Speech 2010, children with severe disabilities will benefit from free monthly domiciliary medical visits. This will be a great relief to parents.

(9) Sensitisation

Regarding sensitisation, my Ministry will step up efforts to create greater awareness on disability issues through the media, posters, radio and TV programmes and the publication of relevant brochures.

(No. 1B/790) Mrs F. Labelle (Third Member for Vacoas & Floreal) asked the Minister of Housing and Lands whether, in regard to the portion of land lying between the Sivananda Avenue and Cité Sadally, he will state if it is State Land and if so, if same is presently being leased, indicating, the duration thereof.

Reply: I am informed that the portion of land in question is not State Land.

MARE CHICOSE – INHABITANTS - RELOCATION

(No. 1B/791) Mr M. Seeruttun (Second Member for Vieux Grand Port and Rose Belle) asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to the project for the relocation of the inhabitants of Mare Chicose, he will state if he has received representations from some inhabitants thereof for consideration to be given to their requests for inclusion of their names in the list of those entitled to a plot of land and if so, state where matters stand.

Reply: In fact, there are three lists have been established for the purpose of relocating the inhabitants of Mare Chicose.

A first list has been worked out for the residential owners of Mare Chicose who are being given land swapping of same size from Mare Chicose to Marie Jeannie, Rose Belle and compensated for the existing buildings at replacement costs, as assessed by the Valuation Department.

A second one relates to a list of 22 members of extended families and tenants who will be given the possibility to purchase a plot of land of about 224 m² each at the relocation. Finally, a third list has been drawn up for the non-resident owners of agricultural land who will also be given the option to buy a plot of land of 422 m² at the new *morcellement*.

The first and third lists have been worked out by my Ministry and the Ministry of Housing and Lands in 2007 and the second list was submitted to the Ministry by the *Forces Vives* of Mare Chicose in August 2009.

Upon a change of chairmanship, the *Forces Vives* had in August 2010 submitted nine new names of families to be added to the list of tenants and extended families. The claims are being examined by my Ministry in consultation with the Ministry of Housing and Lands and the Attorney General's office.

It has been agreed that an affidavit would be required in support of the legitimacy of their claims. Those people have been informed in the course of a meeting held with them in my office in September 2010.

HIGH-LEVEL ATHLETES- INSURANCE COVER

(No. 1B/792) Mr M. Seeruttun (Second Member for Vieux Grand Port and Rose Belle) asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether, in regard to the high-level athletes, he will state the measures taken by his Ministry to offer them protection in case of mishaps while practising their respective sport activities.

Reply: According to provisions of the Sports Act at Rule 2(d) of the Third Schedule, it is the responsibility of all National Sports Federations to insure their licensees which include high level athletes.

However, for major international games warranting the participation of Mauritius, my Ministry provides additional insurance cover for athletes and all other members of the delegation prior to their departure.

Moreover, my Ministry provides a free medical service to all athletes at the Sports Medical Unit situated at Vacoas.

COMMUNITY SERVICE – CASES - 2008 & 2009

(No. 1B/793) Mr M. Seeruttun (Second Member for Vieux Grand Port and Rose Belle) asked the Minister of Social Security, National Solidarity and Reform Institutions whether, in regard to Community Service, she will state the number of cases referred therefor for 2008 and 2009, indicating the mechanism put in place by her Ministry for the carrying out thereof.

Reply: The number of cases of Community Service referred to the Probation and Aftercare Division of my Ministry in 2008 and 2009 were 428 and 388 respectively. As at October 2010, 246 offenders were under community service.

Community Service provides the Court with an alternative sentencing to imprisonment and is applicable to persons above the age of 16, who have been sentenced to a term of imprisonment not exceeding 2 years in the case of adults and 1 year in the case of minors. Under a Community Service Order, the convicted person is required to perform unpaid work in the open for Government or charitable institutions for a specified period which should not be less than sixty hours and not more than three hundred hours. It involves the participation of the Community in the rehabilitation of an offender and offers opportunity for the latter to repay his debt to society. The Court may also issue a community service order in the case of a person sentenced to imprisonment for non-payment of a fine or the balance of a fine, not exceeding 25,000 rupees.

Prior to the issue of the order, a post sentence report is submitted to the magistrate by the Probation Office. The objective of the report is to assess the offender's suitability and availability for Community service.

Upon the Magistrate's decision, the convicted person is explained the purpose, effect and duration of the order and any conditions which the Court intends to attach to the order as well as the consequences of a breach of any condition. It is imperative that the offender must consent to the order. Appropriate arrangements are thereafter made for the carrying out of the order which should take into account the convicted person's free time, including weekends.

Work carried out under Community Service Order is supervised by Probation Officers. Previously, Community Service was carried out on an individual basis only, with the result that major projects requiring lot of resources could not be undertaken. Since last year the relevant legislation has been amended to make provision for Group Community Work as well. Accordingly, needful is being done at the level of my Ministry with the collaboration of the Ministry of Local Government and Outer Islands and other Government and charitable institutions for major projects to be undertaken. In that respect, provision has been made in the forthcoming budget for the recruitment of supervisors on sessional basis to oversee the work.

TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT OF DISABLED PERSONS BOARD – CHILD C.D. – ALLEGED BRUTALITY

(No. 1B/794) Mrs F. Labelle (Third Member for Vacoas and Floreal) asked the Minister of Social Security, National Solidarity and Reform Institutions whether she is aware of an alleged case of brutality on a disabled child, one C. D., by a driver of the Training and

Employment of Disabled Persons Board and if so, will she state if an inquiry has been carried out thereinto, indicating –

- (a) the outcome thereof, and
- (b) if any finding has been made in relation to the question of security at the gate of the centre.

Reply: With regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed that there was an alleged case of brutality on a disabled child, one C. D. by an employee of Training and Employment of Disabled Persons Board (TEDPB) on 21 November 2007.

The Ministry was informed about the incident on 22 November 2007.

A disciplinary committee hearing was held on 29 November 2007 where the charge levelled against the employee was proved to be true.

In fact, in the light of the report of the disciplinary committee, the TEDPB suspended the employee for a period of two weeks without pay and a severe warning was given to him.

With regard to part (b) of the question, I have been informed that there is a 24-hour security service at the gate of the centre and instructions have been given the security guards to ensure maximum vigilance at the gate.

TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT OF DISABLED PERSONS BOARD – ALLEGED SEXUAL ASSAULT

(No. 1B/795) Mrs F. Labelle (Third Member for Vacoas and Floreal) asked Minister of Social Security, National Solidarity and Reform Institutions whether she is aware of an alleged case of sexual assault on a trainee of the Training and Employment of Disabled Persons Board and if so, will she, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Board, information as to if an internal inquiry has been carried out thereinto and if so, the outcome thereof and if not, why not.

Reply: The Training and Employment of Disabled Persons Board (TEDPB) informed my Ministry on 24 November 2010 of an alleged case of sexual assault on a trainee involving one of its employees in the year 2008.

The TEDPB also informed my Ministry that an internal inquiry was being carried out.

However, considering the seriousness of the matter, my Ministry referred the case on the same day to the Commissioner of Police for investigation.

Pending the outcome of the Police inquiry, the employee concerned has been transferred to the Flacq Sub-Centre of the Board.

My Ministry is following the matter closely.

GLEN PARK - CAVERNE DES HIRONDELLES

(No.1B/796) Ms S. Anquetil (Fourth Member for Vacoas and Floreal) asked the Minister of Environment and Sustainable Development whether he is aware of the existence of a cave, known as *Caverne des Hirondelles*, located at Glen Park and if so, will he state if his Ministry proposes to give full support for the preservation thereof.

Reply: I am by the Municipal Council of Vacoas/Phoenix that a cave known as *Caverne des Hirondelles* is found on a private property at Desvergues Road, Glen Park.

My Ministry will follow up the matter with the Municipal Council in regard to the preservation of the site.

INDUSTRIES – COTTON THREAD - IMPORTATION

(No. 1B/797) Mr R. Uteem (Second Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central) asked the Minister of Industry and Commerce whether, in regard to the decision of the Indian Government to limit the export of cotton thread, he will state the measures Government proposes to take to protect the local industries from such a decision, including seeking and obtaining a derogation therefrom.

Reply: In fact, there is no decision of the Indian Government to limit the export of cotton thread. Therefore the question of derogation does not arise.

TROU AUX CERFS – VIEWPOINT - CONSTRUCTION

(No. 1B/798) Mr E. Guimbeau (First Member for Curepipe and Midlands) asked the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the project for the construction of a viewpoint at Trou aux Cerfs, in Curepipe, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Municipal Council of Curepipe, information as to -

- (a) the date the initial expression of interest exercise was carried out;
- (b) if an open advertising bidding exercise was carried out and if so, indicate the -
 - (i) name of the bidders, and
 - (ii) amount tendered in each case
- (c) the name of the successful bidder, indicating the
 - (i) annual rental, and
 - (ii) terms and conditions of the lease agreement, and
 - (d) if all procurement procedures have been followed.

Reply: I am informed by the Municipal Council of Curepipe that the expression of interest was advertised in the local press between 18 and 21 September 2010.

With regard to part (b) of the question, I am informed that in response to the open advertised bidding exercise the following five prospective bidders took the set of bidding documents –

- (i) Mr Rajen Gangoosingh
- (ii) Mr Ahmud Monawara Bhunnoo
- (iii) Vascoda Co. Ltd
- (iv) Mr Navin Deerpalsingh
- (v) Maxisave Construction Ltd

However, only Vascoda Ltd has responded to the expression of interest.

I wish to inform the House that the expression of interest does not require interested parties to quote any amount.

I am further informed that the proposal from Vascoda Ltd is being examined by the Council. Therefore it is premature, at this stage to pronounce on annual rent and the terms and conditions of the lease agreement.

As regards the last part of the question, I am informed that no procurement is being made.

HIV AND AIDS – PATIENTS - DEATH

(No. 1B/799) Mr E. Guimbeau (First Member for Curepipe and Midlands) asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether, in regard to HIV and Aids, she will state the number of patients suffering therefrom who have passed away, since 2005 to-date, on a yearly basis.

Reply: Mr Speaker, Sir, the number of patients suffering from HIV and AIDS who have passed away from 2005 to date is as follows -

2005	19
2006	31
2007	60
2008	49
2009	33
2010 (October)	61

I wish to highlight that HIV itself does not kill a patient. In fact, HIV infection weakens the defence mechanism, that is, the immune system of the patient who then may get infected by other microbes, bacteria or viruses. As a result, the patient develops severe infections such as tuberculosis, cerebral toxoplasmosis, chest infections and septicemia which often lead to death in spite of treatment with the appropriate antibiotics.

GAMBLING REGULATORY AUTHORITY – DELTA COUPS LTD - LICENCE

(No. 1B/800) Mr E. Guimbeau (First Member for Curepipe and Midlands) asked the vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether he will for the

benefit of the House, obtain from the Gambling Regulatory Authority, information as to if it has received an application from Delta Coups Ltd. to be issued with a licence to operate a casino “Royale” and if so, indicate where matters stand.

Reply: I am informed by the Gambling Regulatory Authority (GRA) that it has not received any application for a Casino Licence from Delta Coups Ltd to operate a Casino under the trade name of “Casino Royale” as at date.

SAVANNE AND BLACK RIVER – FISHERMEN - COMPENSATION

(No. 1A/204) Mrs J. Radegonde (Fourth Member for Savanne and Black River) asked the Minister of Fisheries and Rodrigues whether he is aware that the large net fishing fishermen in Constituency No.14, Savanne and Black River have not received the full compensation of Rs 210 per day and if so, will he state -

- (a) the reasons therefor, and
- (b) when the balance thereof will be paid.

Reply: Large net fishermen are paid Rs217 per day on days that they cannot go fishing because of bad weather as declared by the Meteorological Services, excluding Sundays and Public Holidays. For the net fishing season starting from 01 March 2010 to 30 September 2010, along with the prescribed extension period from 01 October 2010 to 10 October 2010, all the net fishermen of Mauritius, which include fishermen from Constituency No 14, have been paid all compensation due.

Net fishermen are paid a closed season allowance at the rate of Rs217 daily during the closed season from 01 October to the last day of February of the following year. This payment has been effected to all eligible net fishermen of Mauritius including those of Constituency No 14, for the period 11 October 2010 to 20 November 2010. The next payment will be effected for the period 21 November 2010 to 20 December 2010, before Christmas. Therefore, there is no outstanding payment as such.

FOOD SECURITY FUND - BENEFICIARIES

(No. 1A/205) Mr K. Li Kwong Wing (Second Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Agro-Industry and Food Security whether, in regard to the Food Security Fund, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Fund, information as to -

(a) the amount of funds

(i) raised, and

(iii) disbursed, as at to-date, giving the list of the beneficiaries thereof and the projects funded

(b) the conditions and procedures laid down for eligibility thereto, and

(c) if measures will be taken to improve the operation and effectiveness thereof.

Reply: The Budget 2008-2009 made provision for a sum of Rs1 billion for the setting up of a Food Security with the objective of increasing the country's food self sufficiency level and build resilience on future food crises. Accordingly, a Food Security Fund Strategic Plan for year 2008-2011 was elaborated and made operational as from year 2009.

As regards part (a) (i) of the question, no funds are raised by the Food Security Fund.

As at date, an amount of some Rs122 m. has been disbursed for the various projects and schemes. The beneficiaries of the fund comprise members of various cooperative societies of vegetable growers, livestock breeders, fishermen, agro-processing operators and also individual farmers and breeders. These include 17 farmers associations and some 2000 individual beneficiaries.

As at date 28 projects and schemes have been launched and are well on track. They are at different stages of implementation and for which an amount of Rs240,250,000 has been provided in my Ministry's budget for year 2008-2009 and 2010.

The main projects and schemes implemented comprise the following -

(i) Seed Potato Purchase Scheme;

(ii) Seed Onion Purchase Scheme;

(iii) Food Crop Insurance Scheme;

(iv) Construction of Model Dairy Farms at Nouvelle Découverte and at Petit Merlo;

(v) Livestock census surveys;

(vi) Irrigation Projects at L'Esperance Trebuchet and at La Chaudière;

- (vii) Research and development projects for strategic crops including crop protection against bats;
- (viii) Potato cultivation at Gros Bois;
- (ix) Payment under freight rebate scheme;
- (x) Mechanical land preparation and fencing works in Rodrigues, Bananes, Rouge Terre and St Avold;
- (xi) Grant for purchase of a fishing vessel through the *Mouvement Auto Suffisance Alimentaire*;
- (xii) Loan and grant schemes for livestock and agro processing development.

As regard part (b) I am tabling pamphlets which highlight the eligibility criteria and procedures for the grants and loans for the six schemes for livestock/agro industry development and managed by the DBM and MPCB.

With regard to part (c), since the setting up of the Food Security Fund, arrangements are in place for the implementation of projects and schemes through a specific Project Implementation Unit (PIU). Food Security still being high on the agenda of this Government, food security programme and actions will be consolidated. Para 60 of Budget Speech 2011 spells out Earmarking of Rs105 m. to accelerate the Food Security project which is twice the amount disbursed in 2010 and will support some 11 projects. In this respect, the Food Security Unit is being revisited with a view to strengthening its capacity to deliver and to operate as a full-fledged department of my Ministry. This Unit will be fully dedicated to implement actions and campaigns to enhance our food security. It will be responsible to mobilise all operators and stakeholders to contribute towards enhancing our food production and also towards changing our food consumption habits, so that we all consume more of what we produce locally.

MAINGARD – FOOTBALLGROUND - CONSTRUCTION

(No. 1A/206) Mr K. Li Kwong Wing (Second Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to the National Development Unit, he will state when was land obtained from the Medine Sugar Estate for the construction of a football ground at Maingard, indicating the -

- (a) extent of the land, and
- (b) project value of the construction of the football ground, indicating the expected date of start and completion dates thereof.

Reply: A portion of land of an extent of 3A (12663sqm) was vested in the National Development Unit in 2004 for the construction of a football ground at Maingard, Beau Bassin.

The National Development Unit is working on the design and scope of work, after which bidding exercise will be carried out and subsequently contract will be awarded. The project will be implemented during the financial year 2011,

SCHOOLS – TEACHERS – Q UALIFICATIONS

(No. 1A/207) Mr S. Obeegadoo (Third Member for Curepipe & Midlands) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether, in regard to the education personnel, he will state, in respect of the years 2000, 2005 and 2010, the percentage of -

- (a) pre-primary teachers who have benefitted from training at the Mauritius Institute of Education;
- (b) secondary education teachers holding;
 - (i) a Post Graduate Certificate in Education;
 - (ii) a Teacher's Diploma;
 - (iii) a Teacher's Certificate and;
 - (iv) no pedagogical qualification and;
- (c) secondary education teachers whose highest academic qualification is a;
 - (i) University degree;
 - (ii) Higher School Certificate, and
 - (iii) School Certificate.

Reply: The relevant information is being compiled and would be tabled as soon as the compilation exercise is completed.

SCHOOLS – STUDENTS – PER CAPITA SPENDING

(No. 1A/208) Mr S. Obeegadoo (Third Member for Curepipe & Midlands) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether, in regard to the students, he will state the present per capita spending in respect of the

- (a) academic main stream, and

(b) State pre-vocational streams.

Reply: At present, the data collection system at the Statistics Section of the Ministry provides disaggregated information only for student enrolment and staffing in respect of the academic and prevocational streams.

Given that in most state secondary schools, the academic mainstream and prevocational students are integrated within the same cost centre, disaggregated per capita cost for each stream is not available.

My Ministry is compiling the information requested and this will be placed in the Library of the National Assembly as soon as it is ready.

NDU – PROJECTS - IMPLEMENTATION

(No. 1A/209) Mr F. Quirin (Third Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to the projects implemented and completed in 2010 by the National Development Unit, he will state, in each case, the -

- (a) type;
- (b) location, and
- (c) amount spent.

Reply: The information is being compiled and will be laid in the Library of the National Assembly in due course.

MINISTRY OF TOURISM AND LEISURE – LEISURE ACTIVITIES

(No. 1A/210) Mr J. F. Quirin (Third Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Tourism and Leisure whether, in regard to leisure, he will give details of the activities organized during 2009 and 2010 by his Ministry, indicating the amount spent in each case.

Reply: I am informed that 3 activities have been organised in the year 2009 for a total amount of Rs 398,743. In addition, 24 activities, organised by various organisations, were sponsored by the Ministry for a total cost of Rs 518,816.

As regards the year 2010, 4 major activities were organised amounting to Rs 1,321,000 and 19 activities were sponsored for an amount of Rs 407, 200.

I am tabling the detailed information relating to those leisure activities.

BEAU BASSIN/ROSE-HILL - ROADS

(No. 1A/211) Mr D. Nagalingum (Second Member for Stanley & Rose Hill) asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to the classified and main roads of Beau Bassin/Rose Hill, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Road Development Authority, information as to if regular inspections are carried out to check the state thereof and if not, why not.

Reply: The information is being compiled and will be laid in the Library of the National Assembly in due course.

MUNICIPAL COUNCIL OF VACOAS/PHOENIX – PROJECTS - COST

(No. 1A/212) Dr. R. Sorefan (Fourth Member for La Caverne and Phoenix) asked the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the projects undertaken by the Municipal Council of Vacoas/Phoenix, since October 2005 to-date, ward-wise, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Council, information as to the –

- (a) nature thereof;
- (b) cost involved, and
- (c) start and completion dates thereof.

Reply: The information requested by the hon. Member is being compiled by the Municipal Council of Vacoas-Phoenix and will be placed in the Library as soon as they will be made available.

MUNICIPAL COUNCIL OF BEAU BASSIN/ROSE HILL – PROJECTS - COST

(No. 1A/213) Mr D. Nagalingum (Second Member for Stanley and Rose Hill) asked the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the projects undertaken by the Municipal Council of Beau Bassin/Rose Hill, since October 2005 to-date, he

will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Council, a list thereof ward-wise, indicating the –

- (a) nature thereof;
- (b) cost involved, and
- (c) start and completion dates thereof.

Reply: The information requested by the hon. Member is being compiled by the Municipal Council of Beau Bassin/Rose Hill and will be placed in the Library as soon as they will be made available.

MUNICIPAL COUNCIL OF PORT LOUIS – PROJECTS - COST

(No. 1A/214) Mr A. Ameer Meea (First Member for Port Louis Maritime and Port Louis East) asked the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the projects undertaken by the Municipal Council of Port Louis, since October 2005 to-date, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Council, a list thereof ward-wise, indicating the –

- (a) nature thereof;
- (b) cost involved, and
- (c) start and completion dates thereof.

Reply: The information requested by the hon. Member is being compiled by the Municipal Council of Port Louis and will be placed in the Library as soon as they will be made available.

MAURITIUS TOURISM PROMOTION AUTHORITY – CHAIRPERSON - APPOINTMENT

(No. A/215) Mr K. Ramano (Second Member for Belle Rose and Quatre Bornes) asked the Minister of Tourism and Leisure whether, in regard to Mr R. D., Chairperson of the Mauritius Tourism Promotion Authority, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Authority, information as to –

- (a) when he was appointed;
- (b) the terms and conditions of his contract;

- (c) the amount of money spent on each mission undertaken, giving details thereof, and
- (d) the countries visited, indicating the –
 - (i) duration;
 - (ii) composition of the delegation, if any, and
 - (iii) purpose thereof.

Reply: With respect to the mission of Mr R.D., former Chairperson of the Mauritius Tourism Promotion Authority, I am informed as follows -

- (a) The Chairperson was appointed on 21 November 2005;
- (b) The terms and conditions of the appointment of the Chairperson as well as the salary drawn by him were as prescribed by PRB;

I am tabling the detailed information requested at parts (c) and (d).

MINISTER OF TOURISM AND LEISURE (FORMER) - OVERSEAS MISSIONS

(No. 1A/216) Mr K. Ramano (Second Member for Belle Rose and Quatre Bornes)

asked the Minister of Tourism and Leisure whether, in regard to the former Minister of Tourism and Leisure, he will state the overseas missions undertaken, since July 2005 to April 2010, indicating the-

- (a) amount of money spent in each case, giving details thereof, and
- (b) countries visited, indicating the –
 - (i) duration;
 - (ii) composition of the delegation, if any, and
 - (iii) purpose thereof.

Reply: With regard to the overseas missions undertaken by the former Minister of Tourism and Leisure, since July 2005 to April 2010, I am tabling the information requested at parts (a) and (b) of the question.

MUNICIPAL COUNCIL OF CUREPIPE – PROJECTS - COST

(No. 1A/217) Dr. S. Boolell (Second Member for Curepipe and Midlands) asked the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the projects undertaken by the Municipal Council of Curepipe, since October 2005 to-date, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Council, a list thereof, ward-wise, indicating the -

- (a) nature thereof;
- (b) cost involved, and
- (c) start and completion dates thereof.

Reply: The information requested by the hon. Member is being compiled by the Municipal Council of Curepipe and will be placed in the Library as soon as they will be made available.

SAINT MARTIN STREET, ROCHE BOIS - HUMPS

(No. 1A/218) Mr A. Ameer Meea (First Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping whether he is aware of the increasing number of vehicles running at high speed in the morning, along the Saint Martin Street, Roche Bois, Port Louis, used as a shortcut and if so, will he state if consideration will be given for the installation of humps thereat.

Reply: The TMRSU has informed that installation of speed calming devices is not warranted in view of the fact that the geometry of St. Martin Street at Roche Bois is such that vehicles cannot speed over long distance.

On the other hand, setting up of speed calming devices is not the only solution to tackle the problem of speeding. In fact, speed calming devices impact negatively on response for emergency vehicles and cause serious discomfort to old/ill persons or pregnant women. It also contributes to noise pollution and accelerated wear and tear of vehicles etc.

SAVANNE AND BLACK RIVER - DRAIN AND ROAD WORKS

(No. 1A/219) Mrs J. Radegonde (Fourth Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the drain and road works in the region of Tamarin, Morcellement Corail, Bois d'Ebene and Goyave Streets, in Constituency No.14, Savanne and Black River, he will state -

- (a) the names of the contractors
- (b) if these projects were budgeted for in 2009/2010 for infrastructural development
- (c) the amount of money allocated for each project, indicating -

(i) if same has been paid to the contractors and

(ii) the dates on which payments were effected, and

(d) if the projects will be completed by the end of December 2010 and if not, why not.

Reply: The information requested by the hon. Member which has been provided by the Black River District Council is being placed in the Library. It may however be noted that projects for the construction of drain and road at Avenue des Capitaines have been undertaken by the National Development Unit.

DESALINATION PLANTS

(No. 1A/220) Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Environment and Sustainable Development whether, in regard to Desalination Plants, he will state the number thereof in operation, indicating their locations and the control exercised thereon by his Ministry.

Reply (The Ministry of Energy and Public Utilities): Groundwater Licenses have been issued by the Central Water Authority to three hotels at Le Morne, Grand Gaube and Bel Ombre.

In accordance with the provisions of the Ground Water Act, the following conditions have to be compiled with –

- (a) the licensees should submit on a monthly basis to the Central Water Authority returns on the quantity of the water abstracted and on the effluents discharged from the desalination plant;
- (b) a meter should be installed for monitoring the volume of abstraction of water;
- (c) the licence is valid for a period of one year and renewal is subject to an assessment by the Water Resources Unit;
- (d) analysis of the groundwater and any waste water discharged should be carried out monthly and the results submitted to the Central Water Authority, and
- (e) the maximum volume of groundwater abstracted should not exceed 300 m³ daily.

I am also informed that an EIA Licence is required for the setting up of desalination plants.

BLACK RIVER DISTRICT COUNCIL - LEGAL ADVISERS

(No. 1A/221) Ms K. R. Deerpalsing (Third Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes) asked the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the Legal Advisers appointed by the Black River District Council, since 2001 to 2005, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Council, information as to the names of the incumbents, indicating in each case the (a) date on which their services were retained and (b) total amount of retainer or any other fees which have been paid to them.

Reply: The information requested by the hon. Member which has been compiled by the Black River District Council is being placed in the library.

CAMP THOREL - DRAIN WORKS

(No. 1A/222) Mr S. Dayal (Third Member for Quartier Militaire & Moka) asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to drain works that had been carried out from the School Road to the Mattarooa Road, at Camp Thorel, up to near the residence of one Mr Mattarooa, he will state when same will be completed, in view of the fact that all the way leaves have been obtained.

Reply: I am informed that the contract for drain works at Camp Thorel will be awarded shortly and works are expected to be completed within three months from the date of start.

BASSIN LOULOU, ST JULIEN D'HOTMAN - STREET LIGHTING

(No. 1A/223) Mr S. Dayal (Third Member for Quartier Militaire and Moka) asked the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether, in regard to St Julien D'Hotman, from Bassin Loulou to the river banks, where devotees offer prayers during festivities like Cavadee, he will state if consideration will be given for the provision of street lighting thereat.

Reply: I am informed by the Moka-Flacq District Council that there is presently no street lighting network from Bassin Loulou to the river banks whereat devotees offer prayers during Cavadee festivals. However, I have already impressed upon the Council to give consideration to

extend the electricity distribution network to the area and to provide street lighting. The Council is considering my request favourably.

ST JULIEN D'HOTMAN - FOOTBALL PLAYGROUND - DRAIN WORKS

(No. 1A/224) Mr S. Dayal (Third Member for Quartier Militaire & Moka) asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to the football playground at St Julien D'Hotman, he will state if consideration will be given for the advisability of carrying out drain works thereat.

Reply: My Ministry will carry out improvement works including drain works at the football ground at St Julien D'Hotman during the financial year 2011.

ST JULIEN D'HOTMAN - PAVEMENTS

(No. 1A/225) Mr S. Dayal (Third Member for Quartier Militaire & Moka) asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to St Julien D'Hotman, he will state if consideration will be given for the advisability of constructing pavements from La Croisée Mont-Ida to the Kalimaye, near Bolome Salute.

Reply: The construction of pavement from La Croisée Mont Ida to the Kalimaye, near Bolome Salute will be undertaken by the Road Development Authority in the next financial year.

The site is situated along Higginson Road (B24) which is 6.5m wide and supports 2-way traffic. Some 2.5km of the road passes through St Julien D'Hotman. Footpaths exist along this stretch.

The length of footpath and drains to be constructed is 400m. The project cost is estimated at Rs 9m.

The RDA has already constructed 1.2km of footpath and drains along B24 at St Julien d'Hotman at a cost of Rs12m. in this financial year.

BINANI CEMENT FACTORY (MAURITIUS) LTD - EIA LICENCE

(No. 1A/226) Mr R. Uteem (Second Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central) asked Minister of Environment and Sustainable Development whether, in regard to the Binani Cement Factory (Mauritius) Ltd., he will state if the company has complied with all the

conditions of the Environment Impact Assessment (EIA) licence issued thereto and if not, the sanctions that will be taken against the Company, if any.

Reply: An appeal has been lodged at the Environment Appeal tribunal on 27 May 2010 by La Farge (Mauritius) Cement Ltd against the decision to grant the EIA licence. The appeal case is still ongoing and therefore *sub judice*.

NYON AND LENEPVEU STREETS - TRAFFIC CONGESTION - PORT LOUIS

(No. 1A/227) Mr R. Uteem (Second Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central) asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping whether, he is aware of the traffic congestion and parking problems, more particularly at the Nyon and Lenepveu Streets and in the vicinity of Port Louis and if so, will he state if consideration will be given for any conversion of streets into one way ones as remedial measures.

Reply: The Traffic Management and Road Safety Unit (TMRSU) has informed that the Nyon Street prior to the year 2004 was a one-way road. Thereafter it was converted into a two-way traffic, taking into consideration the facts that the road has footpath on both of its sides, is a residential road with a low volume of traffic. The present road traffic conditions, therefore, do not warrant the conversion of Nyon Street into a one-way road.

As regard Lenepveu Street, TMRSU has informed that it is a narrow residential access road with practically a very low volume of traffic generated mainly by the movement of the residents. Converting Lenepveu Street into a one-way road can lead to numerous inconveniences; residents would have to travel longer distances, parking would have to be prohibited to prevent unnecessary obstruction, most residents do not have parking spaces for their vehicles and park their vehicles on the street, they would have to look for other locations. This may generate lot of reluctances. Nevertheless, TMRSU has been requested to undertake a careful assessment of the situation to ensure that measures to be recommended do not result in other problems which would offset gain expected.

MUNICIPAL COUNCIL OF PORT LOUIS - CLUBS/ASSOCIATIONS - ANNUAL GRANTS

(1A/229) Ms K. R. Deerpalsing (Third Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes) asked the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the annual grants given by the Municipal Council of Port Louis, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Council, a list of the sociocultural, religious and sporting clubs/associations which have benefitted therefrom, since 2001 to 2005, indicating in each case the

(a) names, and

(b) quantum thereof.

Reply: The information requested by the hon. Member which has been compiled by the Municipal Council of Port Louis is being placed in the Library.