



**FIFTH NATIONAL ASSEMBLY
PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
(HANSARD)
FIRST SESSION
TUESDAY 15 JUNE 2010
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(Formed by Dr. the Hon. Navinchandra Ramgoolam)

Dr. the Hon. Navinchandra Ramgoolam, GCSK,
FRCP

*Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs
and External Communications*

Dr. the Hon. Ahmed Rashid Beebeejaun, GCSK,
FRCP

*Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and
Public Utilities*

Hon. Charles Gaëtan Xavier-Luc Duval, GCSK

*Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Social
Integration and Economic Empowerment*

Hon. Pravind Kumar Jugnauth

*Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and
Economic Development*

Hon. Anil Kumar Bachoo

*Minister of Public Infrastructure, National
Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping*

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*Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration
and International Trade*

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*Minister of Gender Equality, Child Development
and Family Welfare*

Hon. Nandcoomar Bodha

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Dr. the Hon. Vasant Kumar Bunwaree

Minister of Education and Human Resources

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Hon. Showkutally Soodhun	<i>Minister of Industry and Commerce</i>
Hon. Devanand Virahsawmy, GOSK	<i>Minister of Environment and Sustainable Development</i>
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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

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MAURITIUS

Fifth National Assembly

FIRST SESSION

Debate No. 3 of 2010

Sitting of Tuesday 15 June 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. Ministry of Finance and Economic Development -

- (a) The Annual Report and Audited Financial Statements of the Financial Intelligence Unit for financial year 2009.
- (b) The Investment Promotion and Protection Agreement (Republic of France) Regulations 2010 (Government Notice No. 132 of 2010).
- (c) The Annual Report of the Board of Investment for the Financial Year 2008-2009.

B. Ministry of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping –

The Road Traffic (Crop Season) Regulations 2010 (Government Notice No. 131 of 2010).

C. Ministry of Local Government and Outer Islands –

- (a) The Municipal Council of Curepipe (Fees for Outline Planning Permission and Building and Land Use Permit) Regulations 2009 (Government Notice No.133 of 2010).
- (b) The Grand Port Savanne District Council (Fees for Outline Planning Permission and Building and Land Use Permit) Regulations 2009 (Government Notice No.134 of 2010).
- (c) The Black River District Council (Fees for Outline Planning Permission and Building and Land Use Permit) Regulations 2009 (Government Notice No.135 of 2010).

D. Ministry of Fisheries and Rodrigues –

The Rodrigues Regional Assembly (Community Development) Regulations
2010 (Government Notice (Rodrigues Regional Assembly) No. 2 of 2010).

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

STC - DIESEL, MOGAS, PETROLEUM PRODUCTS & RICE (*RATION*)

The Leader of the Opposition (Mr P. Bérenger) (*By Private Notice*) asked the Minister of Industry and Commerce whether, in regard to the State Trading Corporation, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Corporation, information as to –

- (a) the details of the present price structure for diesel and Mogas, indicating the
 - (i) hedging losses incurred as at to date, and
 - (ii) sums paid to filling stations and petroleum companies on the occasion of the last general election;
- (b) whether tenders for petroleum products will be called for;
- (c) the commodities and respective quantities thereof imported by the STCM Limited, and
- (d) the losses incurred, if any, on the recent re-tendering exercise for the supply of ration rice.

Mr Soodhun: Mr Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I will reply to the PNQ as well as to the PQs 1B/41, 1B/56 and 1B/59 together.

With regard to part (a) of the PNQ, details about the price structure for Mogas comprise the following -

1. Cost, Freight and Insurance (C.I.F) which means -
 - the average Platt's Publication (Daily World Price) of the month in which a tanker is loaded (Bill of Lading date) May 2010
 - FOB Mogas plus FOB Mediterranean (Italy) USD/M.Ton 701.99
 - Plus Supplier's margin (premium) USD/M Ton 30.43
 - Plus Freight USD/M Ton 24.40
 - Plus Insurance (.00425% of C&F) USD/M Ton 0.03
 - Total CIF: USD 4,134,237.57 or USD/M Ton 756.85

- No of litres: 5,101,098
 - CIF per litre: USD 0.5822
2. Excise Duty as per Excise Act MUR/litre 9.80.
 3. MID Levy as per the Excise Act - June 2008 MUR/litre 0.15.
 4. (Gain)/Loss from previous month – the CIF used in the price structure of a month is that of tankers of the previous month. Any gain realised due to lower CIF price for tankers of the subsequent month, as compared to that used in the price structure...

Mr Bérenger: I'll ask the rate, of course, to be circulated as it had been done in the past; it is not necessary for the hon. Minister to read everything. We are going to waste half an hour with that.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: It has been the practice in the past to circulate the structure. I, myself, cannot follow what the hon. Minister is saying.

Mr Soodhun: A question has been asked by the hon. Leader of the Opposition, that is, to give detail of the price structure.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition has made a request and the hon. Minister may comply; not now, as he is not in a position to circulate the information. He might do so later on. Carry on!

Mr Soodhun: These are the details which have been asked. Mr Speaker, Sir, concerning the adjustment, when the price structure for a month is worked out, it is assumed that the quantity of the STC will sell to oil companies during a month will be one-twelfth of the normal contracted quantity – 90,000 M. Ton or 9,750,000 litres.

Increase/(Decrease) greater than 7.5% and below 2.5%: as per paragraph 7 of the Regulations - any increase or decrease below 2.5 % in the retail price is carried forward and adjusted in the succeeding month. The same applies if the percentage increase or decrease is beyond 7.5%. Therefore, this amount is charged or refunded in the following month.

For the month of May 2010, the price of Mogas should have been decreased by 8.75%, but has been limited to 7.5% in accordance with the Regulations. The difference of 1.27% or a decrease of MUR 0.5143 has been brought forward to June 2010.

The windfall gain or loss - a stock taking exercise is carried out in the tanks of oil companies and filling stations on the day a change in price is undertaken. When there is an increase in price, a refund of the difference between the existing and the new price is made to the STC by oil companies and filling stations, and subsequently refunded to the consumers in the following APM exercise by STC in the price structure. In the same way, payment is effected to the above stakeholders in case of decrease in price and is charged to the consumers. The amount windfall gain or windfall loss is divided by the number of litres estimated to be sold to oil companies during a month, and is inserted as either a charge or a refund, whichever the case may be, in the price structure. Any amount charged or refunded in short or excess is considered in the item 'Adjustment' in subsequent month.

For May 2010 APM exercise, the stock of Mogas on 08 May 2010 at the oil companies and the retail outlets were 12,414,248 litres and 1,473,802 litres respectively. The price differential between the month of April and May 2010 was MUR 3.0435/litre for oil companies and MUR 3.50 for retail outlets. Hence, a total amount of windfall loss of MUR 42,884,027.28 has been refunded to them. Divided by the monthly estimated quantity of 9,750,000 litres, the amount charged in the price structure of June 2010 works out to MUR 4.3984/litre.

Provision for hedging - this item has been introduced in January 2008 (MUR 1.50 per litre) and increased to MUR 3.00/Litre in November 2008.

Net interest paid/loss on exchange - any interest paid on lines of credit as well as losses in holding such as lines of credit less interest received is charged to consumers. This amount is divided by the number of litres estimated to be sold to the oil Company during the month and inserted as either a charge or a refund, whichever the case may be, in the price structure. An amount charged or refunded in short or excess is considered in the item 'Adjustment' in subsequent months.

For June 2010, an amount of MUR 1.5021 has been charged for this item.

Expenses incurred in connection with importation of petroleum products – MUR 1.4089 per litre.

Contribution to Road Development Authority –

Mr Bérenger: The same thing again on the other products. Instead of circulating...

Mr Speaker: But, unfortunately, the hon. Minister is not ready with the circulation. This is going to be a guideline for next time. When a matter is so complicated, I think it is better that the hon. Minister comes with the answer, and then with some documents to circulate. But, in any event, the hon. Leader of the Opposition will have been able to take cognizance of the answer after that.

Mr Soodhun: Mr Speaker, Sir, I would like to collaborate with the hon. Leader of the Opposition and to give all the information that he needs but, in fact, the details, are very important for that issue. He can have them; I will give it to him.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order! Order! Yes, carry on!

(Interruptions)

Order! Order now!

Mr Soodhun: With regard to part (b) of the question, Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed that arrangements for supply of petroleum products are still going on with Mangalore Refinery and Petrochemicals Ltd (MRPL) of India. The State Trading Corporation (STC) has called for quotations as market strategy from a number of firms. A decision will be taken in the light of the proposals obtained.

Mr Speaker, Sir, we have taken cognizance of the good quality, and I am personally following the matter with STC.

Mr Speaker: I am sorry, the hon. Minister...

(Interruptions)

Order, please! I think the hon. Minister has to answer the question and not make a speech.

Mr Soodhun: He has said that we have not been launching tenders at international level. I just want to mention it for the sake of transparency. The STC has also called for quotations, as a market strategy, from a number of firms, and the decision will be taken at a later stage. The supply of fuel is still going on with Mangalore.

With regard to part (c) of the question, I am informed that, since its incorporation in September 2007, STCM Ltd imported the following commodities -

- 600 metric tons of Lima beans
- 90.20 metric tons of yellow split peas
- 22 metric tons of Super Kernel Basmati rice
- 123 metric tons of Black Eye beans
- 33 metric tons of cloves
- 28 metric tons of refined salt
- 150 metric tons of milk

Mr Speaker, Sir, with regard to part (d) of the question, no losses have been incurred in recent tender exercise for the purchase of ration rice. In fact, a first tender was launched by the STC on 07 October 2009 for the supply of 20,000 metric tons of ration rice.

The STC received three offers. The Evaluation Committee recommended the award of the contract to Chaiyaporn Rice and Food Products Company Ltd, the only responsive bidder, at the price of USD 478.45 per MT.

Given that the difference between the prices quoted by Chaiyaporn Rice and Food Products Co. Ltd and that of the lowest bidder, which was unfortunately not responsive, amounted to USD 94 PMT, that is, Rs60 m. for the whole tender quantity, it was decided to launch the tender anew. Accordingly, a second tender was launched on 20 November 2009 and not in December 2009 for the supply of 20,000 MT of ration rice. The prices quoted by the two tenderers were on the high side, that is, USD 607.45 PMT being the lowest and USD 666.66 PMT being the highest.

This could have resulted in additional subsidy of Rs121 m. for the year 2010. It was, therefore, decided to seek quotations from State-owned organisations with a view to get better prices. The STC contacted 12 Government-owned companies of different countries, and only two responded, namely, State Trading Corporation of Pakistan and the STC India. The former organisation informed STC that it should participate in its tender exercise that was scheduled to be launched in January 2010. The STC has not participated in the exercise because of the long procedure and taking into consideration the risks of short supply. On the other hand, STC India informed that there was a ban on export on non-basmati rice.

Therefore, using our diplomatic relations, the High Commission of Mauritius in India contacted other countries under its coverage, and this resulted in a favourable reply from the Department of Foreign Trade of Thailand.

There was a request from Thai Department to proceed to Bangkok for negotiations. However, the request was not entertained for the sake of transparency.

In order to avoid any shortage of ration rice on the local market, the offer from Chaiyaporn at the price of USD 607.45 PMT was retained. The contract was awarded on 22 January 2010, and a first order of 2,000 MT was placed. However, the STC continued to scout the market, and towards end January 2010 it was observed that the price on the world market was declining. It, therefore, made a request on 29 January 2010 to Chaiyaporn to review its price downwards. However, as no positive reply was obtained from Chaiyaporn, the STC, acting upon legal advice, terminated the contract. The consignment already received would have ensured supply up to beginning of April 2010.

Meanwhile, the STC sought quotations from a list of suppliers, and nine responsive offers were received on 16 February 2010. Based on the new prices, a consignment of 2,000 MT was ordered from Meskey & Femtee Trading (Pakistan) at the cheapest quoted price of USD 432 per MT, that is, at a price difference of USD 175.45 per MT. This order would have ensured supply up to mid-May 2010. No contract for the total requirement could be signed, as the offer was only for 2,500 MT.

Fresh quotes were sought from 14 suppliers on 11 March 2010, and seven offers were obtained. The best quote was from Garibsons PVT Ltd. at the quoted price of USD 404.04 PMT, and was awarded to the company. It is to be noted that this price leads to a saving of USD

203.41 per MT or around MUR 104 m. compared to the tender price of USD 607.45 PMT from Chaiyaporn during the second tender exercise. Even if a comparison is made with Chaiyaporn's first tender price of USD 478.45 PMT, a saving of around MUR 38 m. is made with the award to Garibsons PVT. Ltd.

Mr Bérenger: In letting us have the details of the present price structure, I tried to follow what the hon. Minister had said. Can I know, in the present price structure, what is the provision for hedging losses? Is it still Rs3 per litre or has it increased?

Mr Soodhun: It is Rs3 per litre.

Mr Bérenger: I did not hear the Minister reply to the question: to date, how much of the hedging losses have been met?

Mr Soodhun: Sir, with regard to cost of freight and insurance, we have to...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order, now!

Mr Soodhun: Mr Speaker, Sir, let me explain to the hon. Leader of the Opposition. He asked a question with regard to the cost of hedging losses. It has to be calculated. It started from year 2004 when I and the hon. Leader of the Opposition then formed part of the Government. It will now have to be calculated. It will take time; it cannot be prepared in two hours. I will place the information in the Library.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: The figure is not available.

Mr Bérenger: And they clap! The hon. Minister does not have the figure of hedging losses already incurred. Does he have an estimate of what the total hedging losses are likely to be? I am sure estimates must have been worked out.

Mr Soodhun: Sir, I do not have the information at hand, but I am ready to place it in the Library of the National Assembly.

Mr Bérenger: Can I know if the contribution to the Road Development Authority for the so-called *transport gratuit* in the June formula for the price structure is still Rs2, or has it increased?

Mr Soodhun: Sir, I have already answered that question in detail. The hon. Leader of the Opposition does not want to listen to the answer in detail. I wanted to give it in detail. In fact, he does not want to listen to all the details that we have.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order, please!

Mr Soodhun: I have said it. I explained the MUR1.85/litre on Mogas and MUR1.75/litre on gas oil. I mentioned it, but the hon. Leader of the Opposition did not listen.

Mr Bérenger: The hon. Minister said that prices will be reviewed next time. He said that on 03 June. He even said '*Je promets que nous rendrons justice aux consommateurs lors du prochain exercice*', after having denounced publicly the recent increases. Can he confirm that, indeed, *justice sera rendue aux consommateurs* when comes the next exercise?

Mr Soodhun: Mr Speaker, Sir, justice has always been done. It is there from the beginning! What I want to say is that we have confidence in APM. If we lose that confidence ...

(Interruptions)

Because it is dependent! People have always in mind that STC and APM are mixed, and this is the confusion. What I want to say is that I promise that justice has been done and will be done always under the leadership of Dr. the hon. Ramgoolam, our Prime Minister.

Mr Bérenger: Mr Speaker, Sir, can I know whether the new Minister has worked out how much incompetence and waste at the State Trading Corporation is costing consumers? Has this been worked out by the new Minister? What about absenteeism?

Mr Soodhun: Sir, there is no waste till now. I don't know where the hon. Leader of the Opposition has found that.

(Interruptions)

Mr Bérenger: The hon. Minister has found rice and flour all over the place as well as absenteeism. He said everything will change, and now he says that everything is fine at the STC! Who will take him seriously?

Mr Soodhun: Mr Speaker, Sir, this is my style as Minister. He knows me; I was Minister when he was Prime Minister. I never govern a Ministry by watching television. I go directly there, and I am going to do it!

(Interruptions)

Let me assure the hon. Leader of the Opposition that it is true to say that there has been no abuse. We have to stop some malpractices. A worker cannot be absent for 65 days in a year. When he is talking about rice, let him take it in a cool manner because it is the first...

(Interruptions)

What I want to say to the hon. Leader of the Opposition is that it is true that I found certain things that need to be done, and I am ready! There will be a new shed and I am going to separate flour and rice, so that next time we don't have such a problem. This shed exists for a couple of years. We cannot change it in ten days or one month.

Mr Bérenger: Let me move to part (b), Mr Speaker, Sir. I have listened very carefully to the hon. Minister. He said recently that this purchase *de gré à gré* of petroleum products will stop; for the sake of transparency, there would be public international tenders. He has said today that we still have an ongoing relationship with Mangalore. My question is: as soon as possible, is he going to keep his word and go for public international tenders as in the past?

Mr Soodhun: Mr Speaker, Sir, I thank the hon. Leader of the Opposition. He knows me very well, and he can trust me. I maintain the facts I have mentioned today also in the House. We are going to launch quotations from every country.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: For him, international tender means quotations.

(Interruptions)

Mr Soodhun: I have not finished.

Mr Bérenger: No! If you listened carefully to the hon. Minister when he was replying earlier, he makes differences between quotations which STC does, which are not tenders. So, my question is: will international public tenders be called for petroleum products?

Mr Speaker: Yes, international tenders.

Mr Soodhun: Mr Speaker, Sir, I maintain what I have mentioned. There will be international quotations from every country. We have already launched it. I don't know why the hon. Leader of the Opposition is a bit allergic to Mangalore.

Mr Bérenger: On a point of order, this is imputing motives. I am only calling for international public tenders. Mangalore will quote.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Minister, you have said that you are asking for quotations, and the question is: why are you not going for international tender, as you made a statement in the press? That's what you have to explain.

Mr Soodhun: Mr Speaker, Sir, we need the quotation from different countries in order to compare the price because, as you know, the price of oil is fixed internationally. But the premium and the commissions are being negotiated, and this is what we can negotiate. We have launched even in India, Pakistan, Madagascar, Australia and Middle East. Once we get it, then we can compare. Tomorrow, if Mangalore is giving us the better price, why not Mangalore! But let us have it internationally. I promise the hon. Leader of the Opposition and the population that I will give the details after the next consignment.

Mr Bérenger: We are talking about negotiations; we are not talking about public tenders as he said in a very recent past. He claims to be *en faveur de la transparence*. Will the new Minister lay in the Library a copy of the agreement between STC and Mangalore refineries?

Mr Soodhun: Sir, this is a legal aspect. I have got advice from the legal services...

(Interruptions)

Does the hon. Member want to see to it?

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: No! Order! Order, please!

(Interruptions)

Order! When the Minister is replying, the hon. Member has to keep quiet and if he has any question, he can put it. Continue hon. Minister!

Mr Soodhun: The fact that there is a problem of security and price, we cannot reveal. I have sought legal advice, and we cannot release it because it will cause a lot of damage - not now - in the future.

Mr Bérenger: Can I move on to the third part of my question, that is, STCM Limited. The Minister again came out recently that it would be scrapped; *démantelé* was the word he used. Has this already been done, and is this being done?

Mr Soodhun: Yes, Sir. The following day I was appointed Minister, I did it, and I was congratulated by the hon. Leader of the Opposition. I thank him very much for that.

(Interruptions)

Scrapped completely! The Director was out. Mr Speaker, Sir, let me tell the House and the hon. Leader of the Opposition that all the clerical officers and accounts clerks - there is a number of them - have not been sacked.

Mr Speaker: The hon. Minister should not go into detail like this. What he has done with the employees is not part of the question. He said that the company does not exist anymore; it is finished.

Mr Soodhun: Mr Speaker, Sir, there is a rumour that we have said '*leve paké allé*', but there was no '*leve paké allé*'. We have transferred them to the STC.

Mr Bérenger: It is, of course, a total blame on the former Minister and the former Government. We were given a number of commodities that have been imported by this parallel company, which is now being disbanded. Can we know whether they made a loss, and whether tenders were called for when purchases were effected?

Mr Soodhun: Mr Speaker, Sir, there was no loss. Let me inform the House that there is nothing against the former Government. It would have lapsed according to the Stimulus Package Act in November this year. I have opened a door. This is what I have done. I have just opened a door which was already opened.

(Interruptions)

Mr Bérenger: On the fourth part of my question, Mr Speaker, Sir...

(Interruptions)

As far as purchase of ration rice is concerned, the Minister has confirmed that a tender exercise was carried out at the end of last year and the best responsive bid was \$478. Has the new Minister had an occasion to look into how could the STC make such a blunder? At that point in time, rice prices across the world, in Pakistan, in Thailand and in India were going up through the roof and they decided to make a fresh tender and cancel the one, that is, \$478 a ton, and the result was that the new tender resulted in US\$607. Has the Minister looked into it?

Mr Soodhun: Allow me, Mr Speaker, Sir, to give information about the profit and loss of the STCM Limited, because I did not answer it. According to the Audit Financial Statement of 11 September 2007/2008, there has been a profit of Rs28,440 and the Audit Financial Statement for the year 30 June...

(Interruptions)

But the hon. Leader of the Opposition has asked the question. There has been a profit of Rs1 m. for two years.

(Interruptions)

Concerning the rice...

(Interruptions)

There is no blunder! What has happened is that, in fact, we had a problem with Burma. Everybody knows that we don't have diplomatic relationship with Burma, and we know the reason. This caused us a big problem at that time. We had to cancel this consignment, and it is true to say that there has been a loss because of this problem. In fact, when we came to the second consignment, we made a profit of Rs38 m. We agree that there was a problem but, Mr Speaker, Sir, at the same time, we were forced to buy it. We were in such a situation that we did not have rice in Mauritius. This is the reason. In fact, we had a problem.

Mr Speaker: One last question!

Mr Bérenger: One last question on rice. We have seen the mess, and the Minister has acknowledged a loss. Can I know whether we are getting value for money? My information is that the rice that we have been purchasing recently is of awful quality; 30% broken instead of 25%. Will the Minister confirm that?

Mr Soodhun: Mr Speaker, Sir, we are getting the best quality of rice, and it has been guaranteed up to 2011. This is the best price and the best quality. The Leader of the Opposition can rest assured that I am looking into it closely so that it does not happen.

Mr Speaker: Time is over!

Mr Bérenger: Mr Speaker, Sir, can I take a point of order? There were four PQs. I don't know what has changed. Normally, I stop, some Members have a few questions and then I have...

Mr Speaker: I know, but we have gone six minutes more than the prescribed time.

Mr Bérenger: You should have stopped me earlier on. It is unfair for the Members.

Mr Speaker: I am sorry! We have gone six minutes more. It has been the practice for me to give more time when there are three or four questions. But, now, we have gone six minutes more.

(Interruptions)

But the reply has to come. Next time, we will see to it. The Table has been advised that parliamentary questions 1B/5 and 1B/10 have been withdrawn. Questions addressed to Dr. the hon. Prime Minister! Hon. Bhagwan!

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY PROCEEDINGS – LIVE BROADCAST

(No. 1B/1) Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in regard to the live broadcasting of the proceedings of the House on radio and television, he will state if he intends to present a motion to the House for the setting up of a Select Committee of the House to look into the matter and make such recommendations thereon as it deems fit.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, as I have already stated on several occasions in this House, I am not against the idea of live broadcast of the proceedings of the National Assembly. In fact, on 20 November 2009, I gave notice of a motion regarding the setting up of a Select Committee of the Assembly to make such recommendations as the Committee may deem fit for the live broadcast of the proceedings of the House and matters ancillary to that.

The motion was circulated on 21 November of last year and was set on the Order Paper of Tuesday 15 December 2009. However, as the hon. Members knows, the motion could not be taken on that day due to the sudden demise of late Dr. the hon. James Burty David.

Mr Speaker Sir, being given that Parliament was subsequently dissolved, I propose to present the motion anew during the current session of the Assembly after some further consultations on the matter.

Mr Bhagwan: Mr Speaker, Sir, being given that this question had been discussed for many, many years, especially in the past months, can I ask the hon. Prime Minister whether he can give us a definite timetable? Because he is asking for consultation again. We are at the beginning of a new mandate, and so we cannot wait for the end. We all know the performance of the MBC-TV and the guy who is here actually.

(Interruptions)

We will watch this afternoon, Sir! Can I ask the Prime Minister to give us a clear timetable when, in the coming weeks, this motion will come again on the Table of the National Assembly?

The Prime Minister: First of all, I am glad that the hon. Member loves what the MBC is doing. He said he likes the guy. I have said many times I am all for it. As I have said, I propose to present the motion in the current session of the Assembly, but after further consultations, because as the hon. Member knows I am now in alliance with the MSM and I have to consult them as well.

Mr Bhagwan: We all know that this session can take one year or many months. Can I make an appeal again to the Prime Minister so that, at least, in the coming weeks, this motion is on the Table of the Assembly?

The Prime Minister: I have noted with interest the hon. Member's appeal.

MBC – MR D. R. - RECRUITMENT

(No. 1B/2) Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in regard to Mr D. R, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation, information as to –

- (a) the date of his recruitment at the Corporation, indicating -
 - (i) in which capacity
 - (ii) his conditions of employment
- (b) the different posts occupied by him since then and as at to date and the respective salaries drawn,
- (c) the amount of overtime allowances paid to him since July 2009 to date on a monthly basis, and
- (d) if a vehicle of the Corporation is put at his disposal.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I am tabling a statement giving the information requested by the hon. Member in parts (a), (b) and (c) of the question, as provided by the Director General of the MBC.

As regards to the last part of the question, I am informed by the Director General that Mr D. R. is not entitled to a company car.

Mr Bhagwan: If we go through the records, we'll see that this question has been discussed in the past. It is known to the general public, among the workers of the MBC TV, the trade union responsible at the MBC TV, that this employee is a protégé because he is a close relative of the Director General. I am coming to my question...

Mr Speaker: The hon. Member can put his question, but he should not impute motives i.e relationship.

Mr Bhagwan: Listen! Listen! Do you want me to go into the question of Mr Jhugroo? This is the question of Mr Jhugroo.

Mr Speaker: No, no! The hon. Member has the right to put questions, but he should not impute motives.

Mr Bhagwan: Being given the information we have, is the Prime Minister ready to ask the Director of Audit to make a report, supervised by the Prime Minister's Office, on that particular aspect of this employee of the MBC TV?

The Prime Minister: In fact, Mr Speaker Sir, all this has been done. There has been an inquiry; questions were put by the former Member of the Opposition, Mr Guinness. We have done inquiries; we have looked into some of the things that have been said, and lots of them are not actually true; for example, whether he was taking his car in the weekend turned out not to be true. As I have said, he is not the only one who started with a low salary. I have got a list here of so many people where the same procedure has been applied. What is important is that we give all the details that the hon. Member wants.

Mr Bhagwan: I am not concerned with the question of salaries and promotion; everybody has a right. Especially for this particular case, I won't say relatives, but very close relationship with the Director General. I am asking again the Prime Minister whether his attention has been drawn to the fact that this employee comes during the weekend, on Saturdays, clocks his card, goes home, works outside, and comes at night again to clock his card and earn over time? Is the Prime Minister agreeable to let us have the amount of overtime paid to that employee during the past 12 months?

The Prime Minister: In fact, as I said, the hon. former Member of Parliament, Mr Guinness, did ask the question. I did say I would look into it and find out whether that is true because I didn't know at the time whether it was true or not. We have looked into it, and it turns out not to be true; that he does not do this. In the document I am tabling in the House, the hon. Member will also have the overtime that he has got from, I think, July 2009.

MBC – MR J. G. - SUSPENSION

(No. 1B/3) Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in regard to Mr J. G., he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation, information as to whether –

- (a) he was suspended from duty during the month of April 2010 and, if so, the reasons therefor, indicating if any action has been taken against him, and
- (b) he has been re-instated and, if so, on what terms and conditions.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, with regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed by the Director General of the Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation that Mr J. G., Chief

News Editor, was interdicted from the exercise of his duty with effect from 28 April 2010, on the grounds that he had taken part in a public meeting organised by a political party on Tuesday 27 of April 2010.

In accordance with the Corporation's established procedures, he was required to appear before a Departmental Enquiry Committee on 11 May 2010.

He was subsequently administered a written warning.

With regard to the second part of the question, I am informed by the Director General of the Corporation that he was reinstated in his post of Chief News Officer on 12 of May 2010, on the same terms and conditions of employment prevailing prior to his interdiction.

Mr Bhagwan: Can I ask the hon. Prime Minister who presided over that disciplinary committee?

The Prime Minister: The regulations provide that the Director General may, without reference to the Board, administer a warning to any employee on the ground of unsatisfactory conduct. I think this is how it was done.

Mr Bhagwan: I have asked who presided over the disciplinary committee. This is my question.

The Prime Minister: I can find out who was presiding, but I know that, according to the regulations, the Director General can issue a warning if he is satisfied that there was a breach, although he has given his reasons why this breach has taken place. I can give the hon. Member the name of who presided.

Mr Bérenger: Mr Speaker, Sir, may I know whether that disciplinary committee did meet and whether they made a recommendation?

The Prime Minister: I am informed that he was, in fact, interdicted. He had come in front of whoever was heading the committee and was given a written warning.

Mr Bhagwan: Mr Speaker, Sir, being given that this employee participated in a meeting of the Labour Party or *l'Alliance de l'Avenir* and, in that particular case, had been given a warning, may I ask the hon. Prime Minister why, in other cases, within other parastatal bodies, small employees, labourers had been dismissed? This is a clear case *d'une politique de deux*

poids deux mesures. If there is one policy, in one particular case, of such a type of undisciplined action, can the hon. Prime Minister give the assurance that there is no *politique de deux poids deux mesures* concerning people with allegiance to one political party?

The Prime Minister: I agree that, on the face of it, it looks like this. But, as in a court case, it depends on a case to case basis. In this case, the person admitted that he happened to be there on the grounds that he was in the region. He made apologies. There are other cases where people completely denied and said that they were never there; they were never involved. So, they have done it on a case to case, but, anyway, I will partake this information with the Director General.

Mr Bhagwan: I am asking the hon. Prime Minister about other parastatal bodies. This gentleman in question *a pris la parole dans un* meeting. But, in some other cases, where people had been there and even participated in a public meeting, they had been *licenciés*; and they are poor labourers.

The Prime Minister: I am not aware that he actually took *la parole*. I am not aware that he actually took part in the meeting itself.

Mr Baloomoody: Mr Speaker, Sir, can I ask the hon. Prime Minister on what ground he was suspended? Was there a charge against him and he had to appear before a hearing?

The Prime Minister: There was a Departmental Enquiry Committee. He was asked to explain why he was there, why took part in a public meeting organised by a political party. He explained that he made a mistake, that he was in the region, and apologised straightaway.

Mr Baloomoody: Would the hon. Prime Minister confirm or look into the case where a messenger at the DBM was not given a chance even to explain what he was doing?

Mr Speaker: No. If the hon. Member...

(Interruptions)

Order! If the hon. Member wants, in the light of the reply which the hon. Prime Minister has given, to come with this particular case, he can do so. Next question, hon. Meea!

LA SENTINELLE – JOURNALISTS – PRESS CONFERENCE

(No. 1B/4) 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, in accordance with past practice, journalists of La Sentinelle Ltd are still being invited by his Ministry to attend official press conferences and, if not, will he -

- (a) state when this practice has been discontinued, and
- (b) give reasons therefor.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, there has been no change in the past practice whereby all journalists of the print, electronic and broadcast media, are invited to cover official press conferences and other official functions. This practice will continue.

I wish to remind the House that the Government Programme 2010-2015 highlights our commitment to support the fundamental rights and freedom of all citizens, including the freedom of expression.

(Interruptions)

No, she did not. It was actually false. She did not.

(Interruptions)

No. I also listened to it. It was in a different context. But, as I have stated on many occasions...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Can the hon. Member keep quiet, please?

The Prime Minister: But as I have stated on many occasions, rights and responsibilities have to go hand in hand. You can't have rights and no responsibilities. I believe that a plural, fair, independent and responsible media is an essential component of a democratic system.

Mr Bérenger: Can I ask the hon. Prime Minister whether - he is telling us that no Minister of the Republic of Mauritius - his official functions as Minister will be allowed to exclude any part of the press?

The Prime Minister: That is basically what I am saying. This has been the practice in the past that everybody, whether it is a print, electronic or broadcast media, is invited to cover official press conferences.

GENERAL ELECTION - IMPERSONATION

(No. 1B/5) 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, in regard to the last general election, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to -

- (a) the number of cases of impersonation, if any, detected constituency-wise, indicating the actions that have been taken, and
- (b) state the additional measures that will be taken to avert the recurrence thereof.

(Withdrawn)

PLAINE VERTE & ROCHE BOIS – SUBUTEX - ARREST

(No. 1B/6) 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, in regard to subutex, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to the number of arrests effected in connection therewith during the past twelve months, in the regions of Plaine Verte and Roche Bois.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that for the past 12 months 26 suspects have been arrested in the region of Plaine Verte and 103 in the region of Roche Bois in cases related to subutex.

Mr Ameer Meea: Mr Speaker, Sir, can I ask the hon. Prime Minister whether he has the figures concerning the total value of subutex seized in those regions?

The Prime Minister: What I can say, Mr Speaker, Sir, is that some of the cases are pending in front of the court and, therefore, they will have to ascertain whether the value that we are saying is actually the case. In fact, eight prosecutions have already taken place; five have been sentenced as far as Plaine Verte case is concerned. As for Roche Bois, 25 cases have been prosecuted and 20 have been sentenced already.

POLICE FORCE – PROMOTION EXERCISE

(No. 1B/7) 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 Police Force, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police,

information as to whether the promotion exercise of the police officers in the grade of Sergeant to that of Inspector has now been completed and, if not, why not.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am advised that the completion of the promotion exercise in the Police Force was deferred in view of the impending general elections.

The procedure for the completion of this exercise, which had already been started, as I mentioned in the House, has now been set in motion again and is expected to be completed shortly.

Mr Ganoo: The hon. Prime Minister will agree with me that, in fact, these examinations were conducted some two years ago, well before the general election. But can he inform the House whether any of these candidates has retired by now?

The Prime Minister: I am not aware that it was two years ago. I am aware that it was last February. I am just saying offhand. The hon. Member is trying to score a point by saying two years. I am not aware, but, in any case, all the procedures have already started.

Mr Bérenger: We are talking about promotion exercise for Sergeants to become Inspectors. Can I ask the hon. Prime Minister - because the frustration is intense in the Police Force - what about Constables to become Sergeants?

The Prime Minister: I am told, Mr Speaker, Sir, from the Commissioner of Police that they do one by one. They will do one batch at one time for one promotion and then they will do the other.

FLOREAL – POLICE STATION

(No. 1B/8) Mrs F. Labelle (Third Member for Vacoas & Floreal) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in regard to the project for the putting up of a new police station in the region of Floréal, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to where matters stand.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that the priorities for infrastructure development for the Police Department have been reviewed in line with the new policing requirements and strategies. Priority is being given to the construction

of new police stations in regions where currently there are no police stations, as well as to the renovation/reconstruction of existing police stations which are in a bad state.

In regard to the region of Floréal, I am informed that the existing police station, supported by the ERS, the Divisional CID and the Divisional Support Unit, is adequately covering the policing requirements in that area. In fact, the crime rate in that region has decreased considerably due to the new policing strategies that have been put in place.

The project for the construction of a new police station at Floréal will, therefore, be considered in the light of the new priorities determined by the police and also subject to funds being available.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Speaker, Sir, in reply to PQ No. B/689 last year, the hon. Prime Minister stated that this project was well underway, and even a plot of land was already identified for the construction of this police station, because it was realised that there is a need to bring the police station nearer to the most inhabited part of this area. May I know from the hon. Prime Minister why there has been such a shift from what has been decided for years?

The Prime Minister: There has been no shift. In fact, in October 2005, a plot of land located at Cité Magalkhan was vested in my office for the construction of a new police station. But I am not saying that this is completely out. I am saying that there are new priorities. We want to give priority where there are no police stations at all. But this also is being considered. It is not being scrapped.

DETAINEES – CUSTODY - ESCAPE

(No. 1B/9) 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 detainees, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to the number thereof who, since January 2009 to date, have escaped from custody.

The Prime Minister: I am informed by the Commissioner of Police, Mr Speaker, Sir, that, from January 2009 to 10 June 2010, ten detainees managed to escape from custody. They have all been recaptured.

Mr Baloomoody: Mr Speaker, Sir, has there been an inquiry to find out in which circumstances they managed to run away?

The Prime Minister: Yes, of course. Inquiries are still ongoing.

DETAINEES – ESCAPE – JANUARY 2009-JUNE 2010

(No. 1B/10) 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 detainees, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Prisons information as to the number thereof who, since January 2009 to date, have escaped from custody.

(Withdrawn)

PRIVATE CLINICS – ROAD ACCIDENTS – ALCOHOL & DRUG CONSUMPTION

(No. 1B/11) Dr. S. Boolell (Second Member for Curepipe & Midlands) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in regard to road accidents, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to the procedures followed to ensure that persons involved in road accidents are medically examined and screened for alcohol and drug consumption on admission to private clinics, indicating -

- (a) if these institutions are being informed of such procedures, and
- (b) the consequences for the non-compliance thereof.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Solicitor General's Office that there are currently no specific statutory procedures under the Road Traffic Act to deal with persons involved in road accidents to be medically examined and screened for alcohol and drug consumption when they are admitted to private clinics.

However, whenever a driver is admitted as a patient in a private clinic, the police may require any specimen for analysis in a case of alleged drunken driving. The consent of the treating doctor as well as the patient is required before taking such a specimen.

I am also informed that, until September 2003, the Road Traffic Act provided that a person who has been admitted as a patient to a hospital or to a private medical institution shall provide a specimen of blood or urine with the consent of a medical practitioner who has attended to his case.

However, with the amendments to the Road Traffic Act in September 2003, only a person admitted as a patient at a public hospital is required to provide a specimen of blood or urine with the consent of the medical practitioner who is in charge of the case. The legislation also provides that the specimen should be taken at a hospital.

Mr Speaker, Sir, in regard to part (b) of the question, I must point out that clearly the provisions of the law relating to the consequences for non-compliance are not satisfactory. A case in point is the fatal road accident which occurred on 30 May of this year at Royal Road, Beau Songes. I have already called for an in-depth enquiry into this particular case. Appropriate remedial measures will be taken in the light of the findings of the enquiry, including whether there has been an attempt to subvert the course of justice; and the law will consequently be amended after the enquiry is completed.

Dr. S. Boolell: Mr Speaker, Sir, we all know that private clinics are becoming havens of concealment for the mighty who can afford the clinics, not only for those people involved in road traffic accidents, in sea accidents, but also in other misdemeanours. I would be most grateful if I could be informed whether a protocol could be evolved so as to authorise police officers to have access to private clinics, and whether it would be possible for magistrates to be available on call – there are supposed to be magistrates on call – so as to give the necessary authority to those police officers to have access to private premises of a clinic?

The Prime Minister: I think there are magistrates, as the hon. Member rightly said, who are supposed to be on call. I don't know whether there has been a case or not, but I think these are good suggestions. That is why I said the law has to be amended. Mr Speaker, Sir, when the Road Traffic Act was amended in September 2003, I don't know whether that was just missed. Before, it could happen, and then in 2003 when the law was amended, it was only for public hospitals. That has to be re-corrected.

Mr Bérenger: I think I heard the hon. Prime Minister say that the police, with the authorisation of the person concerned and of his doctor, can take blood or whatever. Did the police try that?

The Prime Minister: No, the police did not try it, for the simple reason that they did not know the patient had been taken to a clinic. I did look into that.

Mr Bérenger: Is the hon. Prime Minister aware that, in fact, the person concerned went to hospital first, and stayed for quite a while there before leaving for the clinic? Why is it that there also, no action was taken?

The Prime Minister: In fact, the doctor noted on the sheet that the person was smelling alcohol. He examined him first, and he was about to go and take the sample when some people came and removed the patient from the premises of the hospital. That is why I said that there is an enquiry, which is ongoing, to see whether there has been an attempt to subvert the course of justice in that case.

Dr. S. Boolell: Mr Speaker, Sir, in view of the fact that one never knows to which clinic the subject is being taken to, could there be some form of regulation compelling directors of clinics to report immediately suspicious cases of admission in their premises, to avoid the police running all over the county?

The Prime Minister: That is a good suggestion, Mr Speaker, Sir.

GENERAL ELECTIONS & RRA ELECTION – ELECTORS – VOTING

(No. 1B/12) Mr J. F. François (Third Member for Rodrigues) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in regard to general election and the Rodrigues Regional Assembly election, he will state if he proposes to amend the relevant legislation to enable electors registered for the Constituency of Rodrigues and who are in mainland Mauritius during polling day to cast their vote at the respective elections and, if so, when, and, if not, why not.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, the issue raised by the hon. Member was, in fact, the subject matter of a recent case entered before the Supreme Court, namely the case of Joseph Clency Lisette & Ors v/s the Electoral Commissioner. The applicants in this case are registered electors for the Constituency of Rodrigues and are residing in Mauritius. They had moved the

Supreme Court to order the Electoral Commissioner to take necessary measures to allow them to vote in Mauritius itself for the general elections held on 05 May 2010.

After considering the issues raised under the relevant legislation, the Supreme Court ruled that any ordinary citizen has to make his own arrangements to proceed to vote at the polling station allocated to him, and that the Electoral Commissioner has no obligation to make arrangements for a registered voter to vote when the latter is physically unable to do so. The Supreme Court further ruled that it was open to the applicants to be able to exercise their constitutional rights to vote, to register themselves for voting in the constituency where they have moved to and are actually residing. The Supreme Court has finally observed that - and I wish to quote -

“It is the duty and responsibility of each citizen to take positive steps to exercise his constitutional right to vote. Failure to do so cannot entail the imposition of an unreasonable obligation on the respondent to take necessary measures to allow him to vote. Otherwise, this would lead to a situation of havoc and chaos, whereby the respondent would be flooded with requests of the present nature whenever an elector is physically unable to be present at the allotted polling station to vote.”

In the light of the above judgment, it is not proposed to bring any amendment to the legislation.

RODRIGUES - PORT MATHURIN BASILE ALLAS GOVERNMENT SCHOOL - INCIDENT

(No. 1B/13) Mr J. F. François (Third Member for Rodrigues) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in regard to the incident which occurred at the Port Mathurin Basile Allas Government School Polling Station on 06 May 2010, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to –

- (a) how and at what time the public gained access to the yard;
- (b) if any politician was involved;
- (c) whether appropriate actions were taken in regard to security measures thereat, and

(d) if any enquiry has been carried thereinto and, if so, the outcome thereof.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that no incident was reported to the police on 06 May 2010 at Basile Allas Port Mathurin Government School, which was used as a counting centre.

The Electoral Commissioner has also indicated that the Returning Officer for the constituency did not report any incident at that school on that day.

As regards part (a) of the question, I am informed that, at about 1500 hours, when members of the public were allowed access to the yard of the counting centre through the gate for the proclamation of the result, there was a rush. However, the police managed to control the situation and was able to maintain law and order.

In regard to part (b) of the question, I am advised that no politician was involved in any incident on that day at the counting centre.

I am further advised by the Commissioner of Police that, since early morning on the counting day, 39 police officers were deployed at the counting centre. These officers were fully briefed about their duties and responsibilities. Furthermore, a team of 30 officers was on standby at Port Mathurin Divisional Headquarters, ready to intervene in case of any incident.

In the absence of any reported incident, no police enquiry has been initiated.

Mr François: Mr Speaker, Sir, may I ask the Prime Minister whether ballot papers were still in the counting room when the mass of people got into the yard?

The Prime Minister: I will not be able to say whether that is the case; I will have to look into it. But, generally - even in Mauritius - because there is a pressure from the crowd which is building up outside, at some point they do open the gate.

Mr François: But the ballot papers were still in the counting room. May I, with your permission, Mr Speaker, Sir, table some photos, as evidence that something went totally wrong at that particular time on the counting day?

Mr Speaker: Do you have any other question? Next question, hon. Ganoo!

SUBUTEX– SEIZURE & ARRESTS

(No. 1B/14) 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 offence of possession of subutex, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to the number of arrests effected in connection therewith since 2005 to date, indicating the quantity seized and the market value of subutex seized.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police as follows -

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>NO. OF PERSONS ARRESTED</u>	<u>QUANTITY OF TABLETS SEIZED</u>
2005	308	9,019
2006	820	11,600
2007	830	79,619
2008	844	24,443
2009	881	2,139
2010	327	19,840

(as at 09 June 2010)

I should like also to point out that, for the whole of the period previous to that, subutex was also seized and people were still being arrested.

I want to draw the attention of the House that the sharp increase in the number of people arrested and the quantity of subutex seized in the recent years, we think, is attributable to the effectiveness of the police authorities in detection, seizure and arrest of persons involved in drug trafficking.

I should also add that, since that time, there has been a very striking parallel decrease in the number of people arrested for heroin related offences.

Mr Speaker: Can the hon. Member allow me to make an announcement? The Table has been advised that Parliamentary Questions 1B/31 and 1B/64 will be replied by Dr. the hon. Prime Minister, if time permits.

Mr Ganoo: Can the hon. Prime Minister give us the market value of the whole amount of the subutex seized during these past years?

The Prime Minister: In 2005, it was 9,019,000; in 2006, it was 13,920,000; in 2007, it was 95,542,000; in 2008, it was 29,331,000; in 2009, it was 3,208,000 and, so far, in 2010, it is 29,760,000.

Mr Ganoo: Has the hon. Prime Minister taken into consideration the two recent cases, namely that of Bois Pignolet, where a suspect was arrested with thousands of subutex drugs and also that of a young French man who was arrested at the airport? These are the two very recent cases of arrest with subutex.

The Prime Minister: I am not sure what the hon. Member's question is.

Mr Ganoo: Has this been taken into consideration when the figures have been computed?

The Prime Minister: Yes, I think so.

Mr Bhagwan: May I ask the hon. Prime Minister where matters stand concerning these people who have been arrested and convicted for the subutex affairs and have been able to escape, for example the French pilot, and other cases linked to subutex? Has there been a follow-up as far as enquiries are concerned?

The Prime Minister: Yes, there has been follow-up. I did answer a question at the last parliamentary session about our cooperation with the French authorities. There are legal problems in that and, that is why, at some point, I said that maybe we should hang them.

EEZ – SOMALIAN PIRATES

(No. 1B/15) Mrs J. Radegonde (Fourth Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in regard to the presence of Somalian pirates in the Indian Ocean region, he will state –

- (a) the measures initiated by Government to provide safety and security to vessels in our Exclusive Economic Zone;
- (b) whether the National Coast Guard is equipped to prevent any attack in our territorial waters, and
- (c) if Government has solicited any help from the French Government in relation thereto and, if so, give details thereof.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, piracy has become a serious concern for maritime security in the Indian Ocean. Mauritius condemns all acts of piracy in any forms and manifestations, and we are fully committed to combating piracy and armed robbery at sea. We strongly support the international community in the repression of piracy.

Government is working very closely with neighbouring countries, the European Union and international organisations to ward off this new security threat to the region. We have recently participated in a Regional Ministerial Conference on piracy held in the Seychelles, under the aegis of the European Union. The problem of piracy was also raised at the IOC Council of Ministers Meeting held in St Denis, Reunion on 08 June of this year, which was attended by the hon. Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade.

I wish to inform the House, Mr Speaker, Sir, that during my participation in the 25th Africa-France Summit held in Nice, France recently, I spoke of the threat posed by piracy to Coastal and Small Island States of the Indian Ocean. I pointed out that piracy not only had a negative impact on fisheries and tourism, but also led to an increase in the cost insurance, and thereby causing a rise in the price of imported products. I solicited the assistance of France to support the African countries in their fight against piracy. I requested the French Government to -

- (a) provide African countries with better logistical and infrastructural facilities to counter the acts of piracy;
- (b) contribute to specialised training, specifically in the fight against piracy and in the promotion of peace and security, and

- (c) increase the financial support to African countries affected by piracy, in particular to the Small Island States of the Indian Ocean.

Furthermore, I proposed that the European Union could extend the span of the operation, which is called the Atalanta Operation in the Indian Ocean, to help Small Island States fight piracy.

I should add, Mr Speaker, Sir, that during a meeting I had with Baroness Cathy Ashton, vice-president of the European Commission and High Representative of the EU for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, we discussed the issue of piracy in the Indian Ocean. Baroness Ashton told me that the EU looked forward to the close collaboration of Mauritius in the fight against piracy in the region. I stated that Mauritius would extend its full cooperation to the United States and the EU in this regard and would be prepared to play a more active role, and we will be prepared to judge any person caught in the act of piracy in the Indian Ocean. However, I pointed out that Mauritius would require the assistance of the EU since our prisons are limited in terms of space. We also need additional prisons facilities in order to pursue this collaboration with the EU as well as training, and we must ensure that we don't increase the queue for our court cases. Baroness Ashton assured me that the EU would assist in that regard.

Government, Mr Speaker, Sir, has already taken a host of measures to provide safety and security of vessels in our Exclusive Economic Zone, which include the following-

- (i) surveillance of the northern region of our EEZ has been reinforced by the Dornier aircraft, also by the new Dhruv Helicopter, which is also doing surveillance in our seas;
- (ii) the National Coast Guard personnel is based at St Brandon, and an armed contingent of the Special Mobile Force has been posted in Agalega as a Quick Reaction Group. A proper mechanism for surveillance of the island and its coastal region has been put in place;
- (iii) a National Coast Guard Commando has been set up to counteract any sea-ward attack, including piracy and terrorism;

- (iv) the assistance of friendly countries, including India, the United States and France has been solicited in capacity building for a more comprehensive surveillance of our EEZ;
- (v) an Automated Identification System has been installed in the port to enable the detection of vessels above 300 tons navigating the International Shipping Lanes of Mauritian waters;
- (vi) the position of all Mauritian fishing vessels are tracked through the Vessel Monitoring System based at the Albion Fisheries Research Centre. The position of the fishing vessels are received every two hours. These vessels are also required to have a satellite phone and a radio on board for communication;
- (vii) I should also add, Mr Speaker, Sir, that private security guards have been authorised on board to provide security to merchant ships and fishing vessels proceeding through high risk areas. Necessary procedures have been put in place for the safekeeping of arms and ammunition when onboard, as well as when the ships are berthed in Mauritius;
- (viii) masters of vessels operating in the piracy infested areas have been advised to follow the guidance issued by the International Maritime Organisation and to strictly adhere to the anti-piracy instructions issued by the National Coast Guard, and
- (ix) finally, I should add that Mauritius has signed the Djibouti Code of Conduct, which makes provision for the repression of piracy and armed robbery against ships in the Western Indian Ocean.

In regard to part (b) of the question, I must acknowledge that Mauritius has limited means to combat piracy in our EEZ. The surveillance of our EEZ is carried out by an operational high-sea going vessel, namely the CGS Guardian and three aircrafts – two Dornier and one Defender, and also now the new Dhruv Helicopter.

However, in the context of bilateral cooperation between Mauritius and India, Indian ships conduct regular patrolling exercises over our EEZ with a view to fighting piracy. Recently,

the INS Trishul carried out joint surveillance exercise in the Mauritian waters. The joint exercise is supposed to be carried out every six months.

In order to enhance the surveillance capability of the NCG, we are in the process of installing a Coastal Radar Surveillance System, which will be operational hopefully by August this year. We are also awaiting the delivery of a new and better equipped offshore patrol vessel to enhance surveillance up to the extremities of our waters.

In regard to part (c) of the question, I wish to inform the House that, during my visit to France in 2008, I signed an agreement with the French Government in the field of security between the two countries, which includes safety and security at sea. As part of that agreement, the French Government is assisting the police department in the capacity building of the personnel of the NCG and the SMF in anti-piracy operations and hostage handling situations. A joint anti-piracy exercise with the French Forces was conducted in Reunion Island recently. Again, CGS Guardian participated in that exercise. An advanced joint training exercise in anti-piracy is scheduled for October/November 2010 in Mauritius. Furthermore, the French authorities have been providing training to police officers in the fields such as “Stage Commando” and Joint Exercise of “*Sauvetage en Mer*”, which are basic training requirements for commandos.

Mr Speaker, Sir, we are very conscious that a lasting solution to the problem of piracy rests in the restoration of stability in Somalia. The international community should strive to set up effective institutions and structures in that country which can address the piracy issue in its totality.

Mr Bérenger: Can I ask the hon. Prime Minister whether our law, as it stands, would allow for pirates caught in international waters or in the Exclusive Economic Zone of a neighbouring country to be tried before our courts?

The Prime Minister: Actually, we will need to amend the law. Once the European Union and the United States agree to help us, as we have requested, we will look at the law. We are looking at it already, but we will have to bring amendments to the law.

Mr Bérenger: I think I heard the hon. Prime Minister say that we would request the European Union and the United States to finance the setting up of a special prison, so that they

will not mix with ordinary criminals in prison. Does the same hold for our courts? Would those pirates, in his view, be tried before the ordinary courts, or would there be special courts?

The Prime Minister: I must say, Mr Speaker, Sir, we are not quite decided on that. The European Union feels that they can be tried in the ordinary courts. We are not so sure. We are going to look at what amendments they have to bring, whether it will have to be a special jurisdiction or not.

Mr Bérenger: Is the hon. Prime Minister aware of the stand taken by the Seychelles? They have agreed to put to trial pirates caught in their waters, but they have told the European Union that they are too small a country, for them to remain permanently in the Seychelles. The European Union would, therefore, have to make arrangements in Somalia or elsewhere. Has he discussed that with our Seychelles *Dallons*?

The Prime Minister: I have not discussed that with the Seychelles authorities, but I am aware of it. In fact, there are suggestions that have been made by Seychelles - from what I understand - including, for example, the point that was raised by the hon. Leader of the Opposition, namely whether they should be separate. We are saying that they should be separate. In the Seychelles, it appears that they have agreed that they will be put together with other prisoners. We are not agreeable to that, Mr Speaker, Sir. We are not so sure what will happen in Seychelles, but we are going to take our own precautions.

Mr Speaker: Time is over! Questions addressed to hon. Ministers. The Table has been advised that PQ No. 1B/60 with regard to the transfer of the lease between Tianli and Jin Fei will now be replied by the vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development.

MRG LEEN STREET, PORT LOUIS – WATER SUPPLY

(No. 1B/18) Mr J. C. Barbier (Second Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether he is aware that some 50 families living in the region of Mrg Leen Street, Port Louis, are regularly being deprived of water supply and, if so, will he, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Central Water Authority, information as to the remedial measures that will be taken.

The Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities (Dr. R. Beebeejaun): Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed that Port Louis, including the region of Mgr Leen,

is supplied from a Service Reservoir of capacity 20,000 m³ at Pailles Treatment plant. The hours of supply are from 4.00 a.m to 10.00 a.m and from 4.00 p.m to 9.00 p.m.

Some 50 families residing at Mgr Leen are affected by irregular water supply, because they are located on a higher level of about 40 metres compared with 10 metres generally.

Following representations, the CWA is implementing a project to rezone the distribution system and to install a dedicated pipeline to supply this area. With this change, I hope, within a few weeks, the situation will much improve.

Mr Barbier: Mr Speaker, Sir, following an inquiry made by the technicians of the CWA, it has been known that when the level goes down at the Pailles Reservoir, there is this problem at Mrg Leen Street. It seems that this problem can be solved with appropriate pumping equipment. Has the hon. Minister looked into it, so that this problem does not repeat again?

The Deputy Prime Minister: With the location of the new connection, it should address the problem of pressure.

PAILLES - WATER SUPPLY

(No. 1B/19) Mr J. C. Barbier (Second Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether he is aware of the frequent disruptions in the water supply in the region of Pailles and, if so, will he, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Central Water Authority information as to the remedial measures that will be taken.

The Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities (Dr. R. Beebeejaun): Mr Speaker, Sir, the area of Pailles, Guibies, is supplied from the Anse Courtois Reservoir of capacity of 3000 m³, which is fed by the Pailles Treatment Plant.

I am informed that, during heavy rains, water from Grand River North West becomes muddy and clogs the slow sand filters at Pailles Treatment Plant, resulting in disruptions in water supply in Port Louis, including the Pailles Guibies region.

To address the problem of water disruption during heavy rains, the CWA has initiated a project since last year, to change the system of filtering. The new filter system is expected to be operational by 2012.

Additionally, the CWA has set up an emergency unit to address the problem of burst pipes. I am glad to inform the House that it seems to have made quite a lot of differences to the water supply, especially in the Port Louis region.

Mr Barbier: Mr Speaker, Sir, it was supposed to have the construction of a new reservoir for the region of Pailles, Morcellement Guibies. May I know from the hon. Minister whether this project is still on?

The Deputy Prime Minister: Very much so.

SPORTS FOOTBALL REGIONALISATION GRANT- FIRST/SECOND DIVISION

(No. 1B/20) **Mr F. Quirin (Third Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière)** asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether, in regard to the Sports Football Regionalisation Grant provided to First and Second Division football teams by Government since 2001/2002 for the promotion of football, he will give a list of the teams which have benefited therefrom as at January 2010, indicating the amount allocated to each team.

Mr Ritoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, I have been informed by the Ministry of Local Government that the Sports Football Regionalisation Grant is being managed by them since 2005. Prior to that, the grant was managed by the local authorities.

With regard to the teams which have benefited from the grant from 2001-2002 up to January 2010 and the amount thereof, this information is being compiled and will be tabled as soon as available.

Mr Quirin: M. le président, j'aimerais néanmoins savoir du ministre des sports s'il a des informations en ce qui concerne la saison 2010. Est-il au courant, en tant que ministre des sports, de la somme allouée aux clubs de première et deuxième divisions ?

Mr Ritoo: Well, as I stated, the amount has already been disbursed by the Ministry of Local Government, and it was for the season 2010.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Do you have information about the amount?

Mr Ritoo: No, I don't have information about the amount. I have now made a request that the amount be transferred through the Ministry of Youth and Sports, so that in future the Ministry of Youth and Sports disburses the amount.

Mr Quirin: Je trouve cela choquant, aberrant, dans la mesure où...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: No, the hon. Member cannot comment upon the answer which has been given.

(Interruptions)

Mr Quirin: Je reformule ma question, M. le président. En ce qui concerne la relance du football, le ministre peut-il nous dire si la somme qui a été déboursée aux clubs en 2009 est la même pour 2010 ?

Mr Ritoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, I have made a request to the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development that, henceforth, the sum be granted to the football clubs through the Ministry of Youth and Sports, and I have also made a request that the amount be increased.

Mr Bérenger: The question is simple. It is about 2009 compared to 2010. Has there been a decrease in 2010? I think the hon. Minister must, at least, know that.

Mr Ritoo: As I stated earlier, the Ministry of Local Government has disbursed the amount...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: If the hon. Minister thinks that this is not his portfolio but that of the Minister of Local Government, he will have to ask the hon. Member to address the question to the Minister of Local Government. That's all.

FOOTBALL - STEERING COMMITTEE - RECOMMENDATIONS

(No. 1B/21) Mr F. Quirin (Third Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether, in regard to the practice of football, he will state if the Steering Committee set up in July 2009 to make recommendations to improve local football has submitted its report and, if so -

- (a) table a copy thereof, and
- (b) state the actions which have consequently been taken as at to date.

Mr Ritoo: The steering committee, presided by Mr Vincent Rogers, has effectively submitted its recommendations in October 2009. Thereafter, several meetings have been held between my ministry, the Mauritius Football Association, football clubs and coaches for the implementation of the main recommendations.

The actions that have been taken by my Ministry to date are as follows -

- (i) the restructuring of the football *des jeunes* through the *fondation pour la formation au football*;
- (ii) identification of permanent training grounds for each of the 1st Division and 2nd Division football teams;
- (iii) identification of a home ground for each of the 1st division and 2nd division football teams;
- (iv) funds are being made available for upgrading works and lighting of football training grounds, where required;
- (v) the participation of under-19 and under-17 football teams of the *Centre National de Formation du Football* (CNFF) in the 1st Division and 2nd Division Football Tournaments respectively;
- (vi) a proposal has been made to the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development for provision of funds for an increase in the financial grant to the 1st Division and 2nd Division football teams, with the objective to encourage restructuring and professionalisation of football. It is expected that other financial grants will also come from other potential sectors willing to contribute for the upliftment of Mauritian football;
- (vii) a *Directeur Technique National* (DTN) has already been recruited, and
- (viii) the turf of George V, Auguste Vollaire, Germain Comarmond and the Anjalay Stadia are being upgraded. These stadia will be reserved for local football championships as well as for international football competitions.

Mr Speaker, Sir, a copy of the steering committee's report on 1st Division and 2nd Division clubs is being placed in the Library of the National Assembly.

Mr Quirin: M. le président, j'ai cru comprendre dans le rapport cité par le ministre des sports que l'État s'engage à mettre à la disposition des clubs des terrains d'entraînement, avec ses aménités. Le ministre peut-il dire quels sont ces terrains qui ont été alloués aux clubs?

Mr Ritoo: As I said, these are the recommendations of the report, and we are working on this issue so as to provide all the 1st and 2nd Division teams with lighting facilities and training grounds. We are working on this issue.

Mr Bhagwan: The Minister has given us a list of initiatives he is contemplating to take regarding our football. So long we don't put order, our football is doomed to fail. We all know the results we have obtained in the recent Indian Ocean Games: not even a *médaille ferraille!* We are at the eve of the Indian Ocean Games, and we are all involved in watching the World Cup. The Prime Minister stated once that Mauritius will win a World Cup medal. Can the Minister give the guarantee to the House that, at least, next year, Mauritius won't suffer the same fate as we did during the past and recent years?

Mr Ritoo: The hon. Member knows very well that the problem of the federation is something very different, very separate, and we can't raise it here. As far as football is concerned, I think the hon. Member knows very well how much I am concerned about it, and that is why I can assure him that the *médaille ferraille...*

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order, let the Minister answer! Hon. Boolell.

Dr. S. Boolell: Combien de centres de formation le ministre compte-t-il construire durant la prochaine année?

Mr Ritoo: We have only one national *centre de formation*; we cannot have many national *centres de formation*.

Dr. S. Boolell: Are we to understand, Mr Speaker, Sir, that only those people who will have access to one *centre de formation* will have the necessary training? This country is quite big; we need more than one, Mr Speaker.

Mr Ritoo: I'll consider it if need be.

Mr Quirin: One more question please. Est-ce que le ministre peut nous dire quels sont les engagements financiers de l'État par rapport aux recommandations faites par le *steering committee*?

Mr Ritoo: As I have stated, there have been recommendations, and we will consider them in due time.

At 1.00 p.m the sitting was suspended.

On resuming at 2.33 p.m with Mr Speaker in the Chair.

CANOT VILLAGE & MORCELLEMENT LA CONFIANCE, MAINGARD – FOOTBALL GROUNDS

(No. 1B/22) Mr F. Quirin (Third Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether, in regard to the Canot Village and Morcellement La Confiance, Maingard, he will state whether there is a project for the putting up of new football grounds thereat and, if so, indicate when works are expected to start and the duration thereof.

Mr Ritoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, I have been informed that, under the 800 Arpents Scheme, a portion of land to the extent of 3A at Canot has been earmarked for the construction of a football ground.

The said portion of land has already been acquired by Government and vested with my Ministry on 11 June 2010. The construction of the football ground will be considered in the next financial year subject to availability of funds.

As regards the construction of a football ground at Morcellement La Confiance, Maingard, I am informed by the National Development Unit, (NDU) that works are expected to start by the end of August 2010 and completed by February 2011.

PETIT VERGER GOVERNMENT SCHOOL - ACCESS ROAD

(No. 1B/23) Mr S. Dayal (Third Member for Quartier Militaire & Moka) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether, in regard to the access road leading to Petit Verger Government School, he will state if he will use his good offices to liaise with the relevant authorities for the upgrading thereof.

Dr. Bunwaree: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed that the access road to the school is a non-classified one and is in a good condition. It does not require upgrading as such. However, it is narrow, with a width of about three metres and, indeed, causes hardships, and represents a security hazard for the school community and the residents of the locality.

The enlargement of the road will necessitate the compulsory acquisition of a strip of three metres of land along one side of the road.

I am informed that the Traffic Management and Road Safety Unit of the Ministry of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping has already initiated action for the acquisition of the strip of land.

Upon acquisition of the land, the following works should be carried out -

- (i) widening of the road to 6m;
- (ii) provision of a footpath of 1.5m, and
- (iii) construction of a lay-by along the side of the access road between the Bois Chéri Road and the school.

MOUNT ORY - CREMATION GROUND – PUBLIC ROAD

(No. 1B/24) 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 existing cremation ground located on the land belonging to the Gowreesunkar family, he will state if he will use his good offices to liaise with the relevant authorities for a vehicular access to be provided from the motorway at Mount Ory, Moka, thereto.

Mr Bachoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, the access to the cremation ground at Mount Ory, Moka, being a private one, action will be initiated to convert it into a public road.

CAMP THOREL – DRAINS & PAVEMENT WORKS

(No. 1B/25) 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 drains and pavement works on the main road at Camp Thorel, in the vicinity of school lane, he will state where matters stand.

Mr Bachoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Road Development Authority (RDA) that drains of an extent of 375 metres have already been constructed up to the surface of the road in August 2008. The drains could not be extended, as way leave was not available. As way leave has now been obtained, the remaining works, including the pavement works, will be undertaken by July this year.

Mr Dayal: Mr Speaker, Sir, with regard to the main road at Camp Thorel, can I ask the hon. Minister whether pavements could be constructed along with drains? This is the only village in the constituency where there is no pavement.

Mr Bachoo: This means we are left with only one village and that works should be completed by the end of this year.

LA TERRE COUPÉ, MOUNT ORY – RETAINING WALLS

(No. 1B/26) 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 construction of retaining walls on both sides of the road at La Terre Coupé, Mount Ory, Moka, leading to the Highway, he will state where matters stand.

Mr Bachoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Road Development Authority (RDA) that the design of the retaining wall on both sides of the road at La Terre Coupé has been completed, and works are scheduled to start by September this year.

Mr Dayal: Can I ask the hon. Minister if, in the same exercise, access to vehicles will be allowed? Will the road be constructed for vehicles to have access to both sides at La Terre Coupé? In the same breath, I would like to thank the hon. Minister for his laudable effort.

Mr Bachoo: I'll look into the issues.

FOREIGN DEBT

(No. 1B/27) 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 foreign debt, he will state –

- (a) the total amount of external borrowings of the public sector;
- (b) the total amount of external debt of Central Government in USD and Rupees as at

- (i) 30 June 2005, and
- (ii) 31 March 2010, indicating the reasons for the change, if any, in each case, and
- (c) whether all external borrowings have been utilised.

The vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development (Mr P. Jugnauth): Mr Speaker, Sir, as regards part (a) and (c) of the question, from information provided to me, I wish to inform the House that the total amount of external borrowings contracted by Government from the end of June 2005 to 31 March 2010 was around Rs51.6 billion, that is, USD 1.5 billion, out of which around Rs10 billion, that is, USD 318 m., has been utilised. Out of this amount of USD 1.5 billion, an amount of USD 900 m. has been contracted in the second half of 2009 and early this year from the African Development Bank, that is, USD 700 m.; from the World Bank (USD 50 m.) and from *l'Agence Française de Développement* (Euro 125 m.). These resources have been mobilised for disbursement over the next three years to finance investment mainly in the infrastructure and sustainable environment sectors.

As regards the external borrowings of public enterprises and the amount utilised as at end of June 2005 and end of March 2010, the information is being compiled and will be tabled in the National Assembly as soon as the exercise is completed.

With regard to part (b) relating to foreign debt, the total amount of public sector external debt stood at Rs22.6 billion as at 30 June 2005 and Rs27.5 billion as at 31 March 2010. In terms of USD, the external debt of the public sector was around USD 793 m. and USD 871 m. as at 30 June 2005 and 31 March 2010 respectively.

Out of this amount, the total amount of external debt of Central Government stood at around Rs9.3 billion as at 30 June 2005 and Rs16.7 billion as at 31 March 2010, that is, an increase of Rs7.4 billion. The USD equivalent for the external debt of Central Government was around USD 325 m. and USD 527 m. respectively for the same period.

The main reasons for the increase in external debt of Central Government are -

- (i) to finance capital projects of Government;
- (ii) to implement measures, to stimulate economic growth following the global economic crisis which impacted on the local economy, and

(iii) the restructuring of the mix of Government's debt portfolio.

The increase in public sector external debt has been due mainly to the increase in Central Government debt. It may be noted that while public sector external debt rose from Rs22.6 billion to Rs27.5 billion between the end of June 2005 and March 2010, the external debt of public enterprises declined from Rs13.3 billion to Rs10.8 billion during the same period, despite the purchase of an aircraft by the national carrier by way of financial lease.

Mr Li Kwong Wing: Mr Speaker, Sir, in view of the massive external loans contracted, which have not been utilised, may we know how this amount of money disbursed is being utilised?

Mr Jugnauth: As I have just mentioned, part of the amount has not been disbursed yet, for example, loans from ADB, from the World Bank and even from AFD. These have not yet been utilised. So, the loans are still there and, as I have said, they will be used for future capital projects.

Mr Li Kwong Wing: This relates to loan commitments for the future. There have been loans which have been contracted, which have been disbursed and which have not been utilised yet as stated in part (b) of the hon. Minister's reply. Could we know whether the amount has been lodged with the Central Bank as a current account deposit, or is it used as a budget support instrument?

Mr Jugnauth: No, the loans that have been disbursed have been earmarked for utilisation for specific capital projects. So, they are available, and they are being used as and when the amount has to be paid to contractors. But they are for those capital projects.

Mr Li Kwong Wing: From the answer, therefore, Mr Speaker, Sir, we note that excess amounts which have not been utilised have been kept in Government account at the Central Bank. That is the query that I had, because there has been no project that has been implemented for the use of these amounts.

Mr Jugnauth: No, this is not correct. What I am saying is that for those projects that are ongoing, the loan equivalent has been disbursed and it is used for those projects. For those projects that are not yet implemented, the amount is there, as I mentioned, from the different financial institutions, and will be utilised as and when their disbursement so requires. There is

no amount that has been borrowed and disbursed, and kept just for the sake of keeping it in an account.

FOREIGN GRANTS & RESERVES

(No. 1B/28) 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 foreign grants and reserves as at 30 June 2005 and 31 March 2010 respectively, he will give -

- (a) the total amount of SDR allocations indicating for the same period, whether, additional SDR allocations were made by the IMF and, if so, why;
- (b) the change in amount of grants and external financial aids, if any, giving a breakdown in each case and the reasons therefor, and
- (c) he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Bank of Mauritius, information as to the net foreign reserves for the same period.

Mr Jugnauth: Mr Speaker, Sir, concerning part (a), I am advised by the Bank of Mauritius that the total amount of outstanding SDRs as at 30 June 2005 was SDRs 15,744,000 (MUR 694,430,967). The total amount of outstanding SDRs as at 31 March 2010 was SDRs 96,805,549 (MUR 4,512,553,268).

On 07 August 2009, an allocation of SDR 75,317,076 was made to Mauritius as part of the General Allocation of SDRs, as approved by the IMF Board of Governors on 07 August 2009. This amount was credited at the Bank of Mauritius on 28 August 2009.

On 10 August 2009, a Special Allocation of SDRs (SDRs 5,744,473), following the entry into force of the 4th amendment of the articles of agreement on 10 August 2009, in accordance with the IMF Board of Governors Resolution No. 52-4, was made. This amount was credited again at the Bank of Mauritius on 09 September 2009.

All our SDR holdings are held in our external assets under the item Special Drawing Rights. The counterpart is held in our liabilities under Provisions and other Liabilities.

Mr Speaker, Sir, as regards part (b) of the question, foreign grants received as at 30 June 2005 amounted to Rs444 m. For the current financial year 2010, an amount of Rs4.1 billion is estimated to be received. Out of this amount, some Rs3.5 billion would come from the EU. As

at 31 March 2010, only Rs1.5 m. has been received. I must say that the bulk of the remaining amount would be received by the end of this year.

The rise in grants over the period is explained by the increasing support of our Development Partners (DPs) to finance the economic reform programme. I can assure the Member and the House that these exceptional resources will be optimally utilised to implement policies and programmes designed to unlock the development potential of our country.

I am tabling a detailed breakdown of the grants received as at 30 June 2005 and the estimates for the year 2010 by institutions and programmes.

As regards part (c), I am informed that the Net International Reserves at end 30 June 2005 and 31 March 2010 stood at Rs65.8 billion and Rs104.3 billion respectively.

Mr Li Kwong Wing: If we sum up the increase in reserves, which is held with the Bank of Mauritius, the net foreign reserves would not be more than Rs24 billion. Is that correct?

Mr Jugnauth: Sorry, I did not get the question.

Mr Li Kwong Wing: The hon. Minister has not given the increase in the net foreign reserves of the Bank of Mauritius. Can we know the change in that amount?

Mr Jugnauth: I have stated that the net international reserves from 30 June 2005 were Rs65.8 billion and from 31 March 2010 Rs104.3 billion.

Mr Li Kwong Wing: In the light of the reserves of the Central Bank and taking into account the foreign debt commitments in terms of external currency, would the hon. Minister be able to inform the House whether there is external debt service sustainability in the medium term for the country?

Mr Jugnauth: Yes, it is sustainable and, as I have mentioned, if we look at the figures in terms of percentage of debt with regard to GDP, it has gone down. So, it is sustainable.

Mr Li Kwong Wing: The question, therefore, relates to the measures that have been taken by Government in view of the loan commitments which have been mentioned by the hon. Minister and in view of the road decongestion programme which will entail massive amounts of external currency liabilities. I would like to know whether Government has considered any cap on the amount of external loans that would be contracted by Government.

Mr Jugnauth: Of course, Government and my Ministry would be monitoring the amount of external debt that is being contracted. But I mentioned earlier that another reason for contracting foreign loans is to look at the mix of public debt portfolio altogether with regard to local debt that is contracted in Mauritian rupees.

EMPLOYEE REAL ESTATE INVESTMENT TRUST – UNITS - REDEMPTION

(No. 1B/29) 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 Employee Real Estate Investment Trust, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Trust, information as to –

- (a) the number of applications for the redemption of units of the Trust as from the date of redemption to date, indicating the number which have been redeemed, and
- (b) whether any dividend has been paid and, if not, why not, indicating if the Trust will propose an immediate payment of a dividend equivalent to the initial value of the unit.

Mr Jugnauth: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed as follows -

With regard to part (a), as per the Trust Deed of the Employees Real Estate Investment Trust, the effective date of redemption is 31 March 2010. As from that date, the Trust has received 55,000 applications for redemption up to 10 June 2010. The processing is ongoing to verify whether all persons who have submitted the redemption requests are effectively on the register of unit holders. I have been informed that, out of 10,000 requests so far processed, around 2,000 are not unit holders. On that basis, it appears that, out of the 55,000 applications received, quite a sizeable number would be from persons who are not unit holders.

Following a press conference I gave on 27 May 2010 and the subsequent launching of an awareness and information campaign, the Trust has, to date, received 1,954 requests for cancellation of the applications for redemption. Since unit holders have up to 31 July 2010 to cancel their applications for redemption if they so desire, it is only after this date that the Trust will be able to compute the total number of effective applications for redemption. Payment of redemption proceeds will be made accordingly.

Regarding part (b) of the question, I am informed of the following -

- i. The Trust does not distribute cash dividends, but instead provision has been made for the distribution of Bonus Units to unit holders. This is clearly indicated both in the 'Scheme Particulars' issued to all unit holders and in the Trust Deed. The 'Scheme Particulars' highlights the fact that "upon realised gains capitalised through completion of real estate projects, this appreciation will be distributed to the unit holders in the form of Bonus Units". Since there has been no completion of real estate projects yet, no bonus issue has been effected.
- ii. It should, however, be noted that the total value of the unit holders' holding in the Trust is not, in any way, affected, and the Net Income is fully integrated and reflected in the Net Asset Value per unit. Instead of additional units, the unit holder benefits in terms of higher Net Asset Value per unit.

May I seize this opportunity, Mr Speaker Sir, to reiterate my total personal commitment and that of this Government as regards future developments that will be carried out by the Trust.

The Employees Real Estate Investment Trust is meant for employees. It will remain as such. The objective, since its launch, is to enable the workers of this country to participate in land and property development as per the philosophy of Government to democratise the economy.

Mr Li Kwong Wing: The fact is that the purpose of the Trust is to engage in land and property development. For the last five years, the Trust has not been deploying its funds for that purpose, meaning that it has not carried out the objective for which it had been set up. Would it not be fair for a cash distribution to be made out of the Trust, in view of the fact that the people who are entitled to redeem the units of the Trust are in need of the cash?

Mr Jugnauth: Cash distribution is not envisaged by the scheme particulars, first of all. Secondly, let me inform the House that there are certain developments that have already started. For example, there are 52.7 *arpents* of land at Rivière du Rempart/Haute Rive village which is going to be developed into a residential/commercial *morcellement*, and the proposed *morcellement* will comprise of residential and commercial plots, green areas and so on. Action has already been taken, because the planner, the civil engineering consultant, the Environment Impact Assessment consultant have already been selected. I am also informed that the Trust has already been granted the EIA licence and land conversion permit with regard to that project.

There are other projects also, for example 178.5 *arpents* of land at Highlands/Côte d'Or village, which is going to be developed again with the same view. I understand that there have been offers to buy other plots of land. So, the projects have already started and will be ongoing. I can assure the House that it will be accelerated.

Mr Li Kwong Wing: I am sure that the Minister would agree that these are projects for the future, which are likely to bring gains only in the future. But in the meantime, Rs350 m. in the Fund have not been used for the purpose for which the Fund had been set up. Therefore, the Trust beneficiaries are being unduly penalised because of the mismanagement of the Trust. Would the Minister, therefore, consider not penalising the Trust beneficiaries and reconsider the issue of a distribution of a dividend, because, in the meantime, the beneficiaries are suffering from the fact that the funds have been stuck in the Trust and have not been used for the purpose for which it had been set up.

Mr Jugnauth: First of all, let me say that the beneficiaries are not being penalised, because the value of the unit has increased from Rs1,000 to Rs2,549.44. So, all those who are willing to redeem their unit will be paid according to the Net Asset Value as it is today, and that will be taken into consideration in the future also.

Secondly, projects have not materialised, but all the initiatives have been taken with regard to a few projects as I have mentioned. So, in due course, they will materialise, and there is no doubt that this will increase the Net Asset Value of a unit.

With regard to the Rs350 m. that was transferred by the then Government, I must say that this was done with regard to the National Savings Fund and, therefore, I am sure that the hon. Member will know that it is the employers who have contributed; at that time, it stood at 348,129 employees. Therefore, I do not see how the beneficiaries would have suffered in the meantime.

Mr Bérenger: I heard the Minister confirm that, between 2005 and now, none of the *projets immobiliers* that were supposed to be developed by those responsible for the Employees Real Estate Investment Fund materialised. Has the new Minister of Finance had the opportunity to look into why this was the case?

Mr Jugnauth: What I can say to the House is that now that I am in the driving seat, I am going to accelerate those projects and we want to have those projects materialised as soon as possible.

Mr Bérenger: The Minister has not looked into the reasons, and now he says that he is going to accelerate when nothing has been done during five years. Does he find it in order that he is supposed to start doing that after five years, with the same people who have been responsible for nothing to have occurred during five years? At the press conference that he referred to, they sat on both sides of him; those people who have been responsible for treating the Employees Real Estate Investment Trust like the Sugar Investment Trust had been treated in the past.

Mr Jugnauth: Mr Speaker, Sir, I have just said that action has been initiated with regard to a few projects. I have given some details, and I can go on.

(Interruptions)

No! It is not now! It has been initiated. For example, let me repeat again, with regard to the land at Rivière du Rempart, Haute Rive Village, the consultants have already been appointed. The EIA licence and the land conversion permit have already been granted. So, it could not have happened in a few days, since this new Government took office; it happened quite some time before, because there has been a tender procedure before appointing the consultants. For the Highlands/Côte d'Or Village project, with regard to 178.5 *arpents* of land, all the consultants have been appointed through tenders. As I said, there are other projects, but these have to be accelerated, of course.

Mr Uteem: If I may ask the hon. Minister. In respect to the Trust, according to their accounts, around Rs900,000 are being paid to the trustees every year and around Rs3 m. are paid every year to the Manager. Since they have not carried out any development, would not the Minister consider renegotiating the contract with the trustees and the Manager for them to refund the money to the State?

Mr Jugnauth: I am not aware of the sums that the hon. Member is saying have been paid to both trustees and the Manager. But, as I have just replied, Mr Speaker, Sir, the philosophy of this Government is, as a priority, to democratise the economy, and this is one tool where we want

to go ahead as fast as possible in order that the number of employees and workers of this country do benefit.

Mr Uteem: In the light of what the hon. vice-Prime Minister has stated about democratisation, would he consider issuing new units to employees who were not initially part of the Trust's beneficiary list?

Mr Jugnauth: Through the press conference that I held, I have mentioned, amongst others, two things, which I am going to highlight. First of all, give the opportunity to those people who are willing to review their decision, to redeem their units. They have been given two months, if they so decide.

Secondly, we are going to offer, at the most, 50 units for anyone who is willing to purchase; whether it be employees who are already holders of one unit or future employees.

BEAU BASSIN & PETITE RIVIERE - NDU PROJECTS

(No. 1B/30) 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 Constituency No. 20, Beau Bassin/Petite Rivière, he will give a list of the NDU projects already approved therefor, indicating which projects have not yet been implemented or completed, if any, as at 30 April 2010, and, if so, the reasons therefor and indicate the expected time frame for the completion thereof.

Mr Bachoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, the information sought is being compiled, and will be placed in the Library of the National Assembly in due course.

TREFLES, CAMP LEVIEUX, PLAISANCE & ROCHES BRUNES - WATER SUPPLY

(No. 1B/32) Mr D. Nagalingum (Second Member for Stanley & Rose Hill) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether he is aware that the water supply in the regions of Trèfles, Camp Levieux, Plaisance and Roches Brunès is irregular and, if so, will he, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Central Water Authority, information as to the reasons therefor and the remedial actions being taken.

The Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities (Dr. R. Beebeejaun): Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed that the regions of Trèfles, Camp Levieux,

Plaisance and Roches Brunes are supplied from Stanley reservoir of capacity 7,000 m³ from 4.00 a.m. to 9.00 a.m. and from 3.00 p.m. to 9.00 p.m.

Water supply has been disrupted in the past months, as a result of damages to the network during the ongoing sewerage project in Roches Brunes and the adjoining areas.

To minimise disruptions, WMA, in agreement with CWA, has started installing temporary by-pass pipes along the roads where sewerage works are being carried out.

Mr Nagalingum: Can the hon. Minister inform the House what action will be taken by the CWA to replace the existing pipes that exist for more than 30 years and are often the cause of leakage in these regions?

The Deputy Prime Minister: This is an ongoing project, and I am glad that the hon. Member has mentioned it. He has said more than 30 years; he should add a bit more to that.

Mr Bérenger: The problem is that, for the last five years, we have seen absolutely no progress in improving the situation. I am sure that the hon. Minister is aware; this is the fifth question concerning water shortages across the island. It is not a coincidence; from the East, South and now Rose Hill. So, when is his Government going to shake up the CWA for it to deliver?

The Deputy Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, there is a problem of water supply; there is no doubt about it. It is not now; it has been there for the past 20 years, at least, if not to say more. There is no evidence that today is worse than the previous years; quite the reverse. We have set up an emergency unit, and many Members of the House, from the opposite side and here, have benefited from the services rendered by this special unit.

Mr Bhagwan: *En connaissance de cause*, I can say that one of the main problems affecting the CWA is mismanagement at the head of the CWA? The General Manager, Mr Harry Booluck, has not been performing for the past five years. I would not come and say that he has been doing political meetings, which is apart, which is *du domaine public*; he spends most of his time at other things than managing the CWA. Can I know from the Deputy Prime Minister whether it is now the time to sack this gentleman?

The Deputy Prime Minister: I can hardly comment on that, but what I can say is that we are getting the collaboration of the regional managers to help with these problems.

PLAISANCE & ROCHES BRUNES - SEWERAGE WORKS

(No. 1B/33) **Mr D. Nagalingum (Second Member for Stanley & Rose Hill)** asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to major sewerage works in the regions of Plaisance and Roches Brunes, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Wastewater Management Authority, information as to the expected date of completion, indicating if the roads in the above regions will be resurfaced with hot pressure concrete and, if so, when.

The Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities (Dr. R. Beebeejaun): Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed that the regions of Plaisance and Roche Brunes, along with west Rose Hill and Mont Roches are covered under Lot 1B of the Plaines Wilhems Sewerage Project, which includes 40 km sewer network, replacement of 10 km of CWA pipes and 4,000 house connections.

Works started on 10 December 2008 and are on schedule. They are expected to be completed by December 2011. Works in the regions of Roches Brunes and Plaisance will be completed in August and November 2011.

When pipe laying works are completed, trenches are backfilled with crusher stone in the first instance and are followed by trench width reinstatement, using 50mm thick asphaltic concrete after a period of three months.

Mr Nagalingum: Can the hon. Minister inform the House whether drains will be constructed after completion of sewerage works?

The Deputy Prime Minister: Yes, they are part of the contract.

Mr Bhagwan: Mr Speaker, Sir, Roches Brunes adjoins my constituency. When we talk of Roches Brunes region, it has the same fate as Quatre Bornes. There has been a major sewerage project. Although we have got the names of persons responsible on site, I think there should be a real follow-up as far as Government is concerned regarding roads and drains rehabilitation. I raised that issue at Committee Stage, and even the hon. Prime Minister agreed to what I was saying, namely that Government should set up a high-level committee, presided by the Deputy Prime Minister himself, at least, to see to it that these roads *redeviennent comme c'était auparavant*, if not even better. People have been suffering; we have been talking about

tuberculosis this morning. We are all for development, but we have seen what has happened in Quatre Bornes, Roches Brunes and Beau Bassin areas. Can I ask the hon. Deputy Prime Minister if, at least, an emergency action can be taken at the highest level of his Ministry to see to it that there is progress as far as road rehabilitation is concerned?

The Deputy Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, there is a question on Quatre Bornes; I will include it in my answer when I reply.

Mr Speaker: It is a general answer!

LOCAL GOVERNMENT BILL (NEW) - INTRODUCTION

(No. 1B/34) Mr D. Nagalingum (Second Member for Stanley & Rose Hill) asked the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether he will state if Government proposes to introduce a new Local Government Bill and, if so, when.

Mr Aimée: Mr Speaker, Sir, Members of the National Assembly who were present last Tuesday in Sir Harilall Vaghjee Memorial Hall have all heard, during the President's address on the Government Programme 2010-2015, that a major review of local government legislations will be undertaken in order to better meet the aspirations of the population.

Mr Speaker, Sir, a new Local Government Bill is being worked out by my Ministry and the Bill will be introduced in the National Assembly in the near future after appropriate approval has been obtained.

Mr Nagalingum: Will the hon. Minister inform the House whether consultations have been completed with stakeholders concerned?

Mr Aimée: As I said, if the hon. Member would go through the President's Address, everything is mentioned in it. I am prepared, with the approval of Government, to render public all the works done in the meantime.

Mr Bhagwan: Those who have been present here since 2005 would know that we have heard the same thing in the Government Programme of 2005. I hope we will not suffer the same fate as that of 2005, and that Government will come with a new legislation. Can the hon. Minister, at least, give us a time schedule for the coming into force of a new Local Government Bill?

Mr Aimée: Mr Speaker, Sir, I can assure the hon. Member that action is being taken actually, and in a very near future this will be public. Very soon, yes!

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, being given that there have been some contradictory statements by Members of the Government, could the hon. Minister clarify whether it is the intention of Government to come with new legislation prior to municipal elections being held?

Mr Aimée: Our intention is clear, Mr Speaker, Sir. But time will tell.

(Interruptions)

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, will the hon. Minister confirm that Government has now been converted to the old idea mooted by the MMM/MSM Government as to the creation of seven new municipal areas?

Mr Aimée: The answer is no.

Mr François: Mr Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Minister whether consultations have already started with the Rodrigues Regional Assembly concerning this Local Government Bill?

Mr Aimée: We have not yet reached the stage of consultancy, neither with Rodrigues nor with any other institutions. We are still deciding on the piece of legislation.

Mr Lesjongard: Mr Speaker, Sir, if this is the case, can the hon. Minister let us know where they have reached with regard to the preparation of this new Bill?

Mr Aimée: M. le président, je l'ai bien expliqué au début. On travaille sur le *piece of legislation*, et cela viendra en temps et lieu. Un peu de patience cher membre!

CAMP LEVIEUX, ROSE HILL – NHDC - BUS STAND

(No. 1B/35) 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 NHDC, Camp Levieux, Rose Hill, he will state if it is proposed to put up a bus stand thereat, indicating -

- (a) if land has already been earmarked for the project, and
- (b) the expected date of completion.

Mr Bachoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the NTA and the TMRSU that there is already a bus stand which can accommodate six buses, situated at a distance of 135 metres from the junction of Ratsitatane Street near the NHDC Complex at Camp Levieux, and my Ministry has not received any request in this connection.

I am also informed that in the NHDC Project in the region, the Ministry of Housing and Lands has earmarked a plot of land for a traffic centre and, if there is any request for same, due to consideration will be given to that project.

MUNICIPALITY OF PORT LOUIS - MANUAL WORKERS & REFUSE COLLECTORS

(No. 1B/36) Mr A. Ameer Meea (First Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether, in regard to manual workers and refuse collectors, posted at different sites in Port Louis, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Municipal Council of Port Louis, information as to if any transfer exercise has been or is being carried out, indicating the reasons therefor.

Mr Aimée: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Municipal Council of Port Louis that no transfer exercise has been or is being carried out in respect of the manual workers and refuse collectors posted at different sites in Port Louis.

QUATRE BORNES - SEWERAGE PROJECT

(No. 1B/37) Mr K. Ramano (Second Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to the sewerage project in Quatre Bornes, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Wastewater Management Authority, information as to –

- (a) the expected duration of the works indicating if –
 - (i) the existing drains will be re-instated;
 - (ii) the roads will be resurfaced and, if so, when, and
- (b) the measures, if any, to alleviate the problem of air pollution resulting therefrom.

The Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities (Dr. R. Beebeejaun): Mr Speaker, Sir, I refer the hon. Member to the reply I made to PQ B/816 of 14 July 2009, where the issues were extensively raised by hon. Ms Nita Deerpalsing.

As per the reply I then provided to the House, sewerage works in Quatre Bornes, Sodnac and Belle Rose are covered under Lot 2 of the Plaines Wilhems Sewerage Project.

Works started on 14 January 2008. Works in the region of Berthaud and La Louise would be completed by March 2011, while in the remaining parts of Quatre Bornes, they would be completed by July 2012.

Under the works contract, provision has been made for –

- (i) the reinstatement of existing drains which are damaged during the sewerage works;
- (ii) the full width resurfacing of roads using asphaltic concrete. Such works are normally carried out within three months, as from the date of the temporary reinstatement works, to allow for the settlement of the trenches, and
- (iii) the regular sprinkling of water and cleaning of sites by the contractor, to alleviate the problem of dust.

Following the intervention of hon. Ms Deerpalsing and other hon. Members of the House and representations of the residents, the Public Relations Unit of WMA and representatives of the contractor and the consultant have regular meetings to monitor the situation closely and ensure that sites are well maintained. They also address grievances and take appropriate remedial measures to minimise the inconvenience that inhabitants will inevitably face. The Public Relations Unit will reinforce its communication in order to keep inhabitants informed of developments and receive feedback from them. And I invite hon. Members of this House to contact the unit, should there be any problem, or we will inform them whenever there are meetings on site.

Mr Ramano: M. le président, il existe une mauvaise coordination entre les différents contracteurs qui travaillent sur les lieux, ce qui explique ce problème aigu qui persiste. Est-ce que je peux suggérer au ministre une meilleure coordination entre les différentes parties ?

The Deputy Prime Minister: It is open to anyone.

Mr Ramano: Suite à ces travaux d'envergure, il existe aussi un véritable problème de congestion routière, et nous avons l'impression que les contracteurs travaillent indépendamment de la force policière. Est-ce qu'on peut s'assurer que la coordination soit faite au niveau de la force policière ?

The Deputy Prime Minister: I can assure the House that the Traffic Management and Road Safety Unit is fully involved, and I take note that we should probably have more sign posts to warn motorists about road deviation. We are doing it and we are still doing it. The problem in *Quatre Bornes* is going to be with us for some time. I wish to inform the House that we are looking at all the issues, especially traffic congestion, and the police have been asked to help.

Ms Deerpalsing: May I ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether - given the experience of the contractors' work - the contractors could liaise with other departments, such as Telecom - because there are new areas where there is no telecommunication pole - CWA and CEB? Can these units be harmonised before they resurface the roads, so that they do not resurface and then two days later CWA or CEB or Mauritius Telecom comes around and dig the road again? Can there be a total harmonisation with the new development areas, so that these things are not causing double or triple inconveniences to the inhabitants?

The Deputy Prime Minister: I thank the hon. Member for the suggestion. It is one of those problems which are in front of us over the years; different departments with different works, at different times, with little coordination. Sometimes, it is possible to coordinate, whilst at other times, due to the time lag and the lack of preparedness of the different Ministries, it is difficult. But we will do our best, so that there is coordination and not duplication of work.

Ms Deerpalsing: I understand that now the works are moving from Belle Rose to Sodnac, and I know there are several hon. Members of the House who live in Sodnac and they are going to shout very loud. Mr Speaker, Sir, may I ask the Deputy Prime Minister to ensure that the planning of the closures of the road is made very carefully? In other areas like Belle Rose and La Source, they encircle the area, so that people do not even know how to get into their own yard. So, may I ask the Deputy Prime Minister to ensure that people are not left three blocks away from their house without any entrance into their own area?

The Deputy Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I know two points that have been raised. One is about what goes on in Sodnac. People do complain bitterly there, and it is a fact that the inhabitants of Sodnac have the tendency to complain; quite the reverse of experiences, for example, in Roche Bois, where we did the works, and there was hardly any complaint. Everyone was happy that the works were going on. But, this is a state of affairs. Secondly, yes, we will make sure with the Traffic Management and Road Safety Unit that roads are not closed unnecessarily.

Mr Bhagwan: Can I ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether it would be possible for the Wastewater Management Authority to circulate documents to the House, to his Ministry, to Members of Parliament with regard to the progress of work, the planning of work, so that, at least, we, as Members of Parliament, are informed - as we have been informed of the different officers on site whom to contact in case of emergency - when such and such roads are going to be completed, as well as resurfacing?

The Deputy Prime Minister: This proposal was made, and we got interrupted because the House was not sitting. The answer is yes. But I would be more interested still that we meet the Members representing the constituency as well as the *forces vives* and the Municipality to discuss all the issues. And certainly, we will issue a progress report.

MUNICIPAL COUNCIL OF QUATRE BORNES – ‘L’EXPRESS’ NEWSPAPER - PURCHASE

(No. 1B/38) **Mr K. Ramano (Second Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes)** asked the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether, in regard to daily newspaper ‘l’Express’, he will state if directives have been issued by his Ministry to the Municipal Council of Quatre Bornes for its purchase and, if so, the nature thereof.

Mr Aimée: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am not aware of any directives that may have been issued by my Ministry to the Municipal Council of Quatre Bornes in regard to the purchase of daily newspaper ‘l’Express’, and what is the nature of the directives, if any has been given.

Mr Ramano: Est-ce que je dois comprendre du ministre que cela relève d’une décision purement administrative au niveau de la mairie de Quatre Bornes?

Mr Aimée: Je n'ai pas cette information. D'après les informations recueillies auprès de la municipalité, il n'y a pas eu de directives, et il n'y en a pas eu non plus émanant de mon ministère.

Mr Ramano: M. le président, les 25, 26 et 27 du mois de mai, il y a eu une déposition faite au poste de police de Quatre Bornes à l'effet de la non-disponibilité des journaux 'l'Express'. Est-ce que le ministre, en tant que *parent Minister*, pourrait faire des commentaires à ce sujet ?

Mr Aimée: Je ne suis pas au courant de ces déclarations, mais je vais quand même m'enquérir et je déposerai les informations sur la table de l'Assemblée. Néanmoins, les informations des journaux sont *online* un peu partout, particulièrement à la municipalité.

Mr Ramano: M. le président, dans un souci de respecter la liberté d'expression, qui inclut aussi le libre accès à l'information, je pense qu'il est tout à fait normal que des journaux, quel que soit leur bord, soient mis à la disposition des collectivités locales.

Mr Aimée: Je vous ai dit au préalable que je n'ai pas cette information.

Mr Speaker: Oui, vous avez répondu. Hon. Bhagwan !

Mr Bhagwan: Venons-en à quelque chose de plus sérieux.

Mr Aimée: Je suis sérieux.

Mr Bhagwan: Tout le monde à l'île Maurice n'a pas l'internet. Il y a des gens pauvres qui n'y ont pas accès. Lorsqu'on parle...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order!

Mr Bhagwan: Everyone does not have access to internet. Some people don't know how to operate a computer; poor people or even other types of people. Can I ask the hon. Minister whether *cette épidémie* de boycottage contre 'l'Express' et les journaux de 'La Sentinelle' s'est propagée dans d'autres mairies ? En temps que ministre responsable des collectivités locales, est-ce qu'il y a eu...

Mr Speaker: I am sorry hon. Bhagwan. The question relates to Quatre Bornes. If you feel that you have to come with similar questions for other Municipalities, you are free to do so.

Mr Bhagwan: Can I ask the hon. Minister whether he has taken cognizance, while reading 'l'Express', of what is happening at the Municipality of Quatre Bornes?

Mr Aimée: I don't read 'l'Express', Mr Speaker, Sir.

(Interruptions)

Mr Obeegadoo: M. le président, puisque le ministre est membre d'un gouvernement qui professe son adhésion aux valeurs démocratiques, voudra t-il bien se renseigner par rapport à ce qui se passe à la mairie de Quatre Bornes pour s'assurer que, comme il se doit dans toute démocratie, la bibliothèque municipale de la mairie de Quatre Bornes offre aux habitants de cette ville la possibilité de consulter tous les journaux publiés à Maurice ?

Mr Aimée: J'accueille la proposition de l'honorable membre. Certainement, je le ferai.

COLLINE CANDOS – STATE LAND LEASE

(No. 1B/39) Mr K. Ramano (Second Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes) asked the Minister of Housing and Lands whether, in regard to State lands in the vicinity of Colline, Candos, Quatre Bornes, he will state—

- (a) if there has been any allocation thereof since 1995, and
- (b) if his Ministry is in presence of applications for the lease thereof and, if so, indicate in each case the names of the lessees and the applicants.

Dr. Kasenally: Mr Speaker, Sir, the answer to both parts of this question is no.

TOURISM INDUSTRY – EURO CRISIS

(No. 1B/40) Mr K. Ramano (Second Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes) asked the Minister of Tourism and Leisure whether, in regard to the tourism industry, he will state if following the Euro crisis -

- (a) his Ministry has carried out a study to evaluate its impact thereon, and
- (b) the measures, if any, being taken at the level of the Ministry to protect the industry.

Mr Bodha: Mr Speaker, Sir, I thank the hon. Member for this question. My Ministry is closely following the Euro crisis with a view to assessing the real impact on that sector. A

conclusive and reliable impact assessment on the sector demands a careful scrutiny and evaluation of individual components of the costs and revenues structures of the sector, as well as such elements as budgeted exchange rate against the realised rates, whether the budgeted rates were realistic or overly optimistic in view of fundamentals; the percentage of the cost elements that actually benefits from an appreciating rupee, the level of Gross Operation Profit, the level of profits in general, and dividend distribution of the sector.

Mr Speaker, Sir, Government is very concerned with the prevailing Euro crisis in view of its possible serious adverse impact on our export-oriented economic sectors, including the tourism industry, owing to the heavy reliance of these sectors on the European market.

Mr Speaker, Sir, with a view to finding possible ways and means to mitigating the adverse impact of the Euro crisis, a Technical Working Group, comprising stakeholders from both the private and the public sectors, has been set up at the level of the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development, as the House is aware. The terms of reference of the Working Group are as follows -

- (a) to review the developments in the Euro zone and assess its impact on the Mauritian economy;
- (b) to monitor closely developments in the Euro zone, and
- (c) to formulate an action plan to mitigate the adverse impact on our economy.

Furthermore, Mr Speaker, Sir, I am pursuing consultations with the representatives of the main stakeholders of the tourism sector, including the hotel operators, tour operators, AHRIM and the SMEs, and I have requested them to come up with proposals that could help to alleviate the impact of the Euro crisis. They have, accordingly, submitted various proposals.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the issue of Euro crisis is a complex one, and it demands a careful attention. We need to identify sustainable long term measures rather than quick emergency solutions, such as artificially depreciating our currency, not backed by economic fundamentals. I have accordingly set up a committee at the level of my Ministry to examine thoroughly the proposals submitted by the tourism stakeholders and to work out, jointly with the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development, an Action Plan, detailing measures to be taken as a matter of urgency and measures to be taken in the short term and in the long term.

Mr Bhagwan: I have not heard the hon. Minister, in his reply, mentioning the Mauritius Tourism Promotion Authority as one of the stakeholders. Can I ask the hon. Minister whether he has met the Chairperson of the Mauritius Tourism Promotion Authority, as one of the stakeholders of the tourism sector, to discuss this issue?

Mr Bodha: First of all, Mr Speaker, Sir, I have never mentioned the Mauritius Tourism Promotion Authority. Second, I have met the Chairperson. In fact, the Chairperson was present to a meeting we had with the PRs coming from over the world.

STC – RICE – TENDER EXERCISE

(No. 1B/41) Mr A. Ganoo (First Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Minister of Industry and Commerce whether, in regard to the supply of rice for 2010, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the State Trading Corporation, information as to if -

- (a) the Corporation launched a tender exercise for the purchase of 20,000 metric tonnes in-
 - (i) October 2008, and
 - (ii) December 2009, indicating in each case the recommendations of the Evaluation Committee
- (b) the award was cancelled after the successful tenderer had already ordered a first consignment in January 2010, and
- (c) the Corporation is presently negotiating with an unsuccessful tenderer and, if so, why.

(Vide Reply to PNQ)

FAMILY HEALTH CLINIC, HENRIETTA – CONSTRUCTION

(No. 1B/42) Mrs F. Labelle (Third Member for Vacoas & Floreal) asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether, in regard to the Henrietta Health Care Centre, she will state if –

- (a) she is aware of the present state thereof, indicating if it is proposed to have the centre renovated, and

(b) a review of the services offered thereat is being envisaged.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Mr Speaker, Sir, I suppose the hon. Member is referring to the Family Health Clinic at Henrietta.

The building housing the clinic is not in a good state, and it is already planned to construct a new building to house the new Family Health Clinic at Henrietta. This project has been included in the Capital Budget 2010 of my Ministry for implementation within this financial year. Arrangements will be made for patients to be directed to Glen Park Community Health Centre for treatment.

With regard to part (b) of the question, it should be noted that the clinic had been set up since a long time back, but it does not offer the same services as a Community Health Centre.

I, therefore, propose to request for a needs assessment to be carried out, to know about any new services which will be required.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Minister when she will be considering new services? Because there is no Health Care Centre in the vicinity. There are only pre-natal and post-natal services. I would like to know whether, with regard to the diabetics, old aged persons or for minor injuries, these services could be considered for the persons of this region.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Mr Speaker, Sir, there are only four such clinics in the country, namely at Henrietta, Souillac, Mont Roches and Trèfles, and the present criteria for the setting up of the Community Health Centre is that the health service point should cater for a population of about 5,000 and that any citizen should not travel more than three kms to reach a health service point. So, this is why we have got a Community Health Centre at Glen Park, which is only within three kms away. But, as I said, I will have a needs assessment, and then I'll see whether those services are required there.

Mrs Labelle: May I ask the hon. Minister whether she or her Ministry has taken into consideration the inhabitants of Camp Savanne, Camp Mapou, who could benefit from a Health Centre at Henrietta? Because, for example, there are more than three kms from Camp Savanne to the Glen Park Community Health Centre.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Yes, Mr Speaker, Sir, we will take these into consideration when establishing new criteria.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE - STUDY - UNDP

(No. 1B/43) Mrs F. Labelle (Third Member for Vacoas & Floreal) asked the Minister of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare whether, in regard to domestic violence, she will state if she has taken cognizance of the recent findings of a study carried out by the United Nations Development Programme thereon and, if so, indicate the measures taken or being envisaged to address the issue.

Mrs Bappoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, on 21 April 2010, my Ministry has received from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) a Draft Report on the study of the 'Extent, Nature and Costs of Domestic Violence to the Mauritian economy' undertaken by the Mauritius Research Council.

Following a request made by the UNDP, a technical committee comprising representatives of the UNDP and my Ministry is examining the draft report thoroughly, in order to finalise it and to decide on the course of action.

Mrs Labelle: May I ask the hon. Minister whether she has an idea or could she inform the House of a time schedule when this final report will be ready?

Mrs Bappoo: I am informed, Mr Speaker, Sir, that the technical committee will be completing this exercise. Then, the submission of the report will go back to the UNDP and, from there, it will go for publication.

Mrs Labelle: May I ask the hon. Minister whether she could inform the House of the composition of this committee and the date of their last meeting?

Mrs Bappoo: I know it is the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry, the Head of the Family Unit, and one representative of the UNDP. I have been informed that they have had some three to four meetings, and even this morning they are having another one. They are still waiting for the finalisation of the technical committee report. Mr Speaker, Sir, as I said, the draft report was submitted on 21 April, and all Members know that we were in the electoral campaign. No action was taken by the Ministry. After assuming my responsibility at the Ministry, I have requested that the technical committee be put up, and there have been three to four meetings.

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, given the urgency of this issue - we have reports every single day in the press of cases of domestic violence - would the hon. Minister agree, while we

await the report from the technical committee or whatever, to set up urgently a permanent hotline, operating round the clock, to offer immediate practical advice and assistance to battered women?

Mrs Bappoo: It does exist, Mr Speaker, Sir, and we have just put up also another mechanism which is acting as an emergency team, because there are so many cases. On one side, it is domestic violence, on the other side it is child abuse, and we need to have immediate action taken. I do agree about the concern of the hon. Member.

TUBERCULOSIS CASES – 2007-15 JUNE 2010

(No. 1B/44) Mrs F. Labelle (Third Member for Vacoas & Floreal) asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether, in regard to patients diagnosed with tuberculosis, she will state the number thereof in -

- (a) 2007
- (b) 2008
- (c) 2009, and
- (d) since January 2010 to date.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Mr Speaker, Sir, the number of patients diagnosed with tuberculosis for the years 2007 to date are as follows –

<u>Year</u>	<u>No. of TB Cases</u>
2007	106
2008	108
2009	116
January 2010 to date	58

Mrs Labelle: May I ask the hon. Minister how many foreigners there are among the patients that have been diagnosed and admitted to hospitals?

Mrs Hanoomanjee: I don't have the information right now, but I know that foreigners also are being screened.

Mrs Labelle: With your permission, Mr Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Minister whether there are any precautions or advice given to visitors when they visit people at hospitals?

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Usually, advice is given because tuberculosis, as you know, is a contagious disease, and obviously they are being given advice.

Mrs Labelle: May I ask the hon. Minister whether she is aware of any precautions or advice that are being given to visitors when they go to hospitals?

Mrs Hanoomanjee: As I just said, there must be advice which is being given to them because it is a known fact that tuberculosis is a contagious disease.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Speaker, Sir, this is the reason of my concern, because actually there are no precautions, no advice given to persons visiting this hospital. So, may I ask the hon. Minister if she could see to it that this is being done? Because it is not the case, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Sure, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Speaker: I would perhaps, for the information of hon. Members, inform them that, according to the rules of procedure, supplementary questions are asked to clarify the answer that has been given by the Minister. The hon. Member could have inserted in her main question the supplementary question put to her. It would have been easier for the Minister to answer and save the time of the House.

CAMP CHAPELON – SPECIAL LANE

(No. 1B/45) Mr V. Baloomoody (Third Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping whether he will state if he has received a request from the inhabitants of Camp Chapelon for the putting up of a special lane along the highway towards Camp Chapelon with a view to facilitate entrance of vehicles from the direction of Plaines Wilhems to facilitate connection thereto.

Mr Bachoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Road Development Authority (RDA) that a special lane at the entrance of Camp Chapelon along Motorway M1 cannot be constructed,

due to site constraints and the existing footbridge which is located some 50 metres from the entrance.

However, I have requested the RDA to have a fresh look at the whole issue.

Mr Barbier: Mr Speaker, Sir, I don't know whether the Minister got the question. It concerns motor vehicles coming from Plaines Wilhems to go into the village of Camp Chapelon on the left side of the road. Actually, it is a very short lane, left sided, and the conductor has no time to apply his brakes and have a proper driving into Camp Chapelon. This is causing much difficulty for other users on the road. This is why a letter was sent to the Road Development Authority, with copy to the Minister, to have some proper actions taken at this point of the traffic at Camp Chapelon. I think the Minister should give due consideration to this request, and find a solution in favour of the inhabitants of Camp Chapelon.

Mr Bachoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, we have got a big problem there, because there is an existing building and a footbridge at the entrance of Camp Chapelon. Secondly, according to our existing legislation, from an engineering point of view, a deceleration lane will require a length of 150 metres and an acceleration lane will require a length of about 200 metres, which is not possible there. A little bit ahead, at the entrance of St. Louis, we do have a deceleration lane which the people of Camp Chapelon are utilising actually, but, at the same time, we are very much concerned for the safety of the inhabitants of that region. I have requested the RDA to have a fresh look at that particular spot and to come forward with suggestions, because this is a very delicate and difficult issue. Since long, we have been battling to find a solution there.

Mr Barbier: Actually, major works are being carried out there. Would the hon. Minister see to it that this is being done soon; immediately I would say?

Mr Bachoo: In fact, we are working on that issue. But, unfortunately, as I have just mentioned, because of the footbridge and the entrance of the existing building, we are having problems. But I am going to have a fresh look again on this issue.

SUICIDAL CASES - STUDY

(No. IB/46) Dr. S. Boolell (Second Member for Curepipe & Midlands) asked the Minister of Social Security, National Solidarity and Reform Institutions whether, in regard to cases of suicide and attempted suicide, she will state –

- (a) for each of the past five years the number thereof, and
- (b) whether a study has been conducted to establish the causes thereof with particular reference to the work place environment.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: In reply to part (a) of the question, the figures are being tabled.

As regards part (b), the House may be informed that no study has so far been carried out on the work place environment as a cause of suicide. However, two research studies on the risk factors of suicide were carried out in 1997 and 2003. According to the findings of the studies, the main causes highlighted in the reports are -

- i. social economic disadvantage such as low level of unemployment and education.
- ii. childhood trauma.
- iii. substance abuse.
- iv. mental illness.
- v. dysfunctional family atmosphere.
- vi. conflicting marital relationships.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I wish to further inform the House that following the submission of the two reports, an Action Plan based on the findings have been published and a Steering Committee chaired by the Permanent Secretary has been set up. The main function of the Steering Committee is to oversee the implementation of the recommendations contained in the Action Plan. In that respect, the various stakeholders involved at the level of the committee are actively working in their respective fields and actions are targeted at the different population groups to prevent suicide.

The situation is being closely monitored and if required consideration may be given to a study being carried out on the work place environment as a risk factor.

Dr. S. Boolell: Mr Speaker, Sir, in view of the fact that we have the France Telecom epidemic where people tend to commit suicide in their workplaces, in view of the fact that there seems to be a total disregard by many employers and heads of departments, including government institutions concerning suicide, I would ask the Minister whether she would not

consider it a matter of emergency to look into the high figures of suicide which have not been circulated, but which I estimate to be quite high for this country and instruct all heads of departments, all directors not to take suicide as a kind of democratic exercise on the part of someone who wants to die, but that it should be something very serious so that we reduce stupid deaths.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: In fact, Mr Speaker, Sir, the House may wish to be informed that there is already at the Ministry, a Suicide Prevention Unit and a lot of awareness campaigns is being carried out on various workplaces. As from January 2010 onwards several work sessions have been carried out in different departments to make people aware of the suicide risks.

Dr. S. Boolell: May I suggest that the Police department be made aware of the dangers of suicide?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: May I inform the House that the police department, the SMS, the Fire Services have all benefited from such awareness campaigns.

Mr Bérenger: The hon. Minister has been asked for the number of suicides and attempted suicides over five years. Truly this would not have wasted the time of the House, it would have been so easy to give us the figures for five years. But being given that it is being circulated, can we know, at least, what the trend looks like over the last five years? Has the situation been deteriorating or not?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: In fact, Mr Speaker Sir, I may give the values. The numbers, fortunately, have been decreasing although one suicide is one too many. Mr Speaker, Sir, may I give the values with your permission? In 2005, there were 99 cases; in 2006: 97 cases; in 2007: 95 cases; in 2008: 84 cases and in 2009: 83 cases.

Dr. S. Boolell: There seems to be a request for attempted suicide cases as well. Are they successful or unsuccessful?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: In fact, in the cases of attempted suicide, the number is more or less the same though, as I have mentioned earlier, one is too many; the number ranges between 355 to 385 attempts.

Mrs Labelle: The hon. Minister mentioned in her reply that a Steering Committee has been set up. I would like to know when and if there has been any recommendation that this

committee has already been submitted. Furthermore, Mr Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I would like to ask the hon. Minister whether there is any psychological support given to the Police Force. She mentioned awareness campaign, but I would like to know what psychological support is being given to the Police Force.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Mr Speaker, Sir, to start with the implementation programmes of the committee, I would like to inform the House that the committee has five subcommittees and these subcommittees are making recommendations on training, advocacy, assistance of Police, fire services and prisons as well as limiting access to dangerous chemical products. The Ministry has a psychologist and several other psychologists working on sessional basis and providing their support to the Suicide Prevention Unit which is based at the NPF building at Beau Bassin. On top of that, we have the Principal Probation Officer, who is a holder of an MSc in the Community Services Management, who is also helping in this Unit. The Suicide Prevention Unit was set up in 2005 and the Implementation Committee has been working since September 2009.

HOSPITALS – HIGH-TECH SERVICES

(No. 1B/47) Dr. S. Boolell (Second Member for Curepipe & Midlands) asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether, in regard to medical services offered by the Government, she will state if Government is envisaging any change in its policy, and in particular to hi-tech medicine, including cardiac surgery.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Mr Speaker, Sir, I wish to inform the House that Medical Services in our hospitals including High Tech Services as well as Cardiac Surgeries performed at the Cardiac Centre, Pamplemousses are provided free of charge to the population.

As regards cardiac surgeries undertaken at the Cardiac Centre operating under the aegis of the Trust Fund for Specialised Medical Care, it has been decided that only those having a personal health insurance cover will be required to meet the cost of cardiac surgeries and other invasive and interventional procedures. In this respect, the regulations are being finalised accordingly.

Dr. S. Boolell: Are we given to understand, Mr Speaker, Sir, that this is the end of the Welfare State as far as the health services are concerned? If we start paying for cardiac surgery,

which is going to become expensive, I would like to know whether next they are going to charge for renal transplantation, renal services and whether someone who has an insurance for cardiac surgery will have priority on the list as opposed to someone who has no insurance.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Surely not, Mr Speaker, Sir! This Government is bent on maintaining the Welfare State. The second thing is that, no priority will be given to anybody whatsoever. But I think that, on an average, we have around 550 cardiac surgeries per year and that those who undergo cardiac surgery much prefer to come to our Cardiac Centre than going to the private clinics. If they have a medical insurance, they pay to the private clinics. Why not pay to the Cardiac Centre at Pamplemousses?

RODRIGUES – FLOUR AND RATION RICE - PRICE

(No. 1B/48) Mr J. F. François (Third Member for Rodrigues) asked the Minister of Industry and Commerce whether, in regard to flour and ration rice presently on sale in Rodrigues, he will state –

- (a) if he is aware of the change in the quality thereof and, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the State Trading Corporation, information as to the reasons thereof, and
- (b) if government intends to subsidise the products to cover the cost of freight charges and other costs involved for the transfer from Mauritius to Rodrigues to put them at par with the price in Mauritius and if so, when and, if not, why not.

Mr Soodhun: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the STC that there has been no change in the specifications for rice and flour and that the same quality of rice and flour is sold in Mauritius as well as in Rodrigues. I am tabling the specifications for rice and flour that have been in force for the last 10 years.

In regard to part (b) of the question, there is also a firm request from the Minister of Rodrigues and my Ministry will examine the request.

Mr François: Mr Speaker, Sir, is the Minister saying that the quality is the same?

Mr Soodhun: Yes, the quality of rice that we are eating everyday is the same. I wish to table a copy of the specifications.

Mr François: Is the hon. Minister aware that the rice being sold on the market is not eatable and that there is a majority of people using *ration* rice in Rodrigues? Is it agreeable that dirty *ration* rice sold on the market is not of good quality?

Mr Soodhun: Mr Speaker, Sir, I have mentioned that the same quality of rice is being sold in Rodrigues as well as in Mauritius. I am going to check again whether the information of the hon. Member is correct or not.

Mr François: Mr Speaker, Sir, the quality of rice is very, very, very bad and people in Rodrigues are saying that even the pigs cannot eat this type of rice.

Mr Speaker: I know the hon. Member is new. The hon. Minister has said that he is going to look into the matter. I would ask him to talk to the Minister and if he is not satisfied, he can still come back and raise the matter at Adjournment time.

Mrs Labelle: M. le président, puis-je demander au ministre s'il est possible d'informer la Chambre du pourcentage de brisure dans le riz présentement sur le marché?

Mr Soodhun: 25%, M. le president.

BEAU BASSIN – WATER SUPPLY

(No. 1B/49) Mr F. Quirin (Third Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether he has received complaints from the inhabitants of Beau Bassin, namely in the regions of Chébel, Barkly, Maingard, Mont Roches and Vuillemin in regard to the frequent disruptions of water supply and, if so, will he, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Central Water Authority, information as to the reasons therefor and the remedial actions that will be taken.

The Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities (Dr. R. Beebeejaun): Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed that prior to April 2010, the regions of Chébel, Barkly, and Maingard were supplied with water on a 24-hour basis pumped from two boreholes.

In April 2010, Chébel, Maingard and Barkly regions were connected to the new service reservoir of capacity of 2500 m³ constructed by CWA at Meldrum. However, it was observed that there was a decrease in pressure in the supply system in particular at Barkly and Chébel, due to heavy leakages in the network at Cité Barkly.

As an interim remedial measure, Cité Barkly has been disconnected from the service reservoir and reverted to the old system of pumping. Water supply is now generally satisfactory, according to the CWA. The CWA is undertaking works to replace the defective network.

As regards Chébel, it is still supplied from Meldrum reservoir and water supply is presently satisfactory.

Mont Roches is supplied from Roches Brunès reservoir. The water supply has been restored to normal following the repair of old water supply pipes, which were damaged during wastewater works.

Regarding Vuillemin, I am informed that on 13 May 2010, there was a burst on the existing service main, resulting in decreased pressure. On the next day, repair works were completed and the water supply restored.

Mr Bhagwan: Can I ask the hon. Deputy Prime Minister whether he has been made aware of the problems following the commissioning of the new reservoir at Meldrum Street? There is a new reservoir at Meldrum Street which is operational to cater for the lower Beau Bassin region. From what we understand from a reliable officer – the hon. Deputy Prime Minister knows whom I am talking about – who is not an engineer, but a sort of PRO, there is a technical problem following the commissioning of the new reservoir. Either it has not been built according to specification or there is a technical problem which has a direct impact on the water supply of the lower Beau Bassin region.

The Deputy Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, this is not my information. The hon. Member did mention it to me and I checked. The real issue has been the unexpected, unknown and undetected losses along the Barkly network. Once this has been closed and water supply restored from the pump, the problem has decreased and we are replacing the pump.

As to the site and construction of the new reservoir, there was a question of whether it was properly sited, I am told that the height and the level are appropriate. But I will check again.

TROMELIN ISLAND – CO-MANAGEMENT

(No. 1B/50) Mrs A. Navarre-Marie (First Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade whether, in

regard to the *cogestion* of Tromelin Island, he will give details of the agreement recently signed between the Mauritian and French Governments.

Dr. A. Boolell: Mr Speaker, Sir, I will seek your indulgence and that of the House because the reply I am going to make is rather lengthy as it pertains to a very important subject of national interest.

Mr Speaker, Sir, as the House is aware, Mauritius and France signed on 7 June 2010 a Framework Agreement on Economic, Scientific and Environmental Co-management relating to Tromelin Island and its surrounding maritime areas. Mauritius and France also signed, at the same time, three implementing agreements relating to archaeological research, fisheries and protection of the environment respectively.

The Framework Agreement concluded by Mauritius and France on the co-management of Tromelin is of historical importance and testifies to the existence of a strong political will on the part of the hon. Prime Minister and the French President.

It is recalled that co-management of territories in our region which are the subject of disputes with France was first proposed at the Indian Ocean Commission Summit held in December 1999 in Reunion Island. Following the Indian Ocean Commission Summit, the Special Cell on Tromelin, operational at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs until early 2000, undertook to examine the implications of co-management. However, the co-management proposal did not gain momentum until the official visit of the hon. Prime Minister to Paris in 2006.

Subsequently, when the hon. Prime Minister met the French President, Mr Sarkozy, in June 2008 in Paris, it was agreed that modalities for the co-management of Tromelin should be worked out by Mauritius and France. The hon. Prime Minister, however, made it clear that the sovereignty issue should not be postponed indefinitely and should be resolved as soon as possible.

Three meetings at senior officials' level between Mauritius and France on the co-management of Tromelin were held in December 2008 in Mauritius, in October 2009 in Reunion Island and in February 2010 in Mauritius. The Mauritius delegation was led by the Secretary to

Cabinet and Head of the Civil Service and comprised the Secretary for Foreign Affairs and the Solicitor General.

As a result of these meetings, Mauritius and France agreed upon a Framework Agreement which provides for the establishment of a regime of economic, scientific and environmental co-management relating to Tromelin as well as its territorial sea and exclusive economic zone. The initial draft of the Agreement was prepared by the Mauritius side with the assistance of late Sir Ian Brownlie, Q.C. and submitted to the French side for consideration.

The Framework Agreement on the co-management regime will initially cover the following areas -

- (a) protection of the marine environment, conservation and promotion of terrestrial and marine biodiversity;
- (b) fisheries;
- (c) monitoring of natural phenomena in the region, and
- (d) archaeological research.

The Framework Agreement also provides for the establishment of a Co-management Committee for the implementation of the Agreement. The Committee, which will comprise an equal number of members from Mauritius and France, will meet, at least, once every year, alternately in Mauritius and in France.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the Mauritian and French senior officials also finalised three implementing agreements on archaeological research, fisheries and protection of the environment respectively. These agreements define modalities for the implementation of the Framework Agreement in the areas falling under its purview.

Under the implementing agreement on archaeological research, the following measures will be taken by Mauritius and France following the two archaeological campaigns on Tromelin Island in 2006 and 2008 -

- (a) setting-up of a Franco-Mauritian scientific team in the context of the third archaeological campaign to be undertaken in 2010 once the necessary financial means have been raised;

- (b) contribution to a scientific publication that would take into account all the aspects of the history of the site of Tromelin;
- (c) an inventory and analysis of the state of the archaeological objects that have been found in Tromelin and determination of the treatment required for the preventive preservation of the objects likely to be exhibited in museums or in exhibitions;
- (d) organisation of an itinerant exhibition in Mauritius, Reunion Island and mainland France;
- (e) conduct of a joint study on the construction of a monument to commemorate Tromelin as a remembrance site, and
- (f) organisation of a lecture tour to Reunion Island and Mauritius as a follow-up to that already initiated in mainland France.

As for the implementing agreement on fisheries, it provides for the implementation of a common fisheries policy which will deal in particular with the evaluation of fish stocks, the elaboration of measures for fisheries management and modalities for the issue of fishing licences. It is to be noted that agreement on the issue of fishing licences was reached after protracted negotiations. The French side had initially proposed that only the French authorities should deliver fishing licences to all vessels authorised to fish in the surrounding maritime areas of Tromelin. The Mauritian side objected to that proposal. It was finally agreed that the Mauritian authorities would issue fishing licences to Mauritian flag vessels while fishing licences for French flag vessels would be delivered by the French authorities. As for vessels from other countries, they would need licences from both the Mauritian and French authorities.

As regards the implementing agreement on the protection of the environment, it establishes a framework for the responsible management of the environment of Tromelin Island, the *platier* and its surrounding maritime areas. The agreement further provides for the conduct of an environmental inventory, following which a Master Plan for the management of the environment of Tromelin will be prepared. A joint oil spill contingency plan will also be worked out by Mauritius and France.

The three implementing agreements equally provide for the setting up of specialised expert groups which will make proposals for consideration by the Co-management Committee to be set up under the Framework Agreement on co-management of Tromelin.

During the talks, the Mauritius delegation insisted on the need for the Framework Agreement on co-management of Tromelin to be of limited duration and for the issue of sovereignty over Tromelin to be resolved as soon as possible. The Framework Agreement and the implementing agreements have thus been concluded for a period of five years. They may be renewed for another further term of five years, unless one of the parties gives notice of its intention to terminate them six months before their expiry. During the duration of the Framework Agreement on co-management of Tromelin, Mauritius will continue to have discussions with France on the issue of sovereignty over Tromelin.

Appropriate provisions have been included in the Framework Agreement and the three implementing agreements to ensure that the conclusion of these agreements is not prejudicial to the sovereignty of Mauritius over Tromelin.

I will table copies of the agreements which have been signed by Mauritius and France.

Mr Speaker, Sir, since there have lately been press reports to the effect that Madagascar is claiming sovereignty over Tromelin, I wish to inform the House that Madagascar had renounced in the 1970s its sovereignty claim over Tromelin. A mutual agreement was reached between Mauritius and Madagascar whereby Madagascar would support the claim of Mauritius over Tromelin and Mauritius would extend its support to the claim of Madagascar over the “Iles Eparses”. I take this opportunity to reaffirm the sovereignty of Mauritius over Tromelin.

NHDC ESTATES – REHABILITATION WORKS

(No. 1B/51) Mrs A. Navarre-Marie (First Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Housing and Lands whether, in regard to rehabilitation works to be carried out on the NHDC Estates, he will state where matters stand.

Dr. Kasenally: Mr Speaker, Sir, as we are all aware inhabitants of NHDC housing estates are owners *de plein droit* of their housing units, and as such are solely responsible for the upkeep and maintenance of their housing units and housing environment. However, this Government being extremely sensitive to the living conditions of these people, made an

unprecedented effort to undertake rehabilitation works in some of these housing estates considered as a priority.

As a matter of fact, provision was made in the budgetary exercise of June 2009 to carry out rehabilitation works in some NHDC housing estates. Works identified as priority were -

- (a) water proofing;
- (b) repair to cracks, renovation to bathroom and toilet areas and associated ancillary works, and
- (c) repairs to CEB meter cabins which were vandalised.

Subsequently, contracts in respect of the above mentioned works were awarded to successful bidders for a total sum of Rs150 m.

Mr Speaker, Sir, rehabilitation works have already started since November last and are ongoing. Eight housing estates were identified for waterproofing, 90% of the works have been completed on three housing estates and are in progress on the remaining four.

In regard to repair to cracks and associated ancillary works, 65% of the works have been completed in the eight identified housing estates. There has been some delay in the progress of works due to the reluctance of certain inhabitants in allowing access to their housing units. Unbelievable, is not it? Officers of my Ministry and those of the NHDC are carrying out a PR exercise to that effect.

Sir, in regard to repair to CEB meter cabins on 13 housing estates, works started in January of this year and are expected to be completed by August 2010.

MEDICAL NEGLIGENCE – INQUIRY

(No. 1B/52) Mrs A. Navarre-Marie (First Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether, in regard to reported cases of medical negligence for each of the last five years, she will state the number thereof, indicating if an inquiry has been carried out in each case and the outcome thereof.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Mr Speaker Sir, I wish to inform the House that in all, 226 cases of alleged medical negligence have been reported to my Ministry and the Medical Council of Mauritius during the period January 2005 to date. Out of these, 205 cases have been directly

reported to the Medical Council by both the public and private sectors as well as private individuals. The breakdown of cases is as follows -

44 cases in 2005;

41 cases in 2006;

39 cases in 2007;

46 cases in 2008;

37 cases in 2009, and

19 cases from January 2010 to date

I am also informed by the Medical Council that out of the 205 cases reported to the Council, 46 cases involving public officers have not yet been investigated as the Council is awaiting the delegation of power from the Public Service Commission to proceed ahead.

With your permission, Mr Speaker Sir, I am tabling the information with regard to the outcome of the cases investigated so far by my Ministry and the Medical Council.

Mrs Navarre-Marie: Will the hon. Minister state whether there have been cases whereby after inquiry, decision has been taken to interdict a public officer and, if yes, in how many cases?

Mrs Hanoomanjee: I have circulated the information, but I can say that in some cases, as regards public officers, we are still waiting for the regulations to be promulgated with regard to the delegation of power from the PSC.

Mrs Navarre-Marie: In cases of victims, has there been any compensation paid to the victims or their families?

Mrs Hanoomanjee: I do not have this information for the time being, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Bérenger: Can I ask the hon. Minister since when have we been waiting for the PSC to delegate its powers?

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Well, I am given to understand that these cases have been pending for some four to five years.

Mr Bérenger: It is obvious that the Public Service Commission is not prepared to delegate its powers. Is it a fact that legislation is being prepared to correct the situation?

Mrs Hanoomanjee: In fact, Mr Speaker, Sir, I had a meeting with my colleague, the Attorney General and things are moving now. We are expecting to receive the delegation of power at any time from the PSC; otherwise, the Medical Council Act will have to be amended if we do not get the delegation of power.

Mr Baloomoody: One of the main problems which alleged victims of alleged medical negligence faces is to have access to the medical file. Will the hon. Minister see to it that whenever somebody complains of medical negligence, especially in the public sector, access to the medical file will be made available to him or her?

Mrs Hanoomanjee: I will have to discuss with the Medical Council on this aspect, Mr Speaker, Sir.

INDUSTRIAL INJURIES/FATAL ACCIDENTS – MEASURES

(No. 1B/53) Mr V. Baloomoody (Third Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment whether, in regard to cases of industrial injuries and fatal accidents on the site of work, he will state -

- (a) the number thereof which have occurred during each of the last three years, and
- (b) the actions that are being taken to ensure a safer working environment.

Mr Mohamed: Mr Speaker, Sir, the number of occupational accidents notified under the Occupational Safety and Health Act 2005 for the last three years are as follows – I am not circulating it because it is only for the last three years that the hon. Member was looking for -

Year	Non-fatal cases	Fatal cases
2007	149	10
2008	151	13
2009	184	15

I must say that even though any accident is one too many, in my humble opinion, Mr Speaker, Sir, that with the excellent work, there has been some good work done at the level

of the Ministry, particularly, in the Department of Occupational Safety and Health. There has been therefore a drastic reduction, because in 2002-2003, we were already at the figures of over 200 non-fatal cases, even 249 at one stage. At fatal levels, 2003-2004 was the highest, 24 at that time. So, there has been a reduction.

Regarding part (b) of the question. I would like to draw the attention of the hon. Member that it is the duty and responsibility of every single employer, by virtue of section 5 of the Occupational Safety and Health Act, to ensure that the safety, health and welfare of his employees at work are being taken care of. In addition to the Statutory Provisions under section 5, my Ministry is implementing several measures which comprise, *inter alia*, the following, with a view to ensuring a safer work environment -

- (a) we have regular inspections that are being carried out at the Occupational Safety and Health Inspectorate of my Ministry to ensure compliance with the legislation. During the past three years - and I believe those figures are very important - there have been 8,563 inspections carried out and 365 complaints investigated into. Court actions have been initiated in respect of 427 cases of breach of the provisions of the legislation;
- (b) ongoing training programmes by the Ministry for the benefit of all stakeholders are conducted, so as to create a safety and health culture at workplaces;
- (c) there is a continuous upgrading of the legal framework which is being looked into, to address changes in work patterns, processes and technology. In this context, a new Regulation on electricity at work was promulgated in June 2009;
- (d) there is also a guideline on Risk Assessment which is being finalised in consultation with the International Labour Organisation. I have had discussions recently. I came back only this morning from the ILO, Geneva. There are discussions that are ongoing for us to finalise the Risk Assessment document, and this document will be a valuable tool for employers to carry out a suitable and sufficient assessment of any risk to the safety and health to which any employee is exposed whilst he is at work, and

- (e) additional staff has also been recruited at the Occupational Safety and Health Inspectorate with a view to providing a better delivery of service to stakeholders, such as inspections.

I must also add, Mr Speaker, Sir, that only last week I was at the ILC in Geneva. I had the honour to meet one of the executive directors responsible for Occupational Safety and Health, Mr Machida, and he has come to Mauritius at the beginning of this year. He has suggested something, which I am seriously considering at the level of my Ministry; it is to amend section 5 of the Occupational Safety and Health legislation to include within the workplace also the lodging of the employee for foreign workers.

Another amendment that we are considering at the level of the Occupational Safety and Health legislation is the possibility of - as is done in other countries, such as Singapore, under the guidance of the ILO - coming up with the amendment that states that it shall be mandatory for every single employer to take his responsibility under section 5 vis-à-vis his employees and to give the relevant training to each and every employee of his establishment. Once the training programme is confirmed as being the right training programme by my Ministry, those workers will be trained mandatorily by each employer under the control and supervision of my Ministry.

Mr Baloomoody: Can I ask the hon. Minister what actions are being taken with regard to foreign contractors who are employing foreigners? Many seem not to be aware of the regulations, especially the Health & Safety Regulation. I would like to know what specific actions are being taken, and whether they are forced to abide with regard to these regulations prior to be given a permit to work in Mauritius.

Mr Mohamed: In fact, I welcome the question by the hon. Member. True it is that, as soon as I took office, I have noted that there is indeed a problem with regard to the way foreign employees are being treated. There is also the legislation. I would like to reassure the hon. Member that one of the means of making sure that everyone is responsible and has to adhere to his responsibility is for us to pass a law. The law was passed; it was an excellent piece of legislation, which is being reviewed accordingly as we need to. But section 5 imposes certain responsibilities upon all employers of local or foreign workforce.

In practice, I totally agree that it is problematic. The problem is that we have identified at the level of my Ministry that not only it is important for employers to be aware of what their responsibility is, where it starts and where it stops, but it is also important for the employee, being local as well as foreign, to know what his rights are under the legislation. Therefore, we have taken a decision - and I have instigated something new at the level of my Ministry - that each and every time a single foreign worker lands in Mauritius, before he even meets his employer, he is to be given an information sheet. We are working on the process by which we can put it into practice. He will be given an information sheet in the language in which he understands. Just as he is given a sheet at the Immigration for health purposes, he is also given a sheet with regard to his rights under the Occupational Health & Safety and the Employment Rights and Relations Acts. What we are doing also, as I have said, amending the law for it to be mandatory upon each employer employing foreign as well as local workers to train them under our supervision. My Ministry has already conducted many training sessions where we have trained trainers. What we are going to try to do now is extend that, to make them liable and responsible.

Mr Baloomoody: My question is with regard to foreign contractors, especially in the construction industry, who are employing foreign and Mauritian workers on construction sites. It seems that they are not aware or do not care about the safety of workers. My question is with regard to specific contractors.

Mr Mohamed: The definition of contractor or foreign contractor, as the hon. Member puts it, falls within the ambit of the employer, as defined under section 5 of the relevant legislation. Therefore, the law does cover them. With regard to what we are doing additionally, we are going, in virtue of an amendment to the law, to make mandatory upon them to train workers, because if they want to ignore the law, if they want to make as though they do not understand what the law says, I can reassure the House that, at my Ministry, we will be very, very strict on this particular issue. There will be no discrimination between local and foreign workforce, and no discrimination in responsibility, whether it is a local or a foreign company. The law is the law, and I will see to it that the letter of the law is adhered to.

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister will surely agree that what is of critical importance is that the compliance with the law can be monitored, and that the law can be

enforced. Since the hon. Minister is aware that the factory inspectorate is notoriously understaffed and has been so for many years, would he be in a position today to inform the House what is the number of factory inspectors entitled to carry out inspections around the island and also in Rodrigues?

Mr Mohamed: What I can right away say from the very outset is that I totally agree with the hon. Member that it is pointless to have a law that is not policed. I must reassure the hon. Member and the Members of the House that there has been a recruitment exercise immediately before I took office, where inspectors were recruited additionally in order to come and sort out this big problem of understaffing that existed and also with regard to the officers responsible for the Occupational Health & Safety. Both issues of understaffing were real and those matters have been taken care of with regard to Mauritius and Rodrigues.

With regard to the exact figure of recruitment, I do not have it with me. If the hon. Member comes with a substantive question, I shall give it to him, or I can give it to him if he gets in touch with me.

TERRASSON & SUGAR PLANTER, POINTE AUX SABLES - SEWERAGE SYSTEM

(No. 1B/54) Mrs A. Navarre-Marie (First Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to the sewerage project, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Wastewater Management Authority, information as to if the inhabitants of Pointe aux Sables, namely, Terrasson and Sugar Planter will be connected to the main sewerage system.

The Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities (Dr. R. Beebeejaun): Mr Speaker, Sir, the region of Sugar Planter, commonly known as Cité Ilois/Debarcadère is already sewered, and presently the Wastewater Management Authority is implementing a project to connect about 110 houses. The project is scheduled to be completed by September 2010.

The region of Terrasson, comprising about 1,000 houses, is unsewered and does not form part of Phase 1 of the first National Sewerage Master Plan of 1994, which is being implemented presently. Consideration will be given to the construction of a sewerage network in Pointe aux Sables in the next phase.

Mrs Navarre-Marie: Mr Speaker, Sir, the hon. Deputy Prime Minister is being confused, Sugar Planter is not Cité Debarcadère. It is another region near Cité Debarcadère. So, it is not sewerred yet. The problem, Mr Speaker, Sir, is very acute for the residents of Terrasson and Sugar Planter. At some point in time there has been a special fund for CHA residents who encounter this problem because to make *vidange* at a regular interval costs a lot of money. Will the hon. Deputy Prime Minister state whether this fund is still operational and, if not, whether he will see the advisability of re-instating it?

The Deputy Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, if there has been confusion about names, I can assure the hon. Member that Sugar Planter is sewerred...

(Interruptions)

That is the information I have, unless we are calling the same thing by different names or different things by the same name; it could be. As to the region of Terrasson, Pointe aux Sables, unfortunately, houses were built there too close and the nature of the soil is such that it is difficult and it is impermeable and there is overflow risk easily. It is difficult to maintain, difficult to know how to proceed, because I am told that the Policy Guidelines of the Ministry of Housing and Lands were not followed when the constructions were made. They are much too close. But we will see to it how to improve the service.

Mr Baloomoody: With regard to the special fund, can fund be made available for those people who are encountering hardship.

The Deputy Prime Minister: I will look into that.

Mr Speaker: Time is over!

MOTION

SUSPENSION OF S.O 10(2)

The Deputy Prime Minister: 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 (Mr P. Jugnauth) rose and seconded.

Question put and agreed to.

Mr Speaker: I suspend the sitting for half an hour.

At 4.22 p.m. the sitting was suspended.

On resuming at 5.00 p.m with Mr Speaker in the Chair

MOTION

GOVERNMENT PROGRAMME 2010-2015

“This Assembly resolves that the Government Programme 2010-2015 presented to this Assembly on Tuesday 8 June 2010, copy of which has been circularised amongst hon. Members, be and is hereby approved”.

Question again proposed.

Ms S. Anquetil (Fourth Member for Vacoas & Floreal): M. le président, c'est avec beaucoup d'émotion et de fierté que je me lève cet après-midi pour mon *maiden speech* dans le cadre des débats sur le discours-programme du gouvernement prononcé par le Président de la République, Sir Anerood Jugnauth. J'aimerais tout d'abord, M. le président, vous féliciter pour votre reconduction aux fonctions de *Speaker* de notre auguste Assemblée nationale. Je voudrais vous assurer de ma volonté d'assumer mon rôle de députée avec détermination et discernement et ce, sous votre aimable et précieuse direction.

M. le président, ce programme gouvernemental a suscité un très vif intérêt parmi la population et aussi parmi les politiciens de tout bord de par l'audace des actions et des réformes préconisées, et ce, dans la même ligne de l'ambition du gouvernement et de notre Premier ministre, le Dr. Navinchandra Ramgoolam, de mettre l'homme au centre de tout développement. On constate dans ce discours-programme que la justesse des principaux axes de développement

visé à considérablement améliorer le niveau de vie et de bien-être de tout mauricien sans exception.

M. le président, le programme démontre la conviction dans la construction sur ce qui a déjà été entamé et apporte de nouvelles initiatives avec une liste de nouveaux projets innovateurs que le gouvernement a décidés de réaliser pendant cette présente législature.

M. le président, je souhaite aussi remercier profondément le Premier ministre, le Dr. Navin Ramgoolam, qui a reconnu en moi, quelqu'une qui a été animée du profond désir de contribuer à la construction d'une nation forte et unie et il m'a ouvert les portes du Parti Travailleuse pour me permettre d'œuvrer dans ce sens à côté d'autres serviteurs du peuple et ensemble réaliser le rêve tant choyé par notre *leader* d'une île Maurice unie, équitable et moderne. Le Dr. Navin Ramgoolam a été mon guide pour les élections 2010. Je lui dois une fière chandelle.

J'aimerais aussi souligner, M. le président, la réciprocité de cette confiance car j'estime que l'île Maurice a énormément de chance d'avoir en le Dr. Navin Ramgoolam, un fin politicien, un vrai fils du sol, un Premier ministre rassembleur, un homme d'Etat d'une sage intelligence qui a su fédérer autour du drapeau mauricien toutes les couches et composantes de la société mauricienne. C'est aussi l'homme qui a été déterminé à donner un coup de pouce pour la féminisation du Parlement mauricien en alignant 13 femmes sur la liste des candidats pour les élections générales 2010 pour l'Alliance de l'Avenir.

M. le président, je tiens aussi à remercier mes deux colistiers, deux candidats brillants, l'honorable Madame Sheilabai Bappoo et l'honorable Nandcoomar Bodha, pour leurs conseils, support et solidarité tout le long de la campagne électorale, qui n'a pas été de tout repos. Un mot special pour cette grande dame, l'honorable Madame Sheilabai Bappoo, une politicienne aguerrie avec un cœur débordant d'amour pour surtout les plus vulnérables. Cette grande politicienne a été ma marraine pour les élections 2010. Je lui suis très reconnaissante.

M. le président, je voudrais remercier très chaleureusement tous les électeurs, hommes et femmes, de la circonscription No. 16 de Vacoas/Floreal qui ont soutenu l'Alliance de l'Avenir. Je les remercie pour leur confiance en me donnant l'opportunité de les représenter au Parlement mauricien. Je retournerai vers eux à la fin des travaux du jour pour résumer les projets en chantier qui leur en sont dédiés.

M. le président, comment oublier ce grand parlementaire parti trop tôt, notre grand ami, le Dr. James Burty David. Son absence se fera sentir dans cette Assemblée Nationale.

Finalement, M. le président, j'ai une pensée spéciale pour mes parents, ma soeur et mes amis qui ont toujours été à mes cotés dans chaque épreuve de ma vie.

M. le président, la famille Anquetil a, en effet, toujours été associée au combat pour la justice et pour les plus démunis depuis 1936 et cela au sein même du Parti Travailleiste. Emmanuel Anquetil, un des fondateurs du Parti Travailleiste, ancien *leader* et président du parti de 1941 jusqu'à sa mort en 1946, considéré comme le père du syndicalisme mauricien, a toujours été un ardent défenseur des droits des travailleurs et c'est, sans doute, que son action a laissé une empreinte sur l'éventuel cheminement du Parti Travailleiste.

Emmanuel Anquetil m'a passé ce flambeau qui l'animait dans son combat, pour que je puisse poursuivre sur cet élan et, apporter ma pierre dans la construction d'une nation mauricienne forte, unie et prospère. Je sais que sous le *leadership* du Dr. Navin Ramgoolam, on réaliserait cette vision de faire que chaque mauricien soit un homme libre, égal et émancipé.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the Mauritius Labour Party has a proud history and a proud record as the party that has strived since its creation in February 1936 for the establishment of social justice in Mauritius and more importantly, Mr Speaker, Sir, for the establishment of a Welfare State. The Labour Party has always been committed to fairness, equality and the consolidation of the well-being of all Mauritians, irrespective of caste, creed and religion. These values have no doubt motivated many great men and women to join the Mauritius Labour Party in its objective to enable each and every Mauritian to climb the social ladder.

And, we all are here, Mr Speaker, Sir, Members of this Government, to drive the policies laid down by our Prime Minister in his strategy to make of Mauritius a State which really cares for its citizens, a country that every Mauritian is proud to belong to. This programme takes the process one step ahead.

En effet, M. le président, le discours-programme de l'Alliance de l'Avenir est caractérisé par son sérieux, car il définit les grands projets qui s'insèrent d'une part, dans la vision du gouvernement, pour une société fondée sur l'unité, l'égalité et la modernité et d'autre part, dans l'action de l'Alliance de l'Avenir de tenir les engagements pris lors de la campagne électorale.

M. le président, étant donné que je suis la première oratrice à parler sur le discours-programme, je n'ai pas l'intention de toucher à tous les sujets, mais mon intervention sera essentiellement concentrée sur la politique, évidemment, l'économie, l'éducation, l'énergie, le social, l'égalité du genre et l'épanouissement de la société du point de vue de justice sociale et de l'inclusion sociale.

Je voudrais ici me faire le porte-parole de mes mandants et de tous ceux qui m'ont parlé pour exprimer notre reconnaissance au Premier ministre pour avoir créé un nouveau ministère, celui de l'intégration sociale pour effectivement s'assurer de notre succès dans la lutte pour l'éradication de la pauvreté pour une société plus juste et équitable.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the world at large continues to be troubled by sluggish growth, volatile energy costs and rising budgetary deficit. Mauritius has been resilient because the former government, under the wise and pragmatic leadership of our Prime Minister, Dr. Navin Ramgoolam, stood up to the challenge and brought a set of bold and daring reforms aimed at -

- stimulating economic growth;
- encouraging the performance and competitiveness of our export oriented and domestic industries;
- streamlining public expenditure;
- creating employment - for instance, 40,000 new jobs created during the past five years;
- protecting the interest of the weaker sections of the population and ensuring the emergence of a new breed of small entrepreneurs through economic democratisation, and above all
- empowering the weak and downtrodden to take off and board the train of progress and development.

Government efforts in that direction, Mr Speaker, Sir, have enabled this country to get out of what some people called *état d'urgence économique*. In fact, we will recall that, at the same period, there was high level of unemployment, low investment, poor economic performance of various sectors, closure of factories. *C'était le désespoir qui régnait en maître*. The Labour Party, as I said, took up the challenge, was daring in its approach and led the country back on track and on more stable grounds.

While the economies of stronger countries were dipping low, Mauritius under the able steermanship of our Prime Minister, Dr. Navin Ramgoolam, kept afloat. This Government turned *cet état d'urgence économique* into un *état de bien-être et d'opportunités*. As I said earlier, it required a man of vision imbued with sincerity and commitment to take this country off the brink of an economic disaster. Today, when we look back, we have every reason to be proud of. Parce que, M le président, selon le 2009 Index of Economic Freedom, l'île Maurice se positionne à la 18^{ème} place au niveau mondial et, à la première place en Afrique sub-saharienne.

Également, en l'espace de cinq ans, il y a eu une augmentation de 56% de revenu par tête d'habitant en 2010, la création de 40,000 emplois, et suite à une décision du gouvernement, 10,000 personnes sont devenues propriétaires de leur maison et terrain CHA et 9,000 autres le seront sous peu, un rêve cher réalisé sous l'Alliance sociale. Ceux-ci ne sont que quelques exemples qui méritent d'être soulignés. Mais comme la Chambre le sait, la liste des projets réalisés par le précédent gouvernement est longue. *This is a caring Government indeed, Mr Speaker, Sir,*

Le pays a été témoin de la création d'une nation d'entrepreneurs avec au départ en 2005, 3454 petites et moyennes entreprises et ce chiffre aujourd'hui s'élève à 12,538 dont la plupart sont dirigées par des femmes.

Mr Speaker, Sir, on 05 May 2010, the people of Mauritius voted massively for continuity and l'Alliance de l'Avenir, under the leadership of Dr. Navin Ramgoolam, is back to power and recognises that les cinq prochaines années seront toutes aussi celles des grands défis que nous comptons relever avec la population. Le peuple a donné à l'Alliance de l'Avenir un mandat clair et ferme pour diriger le pays et nous voici face à notre destin pour paraphraser le Dr. Navin Ramgoolam en avant-propos de notre manifeste électoral pour préciser, je cite : 'l'avenir se construit maintenant et nous allons le construire ensemble'.

M le président, Robert Riley, un grand activiste aborigène australien, a dit et je cite : *'You don't stop fighting for justice simply because those around you don't like it; you just keep on fighting'*. C'est ce qui guidera l'Alliance de l'Avenir pendant les prochaines cinq années. *This Government will keep on fighting.*

M le président, en tant que femme, je suis très sensible à l'élimination de toute forme de discrimination à l'égard des femmes, et à tout ce qui touche à l'amélioration de la condition de la femme et pour l'égalité entre hommes et femmes.

M le président, beaucoup d'efforts ont été entrepris dans ce sens et il y a eu certainement des avancées et des changements, mais on bute toujours quelque part car, malheureusement, il y a encore de la résistance dans certains domaines.

On ne cesse de débattre et de se battre. Nous voulons d'une égalité entre les femmes et les hommes dans tous les domaines, que ce soit au niveau politique, économique, professionnel et social.

Nous saluons encore une fois notre Premier ministre pour sa décision de mettre sur pied un ministère de l'égalité du genre. Il s'agit d'une véritable reconnaissance politique de l'importance de l'égalité entre les hommes et les femmes.

It is a fact, Mr Speaker, Sir, that there are some people, families and regions across the island that have missed the train of economic development. Pockets of poverty have existed since long back, but merit goes to the past Government for having taken the bold initiatives to put in place the Empowerment Programme to fight poverty *même si la pauvreté n'est pas une fatalité*. Mahatma Gandhi said that "poverty is the worst form of violence". As I said earlier, the setting up of a new Ministry for Social Integration and Economic Empowerment is a clear and strong signal that poverty alleviation is a national priority for this Government.

Mr Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I would like to quote a statement of the UN Secretary-General on the occasion of the International Day for Eradication of Poverty which should serve as an inspiration for us all. I quote –

“The world must refocus its attention, and its resources, on the places and people that are being left behind. As we do, we must bear in mind that none is more committed to ending poverty than the poor themselves. Often, all they lack is the guidance, the tools, and the opportunities to win this fight. Our task is to address these failings.”

Mr Speaker Sir, this Government recognises that the best social protection is the creation of employment opportunities. This is why various social assistance schemes have been put in place to help the needy population improve their plight. Some of these schemes include -

- the payment of a grant to needy families for casting the roof slab of their houses;
- the grant of Government sponsored loans to needy families to allow them to build their houses;
- the operation of several welfare funds to cater for various groups of persons and the payment of social aid on a means-tested basis to heads of households who cannot earn a living;
- an allowance in the form of an income support for the purchase of rice and flour is also being paid to some 140,000 needy persons;
- for its part, the Trust Fund for the Social Integration of the Vulnerable Groups, with an overall budget of Mauritian rupees Rs100 m. continues its effective support to families who, otherwise, would be left to fend for themselves under harsh conditions.
- last, but not least, Mr Speaker, Sir, let us not forget the subsidies being given on rice, flour and cooking gas and free transport for the elderly whom we have a tendency to overlook.

Over the next five years, Mr Speaker, Sir, Government plans to construct 10,000 houses for 7,000 families in the 229 pockets of absolute poverty of the State. Prevention of the academic failure, the training and work placement for the youth and women above 40 who have lost their jobs, assistance for the setting up of small businesses, rehabilitation of underdeveloped regions are all concrete examples that demonstrate the political will and the sincerity of the Government to help the underprivileged groups of our society and to bring an end *au fléau de la pauvreté une fois pour toutes*.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the setting up of a Ministry for Social Integration and Economic Empowerment, as evidenced at paragraph 68 of the Government Programme, I quote –

“The main focus of this Ministry will be to enhance the quality of life of the vulnerable groups through greater social justice and human development.”

This, Mr Speaker, Sir, constitutes a pledge from this Government that no one will be left out of the mainstreams of socio-economic development. It is also a clear and strong message

that our Prime Minister is sending, that he is taking *les taureaux par les cornes pour que l'éradication de la pauvreté soit une priorité nationale*. This obviously forms part of our broad based inclusive strategy, underpinned by the empowerment of the needy.

Mr Speaker, Sir, education is the key to economic and social progress; it is also a major engine in our effort to fight *le fléau de la pauvreté*. We must never forget that our biggest asset in this country is our human resources since we do not have oil, gas or minerals or other natural resources. Free education introduced in 1976 by the Father of the Nation, late Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam, has been a landmark decision that has contributed towards transforming Mauritius into a knowledge-based economy. In fact, Mr Speaker, Sir, free transport system for schoolchildren introduced by Government in 2005 has given even more impetus to the importance of education as a vehicle for development and for social stability.

Now, Mr Speaker, Sir, Government wants to shift gears to enable Mauritians to attain new heights in the field of learning by making tertiary education a national priority. A new Ministry of Tertiary Education and Scientific Research has been set up.

If you look at the Government Programme at paragraphs 183 and 186, it says -

“Government will invest further in tertiary education through the physical expansion of existing institutions and the setting up of new “*Campus Universitaires*” in different parts of Mauritius. In addition, in order to create a culture of higher learning in the country, the 24/7 concept will be extended to tertiary education”.

Do we realise that today more than 20,000 seats are available in our universities? *Et de plus, ce gouvernement a l'intention de faire de Maurice un centre d'enseignement d'études tertiaires, ce qui est clairement spécifié au paragraphe 186 du discours-programme et ensuite, d'œuvrer et créer les conditions idéales pour que chaque famille mauricienne ait au moins un fils ou une fille détenant un diplôme universitaire. La promotion de l'enseignement et de la recherche scientifique sera une priorité majeure de ce gouvernement. Sous le chapitre de l'éducation, on ne cessera jamais de mettre l'accent sur l'internet comme medium d'enseignement.*

This Government after having introduced computer and internet facilities in all State schools and colleges now plans to provide laptops and free internet facilities to a category of students. Government is also encouraging the setting up of various loan schemes to facilitate students to follow tertiary education.

Mr Speaker, Sir, we are living in a world of uncertainty. Qui aurait cru qu'un volcan en Islande allait réduire le nombre de nos touristes pendant un certain laps de temps? Qui aurait prédit que la faillite de l'économie grecque allait déboucher sur un affaiblissement de la zone euro et allait mettre en péril plusieurs de nos entreprises dans le secteur de la zone franche? Afin de jeter les bases pour que notre économie soit plus souple et plus imperméable, la réforme et la modernisation de nos institutions et de nos lois sont primordiales. Il nous faudra accentuer davantage la diversification de nos marchés touristiques et mettre beaucoup plus d'accent sur l'utilisation des nouvelles technologies comme l'internet pour accroître notre visibilité. Notre appartenance aux blocs régionaux tels que la SADC et le COMESA est un atout considérable et il nous faut continuer de surfer sur ce *partnership* économique et culturel avec nos frères africains. C'est très important que nos petites et moyennes entreprises soient plus présentes sur le continent africain comme le fait la Chine qui est pratiquement omniprésente.

Mr Speaker, Sir, our energy policy will concentrate on rapidly exploring and expanding domestic production and obtaining maximum efficiency for energy consumption. The previous Government has already taken a number of significant steps. Government is actively exploring alternatives to imported energy. This measure is well defined at Paragraph 56 of the Government Programme -

“(...) since Mauritius produces sufficient molasses, I would plead for efficient production of ethanol from molasses to reduce our dependence on imported fuel. Various studies have already been undertaken on the optimum use of bagasse for energy production.”

Special efforts must be made for the exploitation of solar, wind and wave energy. I sincerely hope that a higher stage of energy development will be triggered through the provision for the establishment of an Energy Commission -Paragraph 59 of Government Programme - to harmonise energy policies at the level of all stakeholders in the sector. That will be another concrete evidence of the Government to address the emerging challenges of the democratisation of the energy sector.

Mr Speaker, Sir, our Prime Minister, Dr. Navin Ramgoolam, has mentioned on several occasions that 2010 *sera l'année des grands chantiers*. The enlargement and modernisation of the SSR International Airport shows the commitment of the Government to make of Mauritius a world-class destination. Investments in the Port sector will further position Mauritius as a trade and business hub. Mr Speaker, Sir, massive investment is being made to upgrade our road

networks, but the icing on the cake is no doubt going to be the Light Rail System. I am convinced, Mr Speaker, Sir, that this project is not only going to alleviate the traffic jam problems but significantly improve communication within the country. The Light Rail System will no doubt create new job opportunities for our unemployed. It will also enable Mauritius to become a 24/7 economy which fits well in the duty-free island strategy.

M. le président, depuis son indépendance, l'île Maurice a toujours su mener une politique étrangère très judicieuse qui a porté ses fruits. Toutefois, le monde actuel n'est plus bipolaire et subit de profondes mutations. L'adaptabilité de notre politique étrangère, en conséquence, peut s'avérer cruciale pour notre avenir économique. J'aimerais saisir l'occasion ici pour saluer l'accent qu'a mis notre Premier ministre, le Dr. Navin Ramgoolam, sur la gravité du problème de piraterie dans l'Océan Indien lors du récent Sommet France-Afrique à Nice. C'est un problème très épineux qui mérite toute notre attention, car on peut imaginer la catastrophe liée à une pénurie de carburant si jamais un pétrolier affrété par l'île Maurice est capturé. C'est un exemple qui explique comment notre diplomatie doit, donc, être intelligente et adaptive. Avec le nouveau gouvernement britannique, le dossier des îles Chagos devrait trouver un dénouement positif. Saluons également l'accord signé entre l'île Maurice et la France sur la cogestion de Tromelin, qui devrait avoir une répercussion extrêmement positive au niveau de notre exploitation des ressources marines, en attendant que la question de souveraineté soit réglée. Finalement, je suis convaincue que la *quiet diplomacy* de notre Premier ministre nous mènera à bon port.

Mr Speaker, Sir, our Prime Minister has a wise philosophy, that is, to live and let live. He believes that the sun shines for everybody, and that everybody will have a share of it. Our Prime Minister wants a nation of innovators, a nation with a versatile and competent workforce, in order to promote social mobility. Because he has trust in his people, likewise the people have also shown that they have trust in him. *C'est la raison pour laquelle il a reçu un large plébiscite de la population. Il restera le Premier ministre incontesté pour encore longtemps, très longtemps même.*

Before I end, Mr Speaker, Sir, I wish to again share with the House how proud I am to be a Member of Parliament, to represent not only Constituency No. 16, but also to be able to participate actively in shaping a new destiny for our country.

M. le président, l'île Maurice est devenue un grand chantier, et la circonscription No. 16 connaît aussi de grands travaux. En effet, plusieurs projets ont été engagés dans la circonscription de Vacoas-Floréal afin d'offrir un service public encore plus performant et un cadre de vie toujours plus agréable. Actuellement, à part des travaux de voirie qui comprennent, entre autres, l'assainissement et le revêtement des routes, en partie déjà complétés dans certains endroits, la construction d'un complexe à Glen Park est en cours ; il comprend une école maternelle, un gymnase, un centre polyvalent, et un jardin d'enfants. Autre projet en cours - l'aménagement d'un terrain de football aux normes internationales à Henrietta. Sous peu, l'éclairage des terrains de football de Mangalkhan, ainsi que celui de la Cité Loyseau, sera entrepris ; l'exercice d'appels d'offres sera très prochainement publié dans la presse locale. Je suis convaincue que le ministre des Infrastructures publiques, de la National Development Unit, du Transport intérieur et de la Marine, l'honorable Anil Kumar Bachoo, va faire diligence, comme il en a l'habitude, pour que les infrastructures nécessaires soient au plus vite complétées, afin de permettre aux sportifs de l'endroit d'en tirer profit.

La gestion de la circonscription No. 16 de Vacoas-Floréal est partagée entre les municipalités de Curepipe et celle de Vacoas. Les réclamations des habitants de Vacoas-Floréal sont essentiellement l'asphaltage des routes, l'aménagement des drains, l'éclairage de certaines routes, et des facilités de sports et de loisirs entre autres. Ce sont des réclamations tout à fait légitimes. Je remercie le ministre des collectivités locales et des îles éparses, l'honorable Louis Hervé Aimée, de bien vouloir faciliter la mise en œuvre des travaux attendus par les habitants dans un délai raisonnable.

Ce discours-programme qui est devant nous, M. le président, a nul doute jeté les bases pour une île Maurice unie, équitable et moderne. C'est un programme très ambitieux, avec une vision pour une île Maurice meilleure et prospère. Il nous incombe de le soutenir pleinement.

M. le président, je voudrais soumettre donc à l'approbation de cet auguste Assemblée, la motion qui a été présentée en mon nom.

Mr C. Sayed-Hossen rose and seconded.

(5.40 p.m)

Mr A. Ganoo (First Member for Savanne & Black River) M. le président, nous voilà à l'aube d'un nouveau quinquennat, le vent de l'histoire a soufflé encore une fois. Nous voici donc réunis dans cette auguste Chambre pour débattre le discours-programme du gouvernement. D'emblée et conformément à la riche tradition parlementaire, permettez-moi de vous féliciter pour votre élection en tant que *Speaker* de la Chambre. Votre élection à l'unanimité est tout à votre honneur. Le *Speaker*, M. le président, vous en conviendrez, constitue le pivot de la démocratie parlementaire. Comme quelqu'un l'a si bien dit : «*The Speaker mars or makes parliamentary democracy* ».

Feu Jawaharlal Nehru avait dit ceci -

«*The Speaker represents the House, the dignity of the House, the freedom of the House and because the House represents the Nation in a particular way, the Speaker becomes the symbol of the Nation's will, freedom and the Nation's Liberty* ».

Vous êtes donc, M. le président, le symbole même des aspirations de notre peuple. C'est pourquoi, de ce côté de la Chambre, nous comptons sur vous pour faire promouvoir la démocratie au sein de l'hémicycle et tout en assurant dans le cadre de nos *Standing Orders*, que l'exécutif puisse mettre en pratique ses décisions d'une part, nous comptons sur vous, d'autre part, pour que la voix de l'opposition puisse se faire entendre dans le cadre de notre jeu démocratique.

Je tiens également, M. le président, à féliciter l'orateur précédent pour son *maiden speech*. Je salue également les nouveaux membres, fraîchement élus des deux côtés de la Chambre, qui se sont engagés dans cette nouvelle voie, si noble, *exciting and rewarding*.

M. le président, les civilités, si je puis le dire, accomplies, laissez-moi maintenant venir au discours-programme. Mais avant de procéder à l'analyse du discours, je voudrais dire que les élections générales sont maintenant derrière nous, une page de notre histoire est tournée. Au MMM, nous allons jouer notre rôle d'opposition constructive. Le peuple pourra compter sur nous pour accomplir notre rôle efficace de chien de garde. Nous constituerons une force d'opposition patriotique, constructive et bien évidemment agressive, et nous nous appliquerons à notre tâche parce que nous avons été dûment mandatés par notre électorat de défendre ses intérêts. Donc, nous ne nous engagerons pas dans des campagnes de dénigrement pour ternir la réputation du pays et nous ne pratiquerons pas non plus la politique de terre brûlée, M. le président. Ceci dit, M. le président, il nous incombe de ce côté de la Chambre de souligner à

haute voix le caractère irrégulier des ces élections. De notre point de vue, ces élections n'ont pas été *free and fair*, ...

(Interruptions)

... eu égard au rôle partisan et infecte joué par la MBC/TV. Nous continuerons à dénoncer à gorge déployée le rôle partisan, *bias*, scélérat qu'a joué la télévision nationale. Nous protestons énergiquement contre les autres abus et le non-respect de certaines règles élémentaires d'une campagne électorale.

Donc, M. le président, nous récusons les résultats de ces consultations. Les agissements de la MBC/TV ont eu lieu et les autres abus ont été rendus possibles de par les lacunes de notre cadre légal. Evidemment, l'*Electoral Supervisory Commission* n'y est pour rien. Au contraire, nous tenons à féliciter et à saluer les membres de cette Commission et le Commissaire Electoral pour leur rôle exemplaire dans ces élections générales. Mais comme je vous disais, M. le président, les lacunes se trouvent dans le cadre légal.

Les clauses de la Constitution, relatives aux compétences de la *ESC*, font mention à la section 41 que l'*ESC* a la compétence, et je vais vous le lire :

« *The Electoral Supervisory Commission shall have general responsibility for and shall supervise the conduct of elections of such Members and the Commission shall have such powers and other functions relating to such registration and such elections as may be prescribed.* »

Nothing has ever been prescribed, Mr Speaker, Sir! Nous avons un *IBA Act and a Complaints Committee*. Mais quid du pouvoir de sanction?

Pour nous au MMM, un code de conduite électoral ayant force de loi n'a jamais vu le jour sous l'ancien gouvernement. Il est maintenant évident, pour nous, pourquoi le gouvernement d'alors, malgré tous ses engagements pris et toutes ses assurances données à la Chambre, n'a jamais daigné légiférer pour consolider notre *electoral process*.

Dans l'opposition, nous réalisons maintenant le *hidden agenda* de l'ancien gouvernement, ses sombres desseins, en promettant à maintes reprises dans cette même Chambre, l'adoption imminente mais combien illusoire et chimérique de ce fameux code de conduite pour les élections. Et d'après nous, M. le président, la loi aurait dû être amendée pour

donner à la commission électorale le pouvoir de superviser et de sanctionner. L'*ESC* aurait dû *take over* les pouvoirs du *Board* de la *MBC* sous la *MBC Act* et aussi du *Board* du *IBA* sous l'*IBA Act*, c'est-à-dire, en période électorale, il incomberait à l'*Electoral Supervisory Commission* de *take over* et de superviser tout de ce qu'il s'agit de *air time*, *political broadcast* et aussi des *news information* tous les jours à la *MBC/TV*. M. le président, bien sûr, le *IBA Act* pour les radios privées, le *MBC Act* pour la télévision, la chaîne nationale pour tout le monde. Mais si ce code de conduite avait été promulgué, il aurait constitué un frein non seulement contre les dérapages de la *MBC*, mais aurait aussi dissuadé la distribution éhontée des cadeaux et d'autres *electoral bribes*.

(*Interruptions*)

Mr Speaker : Please, order ! Order!

Mr Ganoo M. le président, les membres du gouvernement savent mieux que moi en terme de largesses et de cadeaux qui ont été faits après le 1^{er} mai, des *laptops*, des portables ...

(*Interruptions*)

Mr Speaker : Order, now !

(*Interruptions*)

Mr Ganoo : Des produits alimentaires, des *balles douriz* avariés ou non, je ne sais pas trop. L'Alliance de l'Avenir s'était transformée en un véritable supermarché avec de nombreuses succursales. Un *one-stop shop* opérant 24/7 et en plus doté d'un ATM spécial.

(*Interruptions*)

Mr Speaker: Order, now! Order, please!

Mr Ganoo: Je parle d'un ATM spécial, M. le président, car les bénéficiaires n'avaient point besoin de cartes ou de Mastercard, la distribution étant instantanée.

M. le président, pour nous, le système dans lequel les élections ont eu lieu n'était certainement pas un *level playing field*.

(*Interruptions*)

Je ne parle pas de la circonscription No. 14 seulement. Au contraire, il était truffé des *unfair advantages* au profit du gouvernement. Mais pire, M. le président, comme vous le savez, nous avons été encore une fois victime de notre système électoral. Avec 43% des suffrages, le MMM aurait pu élire plus que 18 députés. Ces élections ont mis en exergue, une nouvelle fois, les faiblesses de notre système électoral de *First Past the Post*. De la même façon que dans le cas

de l'*electoral code*, encore une fois dans ce cas-là, les assurances répétées du Premier ministre pour la réforme du système électoral n'ont jamais abouti malheureusement.

Nous nous souvenons ici dans cette Chambre, M. le président, avant la dissolution du Parlement, des engagements solennels pris au sein de l'hémicycle par l'honorable Premier ministre. Questions après questions, semaines après semaines, M. le président, ces engagements n'ont jamais eu de suite. Alors nous, au MMM, comment pouvons nous prendre au sérieux l'annonce en faveur d'une réforme de notre système électoral dans ce présent discours? Mais donnons au Premier ministre le bénéfice du doute cette fois-ci ! Mais j'y reviendrai, M. le président.

Sur le fond, ce discours-programme est un amalgame de mesures déjà annoncées, mais jamais mises en pratique, contenant une série de mesures qui ne sont quelquefois que de vœux pieux et aussi contenant des mesures prônant l'élimination des décisions impopulaires et rétrogrades, dénoncées à l'époque par nos amis du MSM, par le peuple, par cette opposition ; les mesures que le gouvernement a lui-même instaurées à l'époque et défendues par ce gouvernement avec toute l'arrogance que l'on connaît. Et finalement, M. le président, ce programme contient quelques mesures empruntées du programme gouvernemental du MMM. Nous y reviendrons dans quelques secondes, M. le président.

Mr Speaker, Sir, this is no bluff! I was talking of the measures already announced in the past; I do not want to make an abuse of the time of the House. But suffice it to name a few: a new Police Act, the local community policing committees, the alternative mode of transport, the exploitation of renewable energy sources, the implementation of the Bagatelle Dam Project, the increase in the level of coverage by the public sewer system to 50% before the year 2010, the Master Plan for the sewerage development, the review of the Environment Act, a new Local Government Act, the reform of the electoral system, the amendment to the IBA Act to establish a Media Commission, *et j'en passe, M. le président!* And these are the measures which were in the last *discours du président* and which have never been implemented.

How many of them, Mr Speaker, Sir, repeated and never seen the light of the day: the Drug Tsar, the setting-up of a Civil Service College, trade union representatives to be appointed to the Service Commission, the comprehensive Master Plan to fight poverty, encouraging companies to engage in the tourism sector and to open their share capital, the setting-up of a forum to review the reform required to ensure the long-term sustainability of our universal

retirement system, the setting-up of an Employment Equity Commission with regard to employment in private and public sectors, the creation of a separate Court of Appeal, the review of the Legal Aid Act, the enactment of the Freedom of Information Act, the setting up of a Parliamentary Committee to build consensus of foreign policy in the National Assembly. This was in the last Presidential Address.

Mr Speaker, Sir, some of them are very good ideas, very good decisions, very good measures, which were promised to the nation, but how many lost years! *Que de temps perdu!* And, in fact, this Address today enables us, in the Opposition, to take stock of the failure of the Government on many fronts and, in the course of my speech, I will endeavour to point this: *ce bilan négatif du gouvernement* on many important issues to which I will refer later.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I was just talking about the measures which were announced in this Address, which will get rid of unpopular decisions introduced by the then Government. These measures which today amount to a volte-face and confirm that the MMM Opposition in those days was totally right all along the line.

For years, we had campaigned against the NRPT, Mr Speaker, Sir. My friend, the then hon. Guinness, had become an expert in the matter and this side of the Opposition then, Mr Speaker, Sir. You remember the imposition of interest on savings, the elimination of the tripartite wage setting mechanism, the National Pay Council. I was one of the campaigners on this last issue. We were turned into ridicule, we were scoffed at. *On était devenu des bouffons*; we were taken to task for our stand on these issues, for our opposition to these infamous measures, Mr Speaker, Sir.

I remember, *en juin 2006*, when the Budget Speech made mention of the tripartite mechanism for the annual wage compensation and for the setting up of the National Pay Council, we gave our unconditional support to the various trade unions who had refused to nominate their representatives on this Council. I remember having said, Mr Speaker, Sir, that the National Pay Council - and we can check the Hansard - was the brainchild of the MEF, Mr Speaker, Sir. *Que d'insultes, d'invectives à l'époque, M. le président!* Today, this backpedaling of Government is a good thing, but it confirms how right we were in our stand. It also teaches, I think, Government a lesson, Mr Speaker, Sir; a lesson of humility.

Let Government understand this, Mr Speaker, Sir. When we, in the Opposition, do not agree with certain measures, they must sometimes have the humility to listen, Mr Speaker, Sir.

These three measures have been with us since 2006. When the MMM in the electoral manifesto had made mention of these three measures and our decision to repeal them that Government did the same during the electoral campaign. How many lost years again, Mr Speaker, Sir? Since we are speaking of volte-face, let us take the case of the métro léger. Again, I will come to this issue. I remember the hon. Leader of Opposition on 18 December last put a question to hon. Minister Bachoo about the LRT and the BRT. I don't want to trouble the House about what was said. Nine reasons were given why the balance tipped in favour of the BRT system. The following reasons were given; I don't want to go into them and they are available for everybody, Mr Speaker, Sir. I remember the hon. Leader of the Opposition asked very humbly the hon. Minister: was there any report from the World Bank before this decision was taken? We remember all this, Mr Speaker, Sir, and Government then held to its decision. Hon. Bachoo was mentioning at that time: "Mr Speaker, Sir, as I just mentioned, the BRT is ten times more economical because we have got experience in other countries of the world where the LRT has been introduced." Again, another volte-face! But, so be it, it is for the good of the country and we are happy with the new decision taken by the Government. Unfortunately, Mr Speaker, Sir, the address by the President has been read to the nation at a time when one of the pillars of our democracy- shall I say- was at stake and was being threatened. I will now come to this arbitrary decision taken not to invite the press from a particular press group at official functions and press conferences.

M. le président, le discours du Président a parlé of democratic ideals and foundation and so on. This is why I just want to make one comment on this incident. We are all happy that this conflict has come to an end and we are also happy to hear this morning that the hon. Prime Minister had nothing to do with this decision and it was the hon. Minister of Finance who had taken the decision to refuse access to the journalists and the photographers of this press group. Listening to the hon. Prime Minister this morning, it is clear that it was not a collective decision. *On peut peut-être pousser un ouf de soulagement, M. le président.* But why was this done? How did we reach there, Mr Speaker, Sir? *La vengeance, c'est un plat qui se mange froid. Peut-être que l'honorable ministre des finances le mange frigorifié.* The role of the press is to act as a watchdog - because I will come to a decision which has been announced in this Presidential Address, this is why I am saying that - and to see to it that Government authorities act in as much as transparency as possible and subject themselves to the principle of accountability.

The right to seek information and the right to inform the public at large constitutes the essence of journalism. This is why politicians should bear in mind that denying a journalist his right to inform the public of official events is tantamount to censorship and means a violation of one of the fundamental rights enshrined in the Constitution. A Government practising the boycott of a section of the press is bound to be sanctioned, sooner or later, by public opinion, Mr Speaker, Sir. But now, Government has announced that it will introduce legislation for media law reform. This is suspicious to our mind especially, as we know, in the course of its last mandate, this Government had, on a few occasions, intimidated press people. You remember, some journalists were arrested for their *délit d'opinion*. We, on this side of the House, will ask the hon. Prime Minister to be very wary of any attempt of introducing legislation to stifle the press. We have, in our Statute books, different pieces of legislation and, according to us, there is no need, in fact, to come and to introduce any legislation unless there is a hidden motive to *museler* or to intimidate the press on its day-to-day work, Mr Speaker, Sir. This is why we want to underline the fact today that, in paragraph 5 of the Presidential Address - the hon. Prime Minister knows what I am talking about - mention is made about the constitutional regime, the reform to the Constitution, to strengthen our democracy and further entrench the fundamental rights and freedom of all Mauritians. The address refers to the process of constitutional review, the appointment of a team of Constitutional experts who would consider constitutional reforms and the reforms, including the reform of our electoral system.

But the nation needs to have been informed of the reasons for the Constitutional reforms referred to. The terms of reference of those reforms should have been spelled out, Mr Speaker, Sir. What does Government have in mind? On which aspect of our Constitution the reforms are going to take place? Which particular sections of the Constitution Government envisaged to bring amendments to? Mr Speaker, Sir, it would be interesting to hear the hon. Prime Minister or the Attorney General in their speeches. Are we being asked to give a blank cheque to a team of Constitutional experts and task them to propose reforms without identifying which areas need to be looked into? Mr Speaker, Sir, it is true that in some other Commonwealth countries, new Constitutions have been adopted by their National Assemblies years after their independence. Unlike India, Mr Speaker, Sir, in our country also, it is true that no constituent Assembly was set up to draft our Constitution. We had been handed over this Constitution by our colonial masters.

Nevertheless, we are entitled to know the reason why the Prime Minister is envisaging reforms, or Mr Speaker, Sir, *cyniquement* will that announcement remain dead letter as has been the case regarding the announcement which was made in the last Presidential Address at paragraphs 257 to 259. Mr Speaker, Sir, I was reading the last Presidential Address and I was very amused when His Excellency the President in those days read –

"My Government is committed to reform the electoral system to further consolidate democracy and ensure a more equitable parliamentary representation. My Government is also committed to the final decision on electoral reform being made by the people of Mauritius. To this end the voters will be invited to approve reform of the electoral system by way of referendum.

Reform of the electoral system will be implemented along with changes in the supervision of the electoral process to ensure that abuses of State machinery and electoral bribes as witnessed during the last campaign are monitored and checked by the Electoral Supervisory Commission.

Government will appoint a constitutional commission to review the mode of election of the President of the Republic and the powers, duties and functions of the presidency and make recommendations to Government."

Even that was advocated, Mr Speaker, Sir, that is, a commission to review the mode of election of the President of the Republic in those days. But they remained dead letter, as I just said, Mr Speaker, Sir.

We are entitled to know about these reforms to be brought to our Constitution. We have been told that the reforms are related to the Prime Minister's alleged intention, to make of Mauritius a semi-presidential regime in which the President will be elected *au suffrage universel* perhaps and he will be at the head of the country. Perhaps, the Prime Minister has got this intention Mr Speaker, Sir. But, there is no wrong in announcing it. This could have triggered a debate in the whole country. The Prime Minister knows better why he wants to make of Mauritius a semi-presidential regime. We have been told that this will enable him perhaps to learn and to win better recognition when he is abroad.

I am sure hon. Members on this House have also pondered upon this proposal, about this possibility. Of course, I am sure that some Members on the other side of the House have also

started to think about, once the hon. Prime Minister becomes President, who will become the Prime Minister among them.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker, Sir, anyway, we know that there are a few *aspirants* on the other side of the House. But to come back to the issue of constitutional reforms, I would say to the hon. Prime Minister and to our colleagues on the other side, democracy can always be improve; it is perfecting and perfectible. Certain issues such as electoral reform, the law relating to the funding of electoral parties, the adoption of an electoral code of conduct, a Freedom of Information Act, the live coverage of the debate in the House, the setting up of Parliamentary Committees to transact parliamentary business should have been high on the agenda of this Government and they can rely on the Opposition, Mr Speaker, Sir, if such positive amendments will be brought to our laws and to our Constitution.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I would like now to come to another chapter concerning the Presidential Address. A few words, if you will allow me, very briefly on the economic situation. I was just saying a few minutes ago the backdrop to this Presidential Address was unfortunately the blow given to democracy and *les atteintes aux droits constitutionnels* and the fundamental rights of the press people. But the backdrop to this address also, Mr Speaker, Sir, *est la grave situation économique que nous connaissons tous*. In this House, during the last debate, I remember we drew the attention of Government to the very disturbing situation and we described the situation facing Mauritius as being calamitous, Mr Speaker, Sir. Most worrying though was our assessment that Mauritius was unprepared to face that situation. Many things have happened since then on the political field, on the economic realm, Mr Speaker, Sir.

The Minister of Finance has been thanked - the previous Minister of Finance is no more here - by the Prime Minister. The Prime Minister has endorsed the responsibility of the economic decisions implemented *entre* 2005 and 2010. The Government Programme for 2010 *est devant nous, M. le president*, and we are aware that the new the CSO figures of March 2010 are pointing out to enhance growth targets of 4.6% for the current year from a low upwardly revised 3.1% last year, although these forecasts are made on the assumption that there will be some recovery in the economies of our main markets. But we know, Mr Speaker, Sir, the current situation of the Euro zone and the risk of a double dip now that the financial crisis is hitting the real economies. We must be worried, Mr Speaker, Sir. True it is that we know that

in the Mauritian economy, massive funds will be injected in infrastructure and this will, of course, boost growth upwards, but we know also that this will inflate our debts and jeopardise our future. We therefore reiterate our concerns about growth and alongside our fears with regard to rising unemployment, debts and current account deficits which, with stagnating FDI, will command more borrowing to sustain our balance of payments.

Mr Speaker, Sir, what I find particular in this Presidential Address is the following. Between 2005 and 2010, the Prime Minister - for he is, as we know responsible, as he himself says, for the policy approach for this period - and his Government had a clear-cut economic strategy and that strategy was ultra liberalism, business facilitation, elimination of social expenses like subsidies and social security aids to the disfavoured, borrowing to finance infrastructure, opacity on the pricing of fuel, new taxes NRPT and savings, aggressive MRA probing and enhanced VAT revenues out of increasing import prices. The result of all these policies is known but, at least, there was a direction. I am afraid in this present Presidential Address we don't see, we can't read, we can't feel any direction which has been given. It seems to us that this Address, Mr Speaker, Sir, as far as the economy is concerned, is just a melting pot, *un pot pourri*, of what the two or the three components of this Government have retained as being the best of their policy orientations. Mr Speaker, Sir, let me explain myself.

Firstly, before the elections, the seriousness of the crisis had led to the implementation of a stimulus package. The crisis is not over yet, and yet we read nothing about the stimulus package in this Presidential Address. Nothing is said. Where is the package? Why is it that nothing has been mentioned? Is it because it has been wrongly utilised? It has helped and been siphoned off in the pockets of some *petits copains*? Why? Is it because it has been wrongly utilised? Has it been totally consumed or is it the idea of another Minister of Finance that needs to be rejected, Mr Speaker, Sir?

Secondly, we read about new pillars of the economy in this Presidential Address, but none is mentioned. We still talk about the seafood hub, the ICT, property development and all these have been proposed and introduced by the MMM/MSM Government in those days.

Thirdly, Mr Speaker, Sir, I will again come to that question of the LRT. Suddenly, after the birth of the Road Development Company and the committing of Rs25 billion to this agency for a number of infrastructure projects, the *métro léger* is being dragged back in the forefront.

This also is another proposal from the MMM, but certainly not to be implemented in conjunction with the Road Development Company.

Fourthly, the duty-free island is back on the table. Fair enough! If trade is to be a new strong pillar, that's fine, but we are particularly interested to see how Government will resolve the conflict in proposals of enhancing business facilitation, encouraging foreign investment and containing budget deficits, Government debt, sustaining Government revenues and managing our current account deficit.

Mr Speaker, Sir, fifthly, the SMEs. They will remain a key driver for growth, employment and empowerment, and a necessity for economic democratisation. In fact, the sound health of the economy relies on our capacity to revamp the SME sector, Mr Speaker, Sir. The democratisation process over the past five years has visibly failed and I cannot see what new is being proposed in this Presidential Address, save for the EREIT which is a project launched in 2005 by the hon. Minister of Finance, but which has been *mis au placard* for five years and now being forcefully revived to service democratisation which was *en panne*, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Finally, I read a number of policies proposed by the MMM which have been taken out of an overall policy formulation. I was just referring to the elimination of the NRPT and the tax on savings, but there are other measures, Mr Speaker, Sir. There is the creation of a strategic stock of fuel, the creation of a Disaster Monitoring Centre, the enhanced port, airport, Freeport facilities, the tourism on the Hotel Investment Trust, revisiting the free transport system and introducing professional football. All these have been the ideas of the MMM during the electoral campaign and they are in our manifesto. These are definitely worthy projects, but they were proposed within a cohesive national plan. I hope the hon. Prime Minister or the hon. Minister of Finance will enlighten us on all these points that I have raised, Mr Speaker, Sir.

I will now come on a completely different chapter. I will comment briefly on the question of law and order. Mr Speaker, Sir, again, when we go through the *discours du président* - you will bear with me, Mr Speaker, Sir - what do we see? Paragraph 13 *et sequential*, law and order remains a top priority for Government. Paragraph 20 talks about recruitment, Mr Speaker, Sir –

“20. Government will recruit at least 5,000 Police constables as part of the programme to improve security and reinforce law and order.”

Mr Speaker, I say that again, the humility that this Government should have during this mandate. I have with me a PNQ which was raised by the hon. Leader of the Opposition again concerning the question of law and order. I remember, Mr Speaker, Sir, that we put it to the Prime Minister that one of the problems of the Police Force today is that *il manque des effectifs*. No sufficient recruitment has been made. I remember that I asked the hon. Prime Minister: ‘Can I ask him whether he is aware of the fact that one of the fundamental problems of law and order is that there is a shortage of Police Officers in our Police Stations, the CID department? Police Officers tend to retire earlier today and the recruitment exercise has not been carried out as regularly as it should have been so that today the Police Force is suffering from a lack of personnel, human resources. This is one of the reasons for our problem of law and order.’ The Prime Minister said: ‘No, I do not tend to agree’. He explained why he did not tend to agree. Mr Speaker, Sir, this question was asked on 03 March 2010. I have with me another document. *Le commissaire de police*, M. Rampersad, pour son message de fin d’année, avait réuni la presse et tous ses hauts gradés - the high ranking officials of the Police Force. He made a speech and talked about his *bilan*. This is what was said, Mr Speaker, Sir –

“ *D’emblée, le CP a tenu à brosser un tableau précis, d’où il ressort que la police a atteint les objectifs fixés pour cette année. Tout d’abord, il a mis en exergue le manque de personnel et les carences disciplinaires accumulées durant les années. Il a souligné que la police fait face à un manque de plus de 2,200 hommes, et que ces facteurs ont influé négativement sur le travail d’équipe.* »

In all this, two factors were crucial: manpower and discipline. This is what the CP said: “Of an authorised strength of 12,407 as at November last, we were short of some 2,238 men. Amongst the other frontline services, Police Stations are the main casualties.” This is again, Mr Speaker, Sir, what the Commissioner of Police said, *nous donnant raison en ce qu’il s’agit du problème de law and order*. The past Government, Mr Speaker, Sir, had miserably failed in its duty to recruit at the right time and the casualties were the Police Stations. They were those who had suffered most.

At paragraph 21, mention is made of a new Police Act. Mr Speaker, Sir, I hope it comes once for all. But what worries us again, Mr Speaker, Sir, is paragraph 22 -

“22. Government will adopt, in accordance with human rights and civil liberties standards, an Interception of Communications Act (...).”

What is this Interception of Communications Act, Mr Speaker, Sir? I hope the Prime Minister will be able to enlighten us on this proposed adoption by the House. Does that mean *que les téléphones de nos citoyens seront mis à l'écoute officiellement cette fois-ci, M. le président ? On se pose la question. Officiellement j'ai bien dit, et non pas officieusement !*

Mr Speaker, Sir, the Bail Act will be amended again. Those who are practising at the Bar know how urgent it is today for the Government to come with a new Bail Act. The hon. Attorney General is not present. I am sure the hon. Attorney General knows that the Law Reform Commission had apparently produced a report which is on its website. In spite of the fact that hon. Valayden, the former Attorney General, *avait dit qu'il n'avait pas laissé des dossiers en suspens* when he left office, yet we can never understand why the new Bail Act was never adopted, has not come before this House, and I hope that our new Attorney General will present this piece of legislation before this House as soon as possible.

Concerning intimidation of witnesses, Mr Speaker, Sir -

“Government will introduce special measures for the protection of witnesses (...) so as to prevent intimidation of witnesses in drug-related cases and other serious cases.”

Mr Speaker, Sir, you will remember, again in this very House, after *Madame Cindy Legallant avait refusé de déposer en cour intermédiaire*, there was no case against the accused and the question came here. Again, in a PNQ, the hon. Leader of the Opposition asked about the question of drug trafficking, drug dealing, protection of the mafia and so on. I, particularly, once again, raised this question. I asked the hon. Prime Minister a supplementary question, when the hon. Leader of the Opposition had resumed his seat, and I told him that *Madame Cindy Legallant va faire école* and you will see in the days to come how many witnesses will adopt the same attitude as her and will declare that they don't want to say anything. There will be no testimony, no evidence adduced against the accused and all these drug-related cases will be dismissed.

'*Parol ki kurt*', as we say in our good Creole, Mr Speaker, Sir. Since that day till to date - the Attorney General who was a practising lawyer will confirm that - I have seen in court, Mr Speaker, Sir, many cases which are being dismissed because now the witnesses – not only in drug cases, but in larceny and other cases – come and say "*missié magistrat, mo pa pu dir ou narien, mo pa pu kose narien, mo pa koné*". Mr Speaker, Sir, amendments had to be brought to cater for this new situation, and I know because the hon. Prime Minister tried to expedite matters. We had a few sittings and, according to me, this amendment should have come with an emergency certificate. But time has gone by. *En attendant, il y a eu les elections*, and now this is in the *discours-programme* and I hope this Bill will be one of the first to come before this House to remedy that situation when witnesses come and refuse to depone, especially when there are drug-related cases. That will enable mafia and *barons de la drogue* to get away scot-free because the witnesses now have devised a ploy to ensure that cases are dismissed against these '*barons*'.

Mr Speaker, Sir, there is a last paragraph on this question of law and order –

"Government will amend the existing legislation with a view to providing stiffer penalties for those found guilty of murder or manslaughter, gang rape as well as for drug trafficking and drug-dealing offences."

We would have thought that death penalty would have been there. There will be stiffer penalties for drug-dealing offences because the hon. Prime Minister said it in the electoral campaign. But it was just a stratagem to win votes, I suppose, Mr Speaker, Sir. This is why no mention of it is made. But when I see in this programme the question about gang rape, sexual offences and protection of victims, Mr Speaker, Sir, I want to cry. Do you know why? Do you remember there was a Sexual Offences Act? A few of us on this side and other side of the House were Members of a Select Committee. This Sexual Offences Act, after a motion had been presented by the hon. Prime Minister, was referred to a Select Committee, you will remember, Mr Speaker, Sir. You, in fact, nominated the Members who were to sit on this Select Committee. We all have a copy of this Act and it was a good piece of legislation. But we remember why it was sent to this Select Committee because it contained one clause concerning the doing away of the offence of sodomy. When that piece of legislation came before the House, there was havoc, there was a *levée de boucliers* from some quarters, especially the religious people, Mr Speaker, Sir, and then, this Bill was sent to the Select Committee. But, failing this clause about sodomy, Mr Speaker, Sir, it was a good piece of legislation. In this Bill, Mr Speaker, Sir, even in the

objectives, no mention was made of the Bill proposal to do away with the offence of sodomy. It was being hidden and I suppose Members of Cabinet themselves and those who were laymen did not realise what was going to be the consequences of this Act. But, of course, when it came public, a *levée de boucliers* was made, there was an outcry and then the solution was to send it to the Select Committee. I don't have the right to reveal what happened in the Select Committee, but suffice it to say, Mr Speaker, Sir, two or three years were lost. I say it again, Mr Speaker, Sir, it was somewhere, somehow, by somebody's intention to introduce the doing away of sodomy without even making it known to Members of Government or to Members on the other side of the House. *Dans ce projet de loi, c'est le cas de le dire, que la question de sodomie, M. le président, avait fait son entrée par la porte de derrière.* It was insidiously introduced, Mr Speaker, Sir. Gang rape was addressed in this Bill - my friends on the other side of the House will agree with me - to protect young girls. We know today what is happening in the country, all these young victims and all these sexual *prédateurs*. Many Members of this House, even hon. Bodha and the hon. Attorney General, came to depone before the Select Committee, because we were all concerned with this piece of legislation, and we are all concerned that there should be a new Sexual Offences Act to protect victims, especially young female victims, Mr Speaker, Sir. It is again a matter of regret what took place. I hope this new Bill comes in front of the House again, stripped of any controversial matter, and in the House we unanimously, in the interest of victims of this country, adopt a new Sexual Offences Act, create new offences and protect victims of sexual offences, Mr Speaker, Sir.

M. le président, je ne pourrai m'asseoir if I do not say a few words on the fight against poverty, and I promise to be very short on this issue. But before I come to poverty, Mr Speaker, Sir, I would like to say a few words on the social situation in this country. I have talked about drugs, sexual offences; we have seen the Police and so on, but let me just say two sentences about the question of gambling.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the Government is the sole culprit in this situation. In fact, gambling is the only sector which has been successfully democratised in this country to such an extent that the number of gamblers and pathological gamblers is on steep rise. Even Rodrigues has not been spared as we know.

In the past, the Prime Minister had stated that certain gaming houses and casino licences would not be renewed. We are still waiting for the recommendations of the High-Powered

Committee to address the situation in a holistic manner. We have heard about the relocation in the *discours*. But will the relocation of operators address the issue of gambling, Mr Speaker, Sir? It will partly. But is it not time to impose strict regulations on the advertising campaign - intense advertising campaign - or regulate the advertising industry, as voracious as they are, Mr Speaker, Sir? Again, this is another matter on which we have to give our attention and we, on this side of the House, will continue to campaign on this issue.

As regards the fight against poverty, for years, *le gouvernement a fait son cheval de bataille* the fight to reduce poverty - poverty alleviation. Government has come with all types of new strategies and formulae. In this Address, Mr Speaker, Sir, reference is also made to the methods to be applied, the State agencies that will come in the forefront and which will provide support to these vulnerable groups. But what is the end result, Mr Speaker, Sir, of all these strategies deployed, of all these speeches made in the 3 to 4 Budgets that we have had during those 3 or 4 past years? There has been a failure to reduce poverty and all its consequences. In fact, Mr Speaker, Sir, what better proof of my argument than the last report of the Central Statistics Office! I am sure that everybody in this House has read what the report of the CSO mentioned regarding the reduction of poverty, Mr Speaker, Sir. Very briefly, this is how it was diffused, Mr Speaker, Sir.

« Pauvreté: un mal tenace qui ronge et gagne du terrain !

Une dernière étude comparative du Bureau Central des Statistiques en date de décembre 2009 dresse un constat peu confortable des résultats de la lutte contre la pauvreté au cours de cette première décennie du XXI^e siècle. »

This report highlights, Mr Speaker, Sir, how poverty has been on the increase.

« Ce constat sur la pauvreté a été établi sur la base des données recueillies dans le cadre du dernier Household Budget Survey en date, exercice qui se renouvelle chaque cinq ans et complété par des données sur le Household Income and Expenditure. »

“Relative poverty as measured by proportion of household below the half median monthly household income per adult increased slightly from 7.7% in 2001-2002 to 7.9% in 2006-2007; the proportion of poor persons in relative poverty increased from 7.8% to

8.5% during the same period, *notent les spécialistes du BCS dans leur rapport. D'aucuns affirment qu'en cette fin 2009, le problème de la pauvreté serait devenu encore plus grave avec les séquelles de la crise économique internationale et la montée des prix des denrées alimentaires de base. »*

Mr Speaker, Sir, but this was not the end of the matter. After the Central Statistics Office, came another report, Mr Speaker, Sir - and I am sure that we have all heard about it - the National Economic and Social Council. The title was: "Integration into the Global Economy - Socio economic challenges and policy implications for Mauritius - May 2010". *C'était le mois dernier. Again, Mr Speaker, Sir, c'est accablant pour venir confirmer tout ce qui a été dit par le CSO, que la pauvreté a effectivement augmenté.*

Au paragraphe 8, il est dit –

"Globalisation has brought about a wider dispersion of the distribution of income while the gap between the rich and the poor is constantly widening. This gap between the 'haves' and the 'haves not' is becoming a cause for concern. The more so as the market forces seem incapable of alleviating the problems of the poor. What is more disturbing is that the income of the richest segment of Mauritian household is progressing at a higher rate than that of the poorest segment."

I could have gone on, Mr Speaker, Sir, but let me stop here. I will, Mr Speaker, Sir, nevertheless read what is said in paragraph 70 of the Presidential Address. It says –

"The National Empowerment Programme will continue to provide dedicated support (...). Pending a reassessment of the level of poverty (...)".

What reassessment of the level of poverty again, Mr Speaker, Sir? This is another way of wasting time and of delaying intervention when we know that so many studies have already been conducted, so many reports are lying in the drawers of different Ministries, especially at the Ministry of Finance. Although I wish well to the *assises de l'intégration sociale*, to my mind, Mr Speaker, Sir, Government has the sufficient resources, logistics and manpower to accelerate and intensify the fight against poverty and the campaign for poverty alleviation. The process today has been very, very slow. Implementation must be more effective, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Depuis quatre ans, I repeat, on entend parler de absolute poverty, eradication of absolute poverty programme, 227 pockets of poverty, 7,000 familles and so on and so forth, Mr Speaker, Sir. But, what is more important is that as far as the results are concerned, we are not satisfied, in fact, that any significant progress has been made on this score.

M. le président, j'avais une page du manifeste électoral du Parti travailliste pour les dernières élections. I will read what is in there, Mr Speaker, Sir, just to sensitise everybody about the question of poverty reduction and the results achieved so far in spite of, as I just said now, what has been said in this House by the Ministers of past Governments. C'est le chapitre qui accentue davantage l'empowerment des plus pauvres. Comme je viens de vous le dire, M. le président, c'est à la page 24 du manifeste électoral du parti de l'Alliance de l'Avenir –

«Sur les 7,000 familles recensées vivant dans la pauvreté absolue, nous avons remis sur le chemin de l'école 792 enfants en leur payant le matériel scolaire, le déjeuner et le transport, soit environ R1200 par mois. Dans ces familles, il n'y a plus un seul enfant qui ne fréquente pas l'école aujourd'hui. Nous avons offert une maison en béton à 217 familles et une maison en bois et tôle à 1500 familles ».

Donc, après toutes ces années de réduction of poverty – quatre ou cinq ans - seulement 792 enfants et 217 familles ont pu bénéficier d'une maison. J'avais dit cela au ministre Sithanen quand il était là, in my last speech. I told him the same thing that I am saying, Mr Speaker, Sir, but this is proof today that we were right. The implementation process is too slow. Quand est-ce qu'on va finir, M. le président ? Il y a 7,000 familles, d'après les chiffres, 227 poches de pauvreté. A cette allure, M. le président, on est parti pour la gloire.

I will now say a few words on the issues of renewable energy and our waste water sectors, Mr Speaker, Sir. Again this is another chapter on which Government has, unfortunately, miserably failed: renewable energy, Mr Speaker, Sir. I will say a few words on water resources. Again, M. le président, que du temps perdu sur cette question de renewable energy and it is such an important matter, un dossier important, parce que nous savons tous ce qui se passe dans le monde. I will not repeat what has been said in this very House, Mr Speaker, Sir. All Governments in the world today are concentrating all their efforts to diversify from fossil fuels to renewable energy.

Qu'est-ce qu'on voit encore une fois dans le discours du Président? Au paragraphe 56, j'avais entendu notre jeune collègue, l'honorable Mademoiselle Anquetil, parler sur la question de l'énergie, mais, M. le président, elle doit savoir qu'au paragraphe 56 -

“Government will continue to encourage the use of renewable energy order to reduce our dependence on fossil fuels and decrease greenhouse gas emissions, through the setting up of wind farms, hydropower stations, the use of landfill gas for energy production and the optimum utilisation of solar energy.”

Ce paragraphe-là, vous allez le voir dans tous les budgets de ce gouvernement depuis 2006, M. le président, répété mot à mot.

Now, *plus intéressant*, at the next paragraph 57, what do we see? I quote -

“Master Plan for renewable energy will be prepared for the development of renewable energy project up to year 2025”.

C'est maintenant, M. le président, que le gouvernement décide de proposer un Master Plan. Que de temps perdu! Seulement je ne vais pas encore une fois, M. le président, blow my own trumpet. Lors des débats du discours du budget en 2008, M. le président - I do not like doing it - this is what I said:

“Mr Speaker, Sir, to end on this chapter, I am on the opinion that Government should have come up with a Master Plan for renewable energy. The surge of interest in renewable energy and sustainability must be coupled with positive response of the Mauritian Research Council, the MSIRI, the University of Mauritius, the University of Technology and other related research and professional associations to not only improve their own environmental performance, but also to offer courses, training, research grants that would match the expected growing market. I think Government should have set up a Task Force or a High-Powered Committee composed of best brains, of our experts from MSIRI, the University and so on, for a roadmap and then to come up with his Master Plan on Renewable Energy”.

Encore une fois, M. le président, au paragraphe 59, Government will establish “an independent utility regulatory body.” Vous connaissez l'histoire sur l'utility regulatory body, M. le président. Depuis 2004, le MMM/MSM Government avait adopté the law which was passed and voted by the MMM/MSM Government and hon. Boolell, I remember, was the only Member

from the Opposition benches to talk on this Bill and he was agreeable, there was unanimity, that Utility Regulatory Authority should be set up.

M. le président, nous avons perdu les élections, mais 2006, 2007, 2008, le même gouvernement brought back this Bill, corrected it, brought two minor amendments. In 2008, the Bill was brought again before this House, two minor amendments were proposed and we voted unanimously again, Mr Speaker, Sir, but since then the law has never been proclaimed. Et aujourd'hui on vient parler encore that we will establish an independent utility regulatory body to regulate the energy sector. M. le président, comme je vous dis, cela a été fait depuis 2004, amendé depuis 2008 sur proposition du gouvernement. Energy Efficiency Bill encore! How many times, M. le président, have we heard about this? What I want to say in a nutshell, M. le président, is that there is no real will. I do not know why. I do not see any real will, any empressement on the part of the Government to really come to grasp with this dossier of renewable energy.

Mr Speaker, Sir, mention again is made of incentives to small producers and households to generate electricity; *cela aussi a été débattu*. You remember that in the Budget 2007 or 2008, that was called the SIPP (Small Independent Power Producers). There was mention about making a grid code because Small Independent Power Producers have to sell their electricity to CEB, there must be a *protocole d'accord*. I am sure the hon. Minister of Energy will confirm that. All these, Mr Speaker, Sir, have been debated, but nothing in concrete has been implemented. So, again, I hope the Government will agree with me that on this issue also there is a total failure. We are late, lost years, Mr Speaker, Sir.

I see again on water resources, the idea of developing a Master Plan. I do not understand again, Mr Speaker, Sir, a Master Plan for renewable energy, Master Plan for water resources, Master Plan for sewerage infrastructure - you will see in a few minutes - Master Plan everywhere.

Concerning the question of water resources, do you know why I can't understand the idea of developing a Master Plan? There is already a Master Plan for the water sector ending up to the year 2025. This was made in 2005 *sous l'ancien régime* MMM/MSM - 2005 to 2025, there is a Master Plan, Mr Speaker, Sir. An update is certainly welcome but, Mr Speaker, Sir, instead of flowing taxpayers money to private consultants again for another Master Plan, the Authority should have invested in the more acute problem of unaccounted water. The hon. Minister of

Energy knows how seriously is this problem of non revenue water, Mr Speaker, Sir - 48% à 50% - and no mention is made about the private operator which was mentioned in the last Budget, Mr Speaker, Sir. Just mention made, as I have just said, of this Master Plan for water resources. I can't understand that.

In this context, Mr Speaker, Sir, I will like to propose that as an immediate measure to alleviate water problem in the western region, I will humbly appeal to the hon. Minister, his Ministry and the CWA to consider seriously the possibilities of converting la Ferme reservoir into a drinking water reservoir. This would require investment in a filter bed, but the project would certainly resolve the long standing issue of drinking water that the inhabitants of the West have been facing for such a long time.

According to me, from the information I have gathered, Mr Speaker, Sir, there is sufficient water from the St Martin Treatment Plant and in the region for agriculture. I would talk to the hon. Minister and I think he should resolve that and these were since our days. Water is being thrown in the sea *par 40 000 m³*. The hon. Minister should look into that because there is *un conflit* between the CWA and the Irrigation Authority which does not want to buy the water because they know they won't be able to sell it to Medine; they would sell it at a loss, so this water is being thrown in the ocean. So, what I am saying is: let us think about making of La Ferme Reservoir which has a reasonable capacity, Mr Speaker, Sir, into a reservoir of drinking water. Of course, we have to filter it; there must be the necessary filter bed. We will have to invest in it, because *il y a beaucoup de problèmes à Rivière Noire, à Tamarin, sur la côte ouest et avec les nouveaux hôtels, les nouveaux RES*, developments and so on, Mr Speaker, Sir, I am sure that this will help everybody.

Finally, Mr Speaker, Sir, just one little word on the environment. Again at paragraph 178, with regard to the environment issue, Mr Speaker, Sir, I conclude by saying that there is nothing new, I am afraid. It is unfortunate that we have to go back to writing yet another White Paper - not a Master Plan this time. But, Mr Speaker, Sir, the many existing documents all list the strategies that carry sustainable elements. All these have been developed by external consultants who were well versed in the sustainable development precept. This was started under the MMM/MSM Government some five years ago. Much of the work has been done, Mr Speaker, Sir, but it has not been implemented for lack of local appropriation capacities. It must be recognised as work done with public money and we cannot waste all these reports which are

to be found in the Ministry of Environment. Mr Speaker, Sir, instead of tweaking the existing documents in the face of actual challenges, do we really have the time now to go and write other papers on something that is today's buzzword, that is, Maurice Ile Durable? Indeed, it is unfortunate that the Government has now only recognised in this Address, the importance of Environmentally Sensitive Areas and has not done anything in the past five years regarding legislation, Mr Speaker, Sir. I was again amused when I read this -

“Through the *Maurice Ile Durable* vision it will ensure the integration of environmental consideration into policies as a means of achieving balance development. A White Paper did define a long time *Maurice Ile Durable* will be elaborated. Environmentally Sensitive Areas such as our rivers, wetlands, beaches, lagoons and coral reefs are natural assets and so on.”

But I think no mention is made of islets - *les ilots* - Mr Speaker, Sir. What about the islets, Mr Speaker, Sir?

At the moment we should all be aware of the negative effects of climate change and we cannot afford wasting time behind PCs, workshops and the like when the climate change Damocles' sword is hanging on our heads. I will leave this question to Government and, as I said, Mr Speaker, Sir, unfortunately on the environmental chapter also there is nothing new and again rehashed statements, Mr Speaker, Sir.

I will finally end on this environment chapter by saying this, Mr Speaker, Sir: when there was the Copenhagen conference, some of us who got the chance to read the Prime Minister's speech or to listen to him were impressed by this Oscar winning performance of our Prime Minister. We thought that there was a real hope after five years of bluff with the *Maurice Ile Durable* Project. *La coquille vide comme l'a si bien dit le Leader de l'opposition - Ile Maurice Durable*. We thought, therefore, Mr Speaker, Sir, when the Prime Minister would come back we would finally embark on materialisation of projects. Alas, this has been just one more stunt from the Government. Otherwise, Mr Speaker, Sir, how can we explain the motivation of this Government to allow the construction of a cement clinker in Mauritius? Do you know, Mr Speaker, Sir, that right in the middle of Port Louis, a cement clinker will be set up? Is this what Government understands by Sustainable Government? What are the implications of this project, Mr Speaker, Sir, besides ensuring that, perhaps, we will win the Municipal elections? The cement industry is responsible for about 5% of the world industrial climate change

emissions. The cement clinker project will impact on the land, on the habitat, while releasing toxic organic compound such as furans and dioxins. We can just imagine, with this clinker project in the middle of Port Louis, Mr Speaker, Sir, what will be the environmental impact on Port Louis and its surroundings. Again, on the environmental issue *bla-bla-bla, parole, parole, parole*, Mr Speaker, Sir! Nothing really concrete!

Before I sit down, Mr Speaker, Sir, *comme c'est la tradition, je vais dire deux mots sur ma circonscription. Je profite de cette occasion, M le président, parce que d'après nos traditions tous les députés sont permis de dire deux mots sur leur circonscription pour soulever les problèmes qui s'y posent. Et je voudrais, M le président, faire un appel à quelques ministres tout en parlant de ces divers problèmes de ma circonscription.*

First, I would like to appeal to the hon. Minister of Housing and Lands concerning the CHA Estates. *Je crois que l'honorable MsAnquetil avait bien dit avec raison que 10,000 maisons ont été vendues sur 20,000.*

(Interruptions)

I do not know when it came up to 18,000, because from the Parliamentary Question which the hon. Minister answered a few weeks before dissolution, *il avait dit que c'était 9,000.* Well, never mind, but the point I wish to make is that there are some CHA Estates in my constituency where these houses were not built on State land. They were built on *Pas Géométriques* and we know the problem and I think the hon. Minister answered a few questions concerning the CHA Estates of Riambel, St Felix and Case Noyale, the land still belongs to Bel Ombre. So, the sale has not been able to be effected so far and I know of many other CHA Estates which are not in my constituency, and I will appeal to the hon. Minister once and for all. Many of these people are queuing up, they want to acquire their houses, they want to mortgage it, perhaps to get a loan for the wedding of their children or for other household *dépenses, projets de leur ménage.* *Je demanderai au hon. Ministre Kasenally de faire diligence, M. le président,* to see into it, to consult the SLO once and for all and to see how this problem can be resolved and allow so many occupiers of CHA Estates, who have not been able so far to buy their houses.

Concerning the transport, Mr Speaker, Sir, I will ask hon. Minister Bachoo to look into this problem. From Chemin Grenier to Curepipe, from Baie du Cap to Bambous and to Port Louis, Mr Speaker, Sir, every day - hon. Mrs Hanoomanjee knows about that; she even, I think,

raised the problem on Adjournment Time - there is a major transport problem in our Constituency and may I appeal to the hon. Minister to use his good offices and to see to it that the NTC and the other private operators address this problem.

I will also ask the hon. Minister of Local Government, hon. Aimée, to address a problem which, I think, I talked to him, in La Gaulette and Baie du Cap about lighting facilities which have been provided to football grounds and volleyball pitches since long. Now the Village Councils of these areas *sont en train d'exiger que les sportifs et les jeunes* who use these football and volleyball grounds to pay. I think there was even *une émission sur la radio concernant ce problème et beaucoup de jeunes sont en train de protester, M. le président*. This is a discriminatory measure because it is not the case in all villages; not all Village Councils asked the youngsters to pay for the time they use the football and volleyball grounds. Can I ask him, Mr Speaker, Sir, to see to it that these problems be looked into at Baie du Cap and La Gaulette.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I will ask the Minister of Health and Quality of Life who is also the *députée de la circonscription* to look into another serious problem. There has been an outbreak of scabies, *la gale dans le village du Morne*. A few months ago, the same outbreak took place in Rivière Noire. I asked a Parliamentary Question and the hon. Minister who was then sitting over there raised the problem. Two weeks ago, there has been an outbreak of scabies at Le Morne village and many primary students who are at Le Morne Government School have been victims of this outbreak. I have talked to the doctors in Dr. Yves Cantin Community Hospital at Rivière Noire, Mr Speaker, Sir, but perhaps this is not enough. May I humbly appeal to the hon. Minister to look into that problem.

There is another problem in my Constituency, Mr Speaker, Sir, *concernant les maisons de cités, les maisons d'amiante*, that is, asbestos. This was again *répercuté* on the front page of 5-plus some two or three months ago.

Asbestos! *Il y avait un problème ici et le Clerk doit le savoir. Vous devez le savoir, M. le président, le Parlement aussi a fait la une. J'espère que nous avons été isolés, là où nous sommes*. But, in my Constituency, there are many *maisons d'amiante* and it is being rumoured, I don't know if there is scientific evidence to that effect - that even some people have died. One occupant, a lady, in Rivère Noire died. The parents are saying that because she has been living in that *maison de cité d'amiante pendant longtemps*. I don't know whether the hon. Prime

Minister has set up a committee to look into the problem. A lot of NGOs have been going there. Meetings have been organised. Can I ask the hon. Minister to look into that problem?

Finally, there is a project to set up a market fair in Chemin Grenier and Surinam - two villages in our Constituencies. The hon. Minister of Health knows *qu'il y avait un problème à Surinam*, although the project has nearly taken off. May I ask the hon. Minister concerned to see to it that the market fair be materialised at Surinam and Chemin Grenier?

Mr Speaker, Sir, I don't want to go further than that, because there are many other problems in my Constituency, but I will rather stop here. I will end by saying *que nous sommes retournés dans l'opposition, M. le président, mais nous avons le moral très haut, que ce soit au niveau la Chambre ou en dehors, en tant que parti de l'opposition, nous et notre jeune équipe, sommes prêts à relever tous les défis. Pour nous une victoire ou une défaite n'entamera en aucune façon notre désir et notre rage de travailler pour notre pays en tant que patriotes.*

I end up, Mr Speaker, Sir, by saying that the MMM has proved in this last election that it is *le plus grand parti du pays.*

(Interruptions)

M. le président, laissez-moi vous dévoiler ce secret. 50% de la population avait voté pour ce gouvernement. Je leur félicite. Mais combien de votants avaient participé aux élections ? Que 78% ! Donc, ce gouvernement a eu l'adhésion de 50% de 78%, ce qui veut dire 39%. 39% de la population seulement sont derrière ce gouvernement, 61% ont voté contre ou n'ont pas voté pour ce gouvernement.

(Interruptions)

M. le président, la population dans sa majorité est contre ce gouvernement. C'est pourquoi, pour nous, la lutte continue.

Merci, M. le président.

(7.19 p.m)

At this stage the Deputy Speaker took the Chair.

Mr C. Sayed-Hossen (Third Member for Montagne Blanche & GRSE): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I wish to first of all congratulate you on your election as the Deputy Speaker of this House and, at the same time, I take this opportunity to congratulate the hon. Speaker on his election. I am certain that the proceedings of this House will hugely benefit from the wise and

enlightened guidance of both of you so that these proceedings be carried out properly. I also wish to congratulate and welcome new Members to this House and wish them well. Before proceeding, I wish also to congratulate my colleague who is not here, hon. Ms Stéphanie Anquetil, for her very beautiful maiden speech. Like hon. Alan Ganoo, *après les civilités*, let's now look at our business.

First of all, I would like to comment on the concluding remarks of my hon. colleague from the other side of this House who made some very alchemical calculations and who came to the conclusion that the MMM is the largest party in the country, having lost the elections, by the way. I will leave hon. Ganoo to his delusions and as we say: *on trouve son réconfort là où on peut*.

As hon. Ganoo did before me, I thought, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that this whole debate was about the motion presented by my colleague, hon. Ms Anquetil, that is, to adopt the Government Programme as read by the President of the Republic last week. Hon. Ganoo spent quite a substantial part of his very long speech, I must say, on a *critique* of the performance of the *Alliance sociale* Government between 2005 and 2010. But then, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this period 2005-2010 is over. The elections are over.

This Prime Minister sitting here, hon. Navin Ramgoolam, won the elections. And they are still the largest party in the country, in the Opposition! I have listened well to hon. Alan Ganoo who started his speech *avec ce que vous appelez un exercice en dialectique*. He started with a wish : *que la voix de l'opposition puisse se faire entendre. Ce qui a toujours été le cas dans cette assemblée, quelle que soit la nature du gouvernement ou la couleur du gouvernement ou la couleur de l'opposition*. Then, he said that he will not go through a *campagne de dénigrement*, and immediately afterwards, he stated that we didn't have free and fair elections and that the MMM, himself, and his friends will continue criticising these elections *à gorge déployée*. *Ce que je vous recommande mesdames, messieurs, honorables membres : déployez à qui mieux mieux ! Aucun problème ! Le problème, en fait, comme l'a dit l'honorable Alan Ganoo, se trouve dans le cadre légal. Ça c'est le troisième terme de sa dialectique !*

Premièrement, pas d'élection *free and fair* ; deuxièmement, qu'il va continuer à critiquer à gorge déployée et, troisièmement, que le problème se trouve dans le cadre légal. Donc, le problème est structurel. Le problème n'a rien à voir avec l'attitude, la performance ou l'interprétation des lois par le gouvernement de l'Alliance sociale ou actuellement par le

gouvernement de l'Alliance de l'Avenir. Et avec moult trémolos dans la voix, l'honorable Ganoo a parlé des propos illusoires, et je cite : 'illusoire, chimérique, des soi-disant engagements du Premier ministre, le docteur Navin Ramgoolam, à propos d'un code de conduite obligatoire - *mandatory code of conduct*. *But, again, I would like to ask the Opposition, through you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir: what did they do? What have they done when they were in power between 2000 and 2005? And, furthermore, what have they done for the past 40 years to address the problems that they are now identifying?* Ceci dit, je dois remercier l'honorable Alan Ganoo - je suis sûr que je le fais au nom de tous mes collègues de ce côté de la Chambre - du grand moment d'hilarité dont il nous a gratifié dans son discours, surtout dans la partie où il critique le système électoral du *first past the post*. Encore une fois la même question : qu'avez-vous fait? La réponse, on le sait : rien ! Ensuite il ajoute que le discours programme du président de la république, le programme du gouvernement de l'Alliance de l'Avenir, est un amalgame de vœux pieux, d'annulation de mesures qui ont été prises par le gouvernement précédent, l'Alliance sociale. Ceci me fait penser à une chose, M. le président. Il y a un proverbe anglais qui dit : *only a wise man changes his mind*. L'équivalent en français dit : seul un imbécile ne change pas d'avis. Le proverbe ne dit cependant pas comment on appelle quelqu'un qui ne comprend pas qu'on puisse changer d'avis. Cela, je ne le sais pas, le proverbe ne le dit pas, et je le laisse à l'imagination de mes collègues de chaque côté de la Chambre évidemment et il est facile, M. le président, de faire le décompte de toutes les mesures contenues dans un programme gouvernemental qui n'ont pas été mises en marche, qui n'ont pas été peut-être mises en chantier et qui n'ont pas été réalisées. M. le président, si on cherche à couper les cheveux en quatre, on arrivera toujours à couper les cheveux en quatre. Si on cherche la petite bête, on trouvera toujours la petite bête. Comme on dit en Créole : « *si rode lipou kapav toujours trouve li* » même là où il n'y en a pas. *But what about the measures which have been realised, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir? A fair and honest assessment - I am being very sincere - of what has been carried out, what has been realised or started to be realised, because certain measures take a much longer time than five years to be realized. The Government Programme 2005-2010 shows that we have an average of 75% to 80% of success in what was announced in this programme in 2005. The MMM, as hon. Ganoo has said, may have complaints against a certain number of measures that we introduced between 2005 and 2010. That is fair game! As an Opposition, that is their job, but, we, on this side of the House, I must say, I personally take exception to the expression used*

by hon. Ganoo that we took them for *des bouffons*. *Je cite à peu près ce qu'a dit l'honorable Ganoo : 'ils nous ont pris pour des bouffons'*. We never took them for *bouffons or comiques* or whatever, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. That may have been their own self-perception I don't know. I leave that to themselves, but certainly this was not our perception of the Opposition on this side of the House and hon. Ganoo's remarks on democracy or the practice thereof, the so-called conflict with a particular press group, serving as a backdrop to the presentation of the programme by the President of the Republic, makes me think how striking hon. Alan Ganoo and his party can have very specific stands on specific issues depending on whether they are in Government or in the Opposition and when they are in Government or the Opposition depending who they are partnering with. I will not go into details, but I am sure that the hon. Members, on the other side of this House, will understand what I am saying. Actually, this was most surprising, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. Hon. Alan Ganoo - I repeat that because it struck me personally - started his speech by saying : «*après les civilités, je ferai des commentaires sur le programme du gouvernement.* » *A chaque fois que l'honorable Ganoo a parlé d'un problème spécifique, il revient à chaque fois en disant qu'en fait le problème est de nature structurelle, c'est-à-dire, requérant des amendements juridiques, des amendements de loi ou carrément des amendements constitutionnels* and a lot, of course, of 'we have been told', especially, when he was commenting fairly lengthily on his anticipations on electoral reforms or constitutional amendments. His intervention was *saupoudré*, as we said, *de 'we have been told'* and I thought still, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that this was a debate on something concrete, written black on white in the President's Speech on the Government Programme.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir - just listen to that - when hon. Alan Ganoo started his comments on the economy, he said: we warned the Government on numerous occasions about the Euro, we warned the Government about this and that. But, let us just remember what they did to this country between 2000 and 2005, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir! They brought this country to the brink of a catastrophe and now they are trying to teach us a lesson. As they say: "those who cannot, try to teach others." And they are trying to give us lessons and, furthermore, hon. Ganoo said that the measures contained in the programme was a *pot pourri* of past measures. This is very derogatory, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. *Des pots pourris!* I know that they use it for flowers, but a *pot-pourri* of past measures - I am struck by the word *pourri* in *pot-pourri*, but the answer is very simple and we said that. The hon. Prime Minister has said it a number of times during the

electoral campaign. This is a Government of continuity. We have had a tremendous success between 2005 and 2010. We came to power in 2005 and we all know whether we have the courage to admit it or not - that in 2005 from the economic point of view, this country was in tatters. This country had only reached two-point something in terms of GDP. The hon. Leader of the Opposition was Prime Minister, don't forget that! As far as we know, the hon. Prime Minister sets the agenda of Government and the Prime Minister directs the policy of Government. This is what we know. Of course, hon. Ganoo mentioned that the democratisation of the economy was basically a failure, *que la démocratisation de l'économie était en panne*.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we have a few times explained a number of things. I would like to repeat these, very briefly. Our inheritance in 2005 is an economic model that is constrained by three centuries of historical inheritance. We inherited in 2005 - actually before that, but if we take 2000 as the cut-off date - we have inherited an economic system, an economic model which is constrained by conditions having been developed over three centuries by what we call generally in economic jargon '*une économie de plantation*'. Basically, this socio-economic pattern is one basic inequality in the detention of assets. Of course, the main asset being land property. This system was built up over three centuries, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. How does anybody expect anybody else to dismantle that in five years, in ten years or in fifteen years for that matter? If we had tried to do it, forcibly hon. Members on the other side of this House, and certain other quarters outside of this House, would have called us Robert Mugabe or would have called us racists or they would have said that *nous avons un compte historique à régler avec une certaine partie de la population; ce qui n'est pas vrai. Nous n'avons aucun compte à régler, M. le président*. We don't want to break economic efficiency. Nous n'avons aucune intention de casser le ressort du développement et de la croissance économique, which is why the Prime Minister, hon. Dr. Navin Ramgoolam, chose to go the smooth way, to have a smooth transition to broaden the circle of opportunities, not to break the spring of economic development and economic growth.

Pour le moment, M. le président, sans entrer dans les détails, mais en gardant la tête claire et surtout en ayant une vision honnête de la situation, nous devons reconnaître qu'il y a eu des réalisations importantes dans la mise en place des conditions nécessaires pour élargir les bases du système de l'économie. Par exemple, le *Business Facilitation Act* de 2006 rend l'entrepreneuriat

et l'entreprise beaucoup plus abordables pour les petits entrepreneurs et les petits investisseurs. Comme on le sait, les gros entrepreneurs et les gros investisseurs n'ont pas besoin de facilitation. De plus, depuis 2006 il y a eu un certain nombre de *Finance Acts* qui ont mis sur pied des fonds nécessaires pour assister et aider les nouveaux entrepreneurs - les entrepreneurs émergents, comme on dit - et les petits et moyens entrepreneurs pour se mettre au diapason du système économique national. Il y a eu le *Competition Act*, M. le président. Le *Competition Act* est un outil, un instrument fondamental, dans la préservation de l'équité et la défense des droits des petits entrepreneurs. Il y a eu le *Equal Opportunities Act* et nul besoin de préciser, M. le président, qu'une législation sur la compétition avait été passée entre 2000 et 2005. Cette législation avait été *stripped*, comme on dit, de la plupart des *relevant parts of it*.

M. le président, le deuxième point que je voudrais mentionner c'est que le *Equal Opportunities Act* qui figure sur l'agenda du MMM depuis quarante ans maintenant, je crois, n'a jamais été présenté au Parlement, et c'est le gouvernement de l'Alliance sociale qui a présenté l'agenda du *Equal Opportunities* et qui a passé la législation sous le dernier mandat du Premier ministre, le Dr. Navin Ramgoolam.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, hon. Alan Ganoo mentioned a long list of social problems affecting this country, namely poverty, alienation, drug abuse, sexual violence, crime in general. Of course, we know that.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, nobody is denying the existence of poverty. Nobody is denying the existence of alienation. Nobody is denying that there is drug abuse. Nobody is denying that there is sexual violence et que nos compatriotes de sexe féminin sont les plus visées, sont beaucoup plus vulnérables à ce genre de violence et que la criminalité, en général, existe dans ce pays. Les honorables membres de l'Opposition ne peuvent pas non plus nier, ne peuvent pas *write-off* tous les efforts qui ont été faits depuis 2005 par le gouvernement de l'Alliance sociale pour combattre ces maux sociaux. En fait, il y a eu une armada de mesures institutionnelles et de mesures informelles en collaboration avec la société civile pour combattre ces maux. Mais nous devons aussi dire que pratiquement – et ce sera le cas de n'importe quel gouvernement – nous nous battons contre le courant parce que depuis cinq ans, la situation économique internationale fait que le problème de l'accentuation de la misère dans le monde entier devient un problème

d'avant-garde, un problème de plus en plus proéminent, M. le président, et que notre économie, plus que beaucoup d'autres, est liée à des conditions internationales, parce que nous dépendons entièrement, ou du moins massivement, de la situation économique internationale. C'est lié à l'industrialisation. C'est lié à une forme mesquine de modernisation et c'est lié à *the exposure of the country to global conditions through telecommunications, exchanges and travel*.

But at least, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we have had the merit of identifying these ills and to address them. Nobody on this side said that this is *le pays le mieux géré du monde*. We never said that. We admit that there are problems. We identify the problems. We identify measures to combat these problems and we try our best by mobilising civil society, the whole of society, the whole of the nation, to combat these problems. As somebody – I won't mention his name right now – said very recently: “these ills cannot be fought by a Government alone”. Political will alone is not enough, political action alone is not enough, public institutional measures alone are not enough. There has to be a coordinated effort by civil society, by all religious bodies, by all people concerned, by NGOs and by the constraining arm of Government for us to be able to combat these ills. This is what we are doing. It is totally dishonest, and I would even say that it is unethical, to say that this Government is not doing whatever needs to be done to combat these ills.

I take exception of one thing which hon. Ganoo mentioned - comments on the National Economic and Social Council que l'écart entre les riches et les pauvres est en train de grandir. Ce qu'a dit l'honorable Ganoo n'est qu'un commentaire. Il n'y a aucun chiffre et aucune statistique, mais je suppose ...

(Interruptions)

D'accord! Mais quand nous parlons de l'écart qui grandit entre les riches et les pauvres, le seul indicateur quantitatif qui puisse nous indiquer un tel écart, c'est ce qu'on appelle le coefficient GINI. Le coefficient GINI est calculé à partir du *National Household Income Expenditure Survey*. C'est un *survey* qui est fait tous les cinq ans, quelquefois tous les dix ans. Et le dernier coefficient GINI, M. le président, date de 2006 ou a été calculé peut-être quelque temps après, mais est basé sur un *Household Income Expenditure Survey* qui a été fait entre 2001 et 2006, pas entre 2005 et 2010. Donc, les commentaires du *National Economic and Social Council* auxquels a fait référence l'honorable Alan Ganoo sont les commentaires qui

portent sur l'action gouvernementale entre 2001 et 2006 et nous savons qui était au pouvoir entre 2001 et 2006, M. le président.

Anyway, I congratulate hon. Ganoo and his party for discovering that poverty does exist in Mauritius. I think they discovered that in 2005 when we first mentioned it and we started to combat it.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the hon. Prime Minister, as I have said at the beginning of my speech, has mentioned a number of times during the electoral campaign, before the electoral campaign and even after we won the elections - has repeated, therefore, and reiterated - the philosophy that underpins his planned action over the period 2010-2015. The basic philosophy is the continuity of the general orientation of the policy of this Government in economic efficiency and in the reinforcement of social justice and this is written black and white in the Government Programme which is being debated right now. As the programme says, these two elements, economic efficiency and social justice, underpin all actions and all planned actions of this Government.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, politics, political action, social change, management of the political economy, all boil down to the same thing and they have two fundamental objectives. First of all, economic efficiency and secondly, human added value. A country is not a corporation, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. And on both economic efficiency and human added value *nonobstant ce qu'a dit l'honorable Ganoo avant moi, le gouvernement de l'Alliance sociale* has done exceedingly well. We all know that this Government has brought this country back from a near catastrophic situation, has put this country back on a track of progress and growth, has caused economic growth to restart and, especially, we have weathered out an unprecedented accumulation of adverse conditions between 2005 and 2010 including among others - there are so many of these adverse conditions, I will mention only the most striking - the 36% drop in sugar prices, at least, the price at which we sell our sugar to the European Union, the massive increase in the cost of oil, the international crisis in food supply which caused a massive increase in the cost of food, the international financial crisis which hit us about two and a half or three years ago and the international economic crisis which seems to linger on.

On the social front, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we have introduced multiple social measures. I was very surprised, I take exception to what hon. Ganoo said that the *Alliance sociale* Government carried out cuts in social budgets. Actually, between 2005 and 2010, there

were massive increases in the budget allocation of three Ministries which are the social Ministries: the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Health and Ministry of Social Security. To date, the budget of these three Ministries constitutes something like 60% of Government budget, not less than that.

The *Alliance sociale* Government introduced economic empowerment and a number of measures to ensure and maintain a sustainable reduction and alleviation of poverty. With such a track record, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, what is healthier than continuing along the same global orientation! I am not meaning at all that we are continuing and this is not what the programme says. There is a number of changes, a number of *ajustements* that are being carried out especially in the economic field and, as we have said, *seul un imbécile ne change pas d'avis, M. le président*. And this Government has never been a Government of business as usual. We have never just followed the beaten track, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. As we have said, a country is not a corporation. This country is made up of people, rich people, less rich people, poor people and very poor people, and it has always been the fight of this Government, it has always been the fight of the tradition that is being represented on this part of the House to fight inequality, injustice and poverty. The resolve is very clear. As it is written - it's the only bit in the programme that I will quote - at paragraph 75 in the Government Programme –

“Government is strongly resolved to ensure a fair balance between economic imperatives (...)”

Which are important, of course.

“(...) and social exigencies.”

Social exigencies, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this is what drives this Government. But then we are realistic enough to realise that we cannot think of social exigencies if we don't earn the money to be able to respond to social exigencies. So, economic imperatives are as important. As we have said, a honest assessment of our performance between 2005 and 2010 clearly shows that the *Alliance sociale* Government has done very well and I don't have a single doubt that again this programme which was presented last week by the President of the Republic and which will be carried out, *mis en chantier*, under the able leadership of the Prime Minister, hon. Dr. Navin Ramgoolam, will lead us again to resounding success between now and 2015.

I thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I move that the debate be now adjourned.

Mr Aimée rose and seconded.

Question put and agreed to.

Debate adjourned accordingly.

ADJOURNMENT

The Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities (Dr. R. Beebeejaun): Sir, I beg to move that this Assembly do now adjourn to Tuesday 22 June 2010 at 11.30 a.m.

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

The Deputy Speaker: The House stands adjourned.

Question put and agreed to.

MATTERS RAISED

MORCELLEMENT BELLE VUE, ALBION – BUS SERVICE & VILLAGE HALL

Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have two issues. One concerns the Minister of Public Infrastructure, responsible for transport, with regard to the region of Morcellement Belle Vue, Albion.

There is a real problem of transport, particularly by the CNT bus operator and the other bus operators, in the morning, during day time, and also in the evening, faced by female workers coming from Port Louis and also from the region of Plaine Wilhems. I am asking the hon. Minister to see to it with both companies so that this problem of transport in Morcellement Belle Vue is addressed.

Secondly, in the same Morcellement Belle Vue, Albion, there is a village hall which is closed during day time. There have been several requests by women's associations of this *morcellement* for the use of this village hall during day time. They have addressed the petition to

the chairperson of the District Council who is also an inhabitant of the region and their petition has not received any attention and has not been catered for.

I will ask the Minister of Local Government to see with the District Council of Black River the request from the women's associations of Morcellement Belle Vue for the use of the village hall from 10.00 a.m. to 2.00 p.m. because, in the afternoon, it is used by the youngsters of the region.

Mr Bachoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I will convey the concern of the hon. Member to the CNT and the other bus companies.

Mr Aimee: M. le président, j'ai bien écouté l'honorable membre et je ferai le nécessaire.

VERA CLUB HOTEL PALMAR – TAXI DRIVERS

Mr C. Sayed-Hossen(Fourth Member for Montagne Blanche & GRSE): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I wish to bring to the attention of the hon. Minister of Public Infrastructure and Land Transport, the Minister of Tourism and the Minister of Employment, the plight of about nine taxi drivers presently operating from the Vera Club Hotel in Palmar. My understanding is that by law, only taxis with a licence to operate from a given base of operation, can operate from this given base of operation, which implies that no other taxi with a different base of operation can pick up passengers from that particular base of operation.

The situation at Vera Club is as follows, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. Vera Club Hotel has a contract with a company called Corallo Bus Company and outsources transport from that company. I am informed that Corallo has not a single car, neither a single bus nor van. It rents services of either private or contract vehicles. The hotel decides unilaterally whether, when and for what price, taxi services are needed. I will give you two examples. Between 25 May and 30 May 2010, 87 individuals were transported from Vera Club to somewhere else, 79 of them were transported by Corallo in vehicles belonging to outside contractors and only eight of them by hotel taxis. This means that during the six days that we are talking of, the nine taxis only carried eight passengers and between 02 and 07 June 2010, there were 134 individuals carried from the hotel to somewhere else, 121 were carried by outside contractors, Corallo and only 13 by the hotel taxis. The next point is that even when the taxis have trips, these are decided by the hotel and the hotel guests have to pay to the hotel.

There is something which, maybe, should be brought to the attention of the MRA. The taxi drivers have to hand over to the hotel their receipt book. The hotel bills the guests on the receipt book of the taxis. In the excursion programme in Italian which is distributed by the hotel to the guests, it is written - I am translating it, I do not understand Italian, but it is fairly close to French - excursion to Pamplemousses Garden and Port Louis for shopping: Rs900. So, the hotel will bill the guest Rs900 on the *carnet de reçu* of the taxi. The hotel has a contract with a taxi. I have a copy of the contract here. The English is approximate, taxi drivers are agreed to be paid Rs400 per passenger for the excursion from Port Louis to Pamplemousses. The hotel bills Rs900 on the *carnet de reçu* of the taxi and then gives only Rs400 to the taxi driver and keeps Rs500 per passenger, unaccounted for, no trace, totally opaque.

I think, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, you will agree that this is also a matter for MRA to enquire into. I have calculated, according to these and other figures, that nine taxi drivers have gross earnings - I really mean gross earnings - of between Rs3,500 and Rs4,000 *par mois*.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I do not know to whom the hotel belongs, but it is run by Italians. The General Manager, one Mr Andrea Bee, has been around for 8 years and he is known for making racial remarks to Mauritian employees at the hotel, referring to the colour of the skin. One lady there, Miss Raphaëlla Sampaolino, who came here as *animatrice*, only sits down at a desk, acting as a cashier all day long. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I think that this is most unfair and I also think that the laws of the Republic are being violated. I beg to bring this issue to the attention of the three Ministers concerned.

Thank you very much.

Mr Bachoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this issue concerns my Ministry, partly the Ministry of Employment as well as the Ministry of Tourism. It is a fact that taxi operators are undergoing untold hardships and miseries, not only at Vera Club, but also at another Club which is called 'Les Flamboyants'. They are fleecing the taxi drivers and this matter was reported to me. I have taken up the matter and reported it to the Minister of Tourism and the Minister of Employment also. I have made a humble plea to them to, at least, come and try to support these workers. As far as I am concerned, we had many meetings at the NTA and even the Deputy Prime Minister called one Andrea Bee to his office where he behaved arrogantly. We have got our laws and these people are flouting them. My humble plea to the Minister of Employment is that we have to take action against those expatriates.

Last Friday there was a meeting at the NTA ...

(Interruptions)

This is something very important hon. Bhagwan, it concerns our people.

As I was saying, last Friday there was a meeting at the NTA with the taxi drivers and the proprietors of the hotel. We have given a last warning to those expatriates, because they have to obey the law of the country. If they insist in this way, then, of course, Government will have to take a decision against those expatriates.

Mr Bodha: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister talked to me. Our hon. colleague, the Minister of Employment, was not in the country. Now we are going to sit down together and find a solution. I have also had some complaints and reports and I think that the law has to be respected in this country.

CITE SADALLY – HUMPS & MOTORCYCLE RALLIES

Mrs F. Labelle (Third Member for Vacoas & Floreal): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would like to bring to the attention of the House, particularly to the Minister of Infrastructure, a problem faced by the inhabitants of Cité Sadally. In fact, Cité Sadally is a very small vicinity with some 100 families, which means that the kids over there do not have any place to go. When they want to go out of the houses, they have to go on the streets and since there has been an increase in the number of vehicles coming to this place, the inhabitants would really appreciate if some humps could be placed on the streets to protect their children. Moreover, there is a piece of land between Cité Sadally and Avenue Sivananda where there are no handrails and it has happened that cars going along Avenue Sivananda come on that piece of land which is a danger to the inhabitants, particularly the children. I would request if some handrails as well as humps could be placed in Cité Sadally.

Moreover, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, there is another problem and maybe the hon. Deputy Prime Minister could help in that matter. During weekends and on public holidays, there is a group of motorcyclists who have taken the habit of having motorcycle rallies inside the Cité. The inhabitants have brought that to the attention of the Police on several occasions but, unfortunately, nothing has been done up to now. I would ask the Minister if we can see that Police officers take the necessary steps to prevent rallies such a small place which is a real danger to the inhabitants of Cité Sadally.

Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

The Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping (Mr A. Bachoo): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have received requests from the inhabitants of that region regarding the installation of humps and handrails, and I am going to transmit these requests to the TRMSU. I will see to it that the needful is done.

The Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities (Dr. R. Beebeejaun): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I will transmit the said request to the Police.

(8.01 p.m)

NAVIN SOONARAN GYMNASIUM - RENTING

Ms K. R. Deerpalsing (Third Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have a couple of small issues. The first one concerns the Minister of Local Government. I have a letter from my constituents regarding the renting of the Navin Soonaran Gymnasium. The Belle Rose residents have to pay Rs200 per hour to play badminton there, which means that, for eight or ten hours, they have to pay some Rs1,600 to Rs2,000 to play badminton, whereas residents who are just nearby are not charged by the Municipality. There is a *politique de deux poids deux mesures* and I would like to ask the hon. Minister to look into the matter.

HOSPITAL VICTORIA, CANDOS - HANDRAILS

I have a couple of issues which relate to the Ministry of Public Infrastructure. The first one is also a problem of handrails opposite Victoria Hospital in Candos on the main road. The residents have asked that handrails be placed on the left side as we go up from La Louise.

OLLIER AVENUE – MOSQUE – BUS STOP

There is also a request from the President and Committee of the Mosque on Ollier Avenue. There is a bus stop right at the Mosque and this causes some inconveniences to the people who go to the Mosque. They have requested that the bus stop be displaced either further or before a few metres. It would be very much appreciated if this could be done. Thank you.

The Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands (Mr H. Aimée): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, my colleague, hon. Ms Deerpalsing, can rest assured that I will look into the matter.

The Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping (Mr A. Bachoo): Both requests that have been made to me would be looked into.

(8.03 p.m)

GENTILLY BRANCH ROAD, MOKA – DRAINS & BRIDGE

Mr S. Dayal (Third Member for Quartier Militaire & Moka): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the point that I am going to raise concerns the Minister of Public Infrastructure and the NDU.

Concerning the cover drains at Gentilly Branch Road, Moka - the way the slabs have been cast - generate a lot of noise and disturb the inhabitants there, especially at night when vehicles pass by. My request is that needful be done to alleviate the suffering of the people there. There is also a bridge nearby which shows some signs of crumbling and many site visits have been effected to no avail. My prayer is that this be looked into as soon as possible. Thank you.

The Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping (Mr A. Bachoo): I have no problem in conducting another site visit and we have to look *de visu* at the problem.

MORCELLEMENT KENSINGTON, POINTE AUX SABLES – PUBLIC TRANSPORT

Mr V. Baloomoody (Third Member for GRNW & Port Louis West): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, if I may address my request to the Minister of Public Infrastructure concerning the inhabitants of Morcellement Kensington at Pointe aux Sables.

In fact, there is no public transport from La Pointe, Point aux Sables to Morcellement Kensington and this is creating serious difficulties, not only for the ladies who come from work at night, but also to children and students. I would ask the hon. Minister to look into the matter

and whether we can have a sort of mini bus who can transport workers, especially at peak hours.
Thank you.

The Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping (Mr A. Bachoo): I will look into these issues.

At 7.50 p.m., the Assembly was, on its rising, adjourned to Tuesday 22 June 2010 at 11.30 a.m.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

IAN PALACH NORTH AND SOUTH BUS STATIONS – FATAL ACCIDENTS

(No. 1B/16) Dr S. Boolell (Second Member for Curepipe & Midlands) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in regard to the Ian Palach North and South bus stations in Curepipe, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to the number of fatal accidents which have occurred thereat during the past five years, indicating the remedial actions that have been taken.

Reply: I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that since 2005 to 10 June 2010, two cases of fatal accidents have occurred at Ian Palach North bus station in Curepipe in which 3 persons lost their lives.

I am also informed that the Police is deployed at the Ian Palach bus station from 0700 hours to 2100 hours to perform duties such as traffic control, linking up with stand regulators, ensuring security of passengers, attending to request from travellers, preventing larcenies and other anti-social behaviour as well as illegal activities.

I am further informed that a series of measures have been taken to make Ian Palach bus station more secure, such as installation of handrails, traffic lights and the provision of pedestrian crossings, footpaths and road markings.

The Police have also carried out sensitisation campaigns with bus crews and at educational institutions of the Curepipe region to enhance the road safety awareness of the users of the bus station.

LONG MOUNTAIN POLICE STATION – INCIDENT – INQUIRY

(No. 1B/17) Mr G. Lesjongard (Second Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to if an incident occurred at the Long Mountain Police Station on 8 May 2010, indicating –

- (a) if the police station was damaged as a result thereof, and
- (b) if an inquiry has been carried out thereinto and, if so, if the inquiry has revealed whether the person involved is a political activist.

Reply: I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that on 8 May 2010 at 18.30 hours, Mrs. S.A. called at Long Mountain Police Station accompanied by her brother-in law Mr. B.A to report a case of assault. While the statement of Mrs S.A. was being recorded, one Mr. T.B. entered the Station. He removed a piece of wood which was concealed under his T-shirt and started to assault Mr. B.A.

Two Police Officers called Mr. T.B. to order but he instead turned hostile and violent. He again tried to assault Mr. B.A. and the two Police Officers. He then rushed outside and damaged six window panes and two door panes of the Station. The Police tried to arrest him but he managed to run away. Reinforcement was sought from the Divisional Operations Room, Piton to search for Mr. T.B. The Police tried to trace out the latter on 8 and 9 May 2010 but he could not be found.

On 10 May 2010, Mr. T.B. called at Long Mountain Police Station, accompanied by his lawyer. He was arrested and after enquiry, was brought before the Pamplemousses District Court on the same day. A provisional charge of “Damaging Government Property” was lodged

against him. He was granted bail on the same day after furnishing a surety of Rs3000 and Rs100 costs.

I am informed that Mr T.B., a Caretaker of the Sugar Industry Labour Welfare Fund, has been interdicted.

I am further informed that Mr. T. B. will be prosecuted for the offence of assault. Police enquiry is still in progress.

Police is not aware whether the accused is a political activist, but that is irrelevant in any case. Anyone who breaks the law must expect to face the full rigours of the law.

GOVERNMENT PUBLICITY – MONEY PAID – JANUARY- 31 MAY 2010

(No. 1B/31) 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 Government Publicity, he will state the amount of money paid to each daily and weekly on a monthly basis for the period of January to 31 May 2010.

Reply (The Prime Minister): This matter is *sub judice* and therefore it would not be proper for me to give the information requested.

GOVERNMENT HOUSE – RENOVATION WORKS – ASBESTOS

(No. 1B/64) Dr. R. Sorefan (Fourth Member for La Caverne & Phoenix) asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether, in regard to the Government House presently undergoing renovation works, he will state if –

- (a) traces of asbestos have been detected therein, and, if so, indicate the measures that have been taken for the protection of the public and the employees of the contractor, and
- (b) the product has been disposed of and, if so, when and how.

Reply (The Prime Minister): In regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed that on 03 May 2010, a site inspection was carried out by representatives of my Office, the Ministry of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment, the Ministry of Civil Service Affairs and

Administrative Reforms and the National Assembly at the Old Parliament House where renovation works are currently being undertaken by the firm Ireko Construction Ltd. During that inspection, materials suspected to contain asbestos were found in the false ceiling of the second floor of the building. The National Assembly immediately contacted the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life regarding measures to be taken in such cases. The latter subsequently submitted a series of recommendations, including a Protocol on Precautionary measures to Protect Workers at Work with Asbestos. It also advised that action be initiated by the contractor for the samples to be taken for analysis to confirm the presence and type of asbestos.

I am informed that the samples have been sent to the Mauritius Standard Bureau and results are currently awaited.

However, in the meantime the recommendations made by the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life have already been implemented and the provisions of the Protocol are being followed by the contractor. In fact, the whole working area has been enclosed and isolated. Areas under the scaffolding have been demarcated and secured. Access to the building and to its premises is prohibited to the public. Warning tapes and safety signs have been installed.

Workers have also been provided with the appropriate masks, disposable overcoat, safety helmet and shoes.

In addition, medical examinations of the employees of the contractor have been carried out and results are awaited.

As for part (b) of the question, I am informed that the suspected materials, a total of 4.3 tonnes, were removed on 08, 09 and 10 May and stored in a room which was sealed off without access to anybody. They were subsequently put in double plastic bags and in raffia bags, and disposed of at the Mare Chicose landfill on 27 and 28 May 2010.

I wish to add that a complete survey of the building has been undertaken by the Contractor and no other materials suspected to contain asbestos have been identified.

RING ROAD PROJECT - STUDY

(No. B/55) Mr R. Uteem (Second Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central) asked the Minister of Housing and Lands whether, in regard to the ring road project, he will state if his Ministry has carried out a study to ascertain -

- (a) the residential areas which will be affected
- (b) the number of houses which will have to be demolished
- (c) the number of residents who will have to be displaced, indicating if any assessment has been made on the social impact of their displacement, and
- (d) if, in the affirmative, will he table a copy of the report.

Reply: The main residential area of Vallée Pitot will not be affected by the proposed Ring Road Project.

However, a total of 85 families are currently illegally occupying two areas of state land situated directly on the proposed Ring Road alignment, thus requiring to be relocated. These families have decided, on their own, to illegally occupy these areas in spite of being aware that this land is reserved for the Ring Road Project. Out of the 85 squatters, 18 families occupy state land near Military Road and the remaining occupy state land near the Eid Gah. Over and above the 85 squatters, there are 6 families who hold valid residential leases. These are squatters who have been regularised.

So far, a plot of land of about 4A00 at Military Road has already been identified for the relocation of some of the squatters. My Ministry is in the process of identifying additional land for the relocation of the remaining ones.

My Ministry is also discussing with the Ministry of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport and Shipping regarding the possibilities to reduce to a minimum the number of families who need to be relocated. In the process, all implications of the relocation exercise including the social ones are being looked into.

Consultations will also be held with all stakeholders.

STC – PETROLEUM PRODUCTS – HEDGING TRANSACTIONS

(No. B/56) Mr R. Uteem (Second Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central) asked the Minister of Industry and Commerce whether, in regard to hedging transactions on petroleum products, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the State Trading Corporation, information as to -

- (a) the total amount of losses incurred as at to-date, indicating if the Corporation is still carrying out hedging transactions;
- (b) if an inquiry has been carried out regarding the losses incurred through hedging, and, if so, table a copy of the report, and
- (c) if any sanction has been taken against any officer or officers responsible for the hedging losses.

(Vide reply to PNQ)

STC – PETROLEUM PRODUCTS - PURCHASE

(No. B/57) Mr R. Uteem (Second Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central) asked the Minister of Industry and Commerce whether, in regard to petroleum products, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the State Trading Corporation, information as to -

- (a) the amount of petroleum products purchased, if any during the electoral campaign, indicating the cost thereof;
- (b) the amount of losses, if any, suffered by the Corporation as a result thereof, and
- (c) whether approval from Board for the said purchase was sought and obtained.

Reply: I am informed that the STC had purchased five consignments of petroleum products during the period 02 April 2010 to 06 May 2010. I am tabling a statement indicating the volume and value of Petroleum Products purchased per vessel and the arrival date thereof.

In regard to part (b) of the question, I am further informed that no loss was incurred on the purchase of the products. The purchases were done in the normal course of business.

In regard to part (c) of the question, the importation of 28,687MT of petroleum products which arrived in Mauritius on 22 April 2010 was approved by the Board of Directors of STC on 07 April 2010.

CENTRAL MARKET - HAWKERS

(No. B/58) Mr R. Uteem (Second Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central) asked the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the hawkers operating within the 500 metres of Port Louis Central Market, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Municipal Council of Port Louis, information as to the measures that are proposed to be taken to find an alternative location for them to operate.

Reply: After the street hawkers have been ordered to stop plying their trade within a radius of 500 metres from the Port Louis Central market, I have personally met their representatives in order to see how, on humanitarian grounds, they could be relocated elsewhere so that these hawkers are not deprived of the means of subsistence both for themselves and their families.

I have personally visited a few alternative locations in Port Louis where the hawkers could possibly be relocated. I have also had a meeting with the Acting Lord Mayor of the Municipality, the Chief Executive, the Acting Chief Health Inspector and officers of my Ministry to study how best the hawkers could be relocated. I am pursuing my investigation together with the support of the Municipality of Port Louis and I hope that a solution can be found very soon.

STC – PETROLEUM PRODUCTS - TENDERS

(No. B/59) Mr A. Ganoo (First Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Minister of Industry and Commerce whether, in regard to petroleum products, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the State Trading Corporation, information as to whether the purchase agreement between the Corporation and the Mangalore Refineries and Petrochemicals Ltd -

- (a) has not been renewed and, if so, the reasons therefor;
- (b) the Corporation has decided to float international tenders for the

purchase thereof, and
(c) whether he will now table a copy of the agreements signed between the Corporation and Mangalore Refineries and Petrochemicals Ltd for the supply of petroleum products since 2006.

(Vide reply to PNQ)

TIANLI - LEASE

(No. 1B/60) Mr G. Lesjongard (Second Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue) asked the Minister of Housing and Lands whether, he will inform the House if, following the transfer of the lease between Tianli and Jin-Fei, his Ministry has written off any amount owed as rental by Tianli and, if so, indicate the amount.

Reply (Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development): I will reply to PQ 1B/60 addressed to my colleague the hon. Minister of Housing and Lands and to PQ 1B/66 addressed to me at the same time since they relate to the same subject.

As the House is aware, the Jin-Fei Zone is one of five economic zones that the People's Republic of China is supporting in Africa. It is the outcome of intense lobbying by the Prime Minister during the Sino Africa Summit held in Beijing in 2006 for Mauritius to be part of the Africa development strategy by the Chinese Government.

I wish to inform the House that I am not in a position to table the Framework Agreement as there is a confidentiality clause which provides that the parties to the Agreement should ensure strict confidentiality on the Agreement.

However, I am pleased to provide information on essential aspects of the project. Government succeeded in convincing the Chinese promoters to choose Mauritius over other African countries by offering a package that includes the provision of off-site infrastructure with a contribution of Rs100 m. from the promoters, a tax platform of 15% applicable to all investors, leased land at concessional rates on a similar basis to what has traditionally been offered to investors in new sectors, including on *Pas Géométriques* and on industrial zones, and passports for a limited number of investors, namely one passport for every USD 500, 000 of investment.

Regarding the lease of land, a portion of land of 211 hectares has been earmarked for the Tianli project. Government had planned to release the land in two stages since 160 hectares were still under occupation of the planters of the Terre Rouge Land Settlement.

A first lease agreement was signed between Government and the Tianli Enterprise Group for a portion of 51 hectares of land on 12 July 2007. The lease agreement for the second portion of land of 160 hectares was not signed as the land could not be released in totality until December 2008.

Following representations from Tianli, Government approved, on 26 March 2009, an amendment of the first lease agreement to provide for the addition of the remaining 160 hectares, to be effective as from 12 February 2009. The deed of amendment was prepared but was not signed by Tianli because of ongoing discussions among the Chinese promoters.

Following an overhauling of the shareholding structure of the company and its renaming into Mauritius Jin-Fei Economic and Trade Cooperation Zone Company Ltd, a revised implementation schedule was agreed for the project and the project implementation started on 16 September 2009. Thus the Chinese side namely Jin-Fei signed the amended lease agreement in respect of the 211 hectares only on 16 September 2009. Regarding the lease rentals for the 160 hectares of land for the period up to the date of the signature of the lease agreement, Government agreed to waive the dues since the land was encumbered.

Investment in the Jin-Fei Project is estimated at USD 750 million. This project will assist Mauritius to realize its ambitions of becoming a bridge between Asia and Africa.

RODRIGUES - INTERNET AND BANDWIDTH CONNECTION

(No. 1B/61) Mr J. F. François (Third Member for Rodrigues) asked the Minister of Information and Communication Technology whether, in regard to the internet and bandwidth connection in Rodrigues, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Mauritius Telecom, information as to –

- (a) if it has any priority project for operational plan under the Universal Service Fund,
and
- (b) the number of persons awaiting to be connected to ADSL.

Reply: The Mauritius Telecom Ltd has identified four priority projects, which are intended to increase the broadband penetration in Rodrigues over the short term. These projects are:

- (1) an upgrade of the fixed line facilities to provide for additional fixed lines;
- (2) extension of broadband network to cover all existing MT Exchange Areas;
- (3) extension of the Internet Protocol (IP) Core to Rodrigues with the introduction of a new IP router at Mont Vénus and Port Louis by end of 2010, and
- (4) migration of all ATM-based services to IP with the new router at Mont Vénus by 2010 and the deployment of a new 10 Megabits per second IP satellite link between Mauritius and Rodrigues.

The Mauritius Telecom Ltd has approached the Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) Authority with a request that the implementation of these projects be financially supported by the Universal Service Fund. These projects will involve a significant level of investment as well as relatively high annual operating costs when weighed against their commercial viability. The request is currently under examination at the level of the ICT Authority.

As regard part (b) of the question, the Mauritius Telecom Ltd has informed that the number of pending applications for ADSL in Rodrigues as at end of May 2010 is 216.

TOLL TAX

(No. 1B/62) Dr. M. R. Sorefan (Fourth Member for La Caverne & Phoenix) asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to toll tax, he will state if his Ministry has already taken a decision for the imposition thereof and, if so, indicate the roads which have been identified.

Reply: In view of the colossal investment of Rs26 billion involved in the Road Decongestion Programme, Government has approved that the project be implemented under a Public Private Partnership (PPP). Part of the investment will have to be recouped by way of a toll system.

The roads identified under the feasibility study undertaken by South African Consultant, SPP Projects Solutions Ltd are -

- (i) the Harbour Bridge;
- (ii) Port Louis Ring Road;
- (iii) Terre Rouge-Verdun-Ebene Link Road;
- (iv) A1-M1 Bridge; Belle Etoile/Soreze ;
- (v) Motorway M1 from Phoenix to Port Louis, and
- (vi) Motorway M2 from Terre Rouge to Port Louis.

Road users will have the choice to use alternative roads which will not be tolled. Public transport buses will be exempted from payment of tolls on tolled roads.

ST-PIERRE – SUPERMARKET – TRAFFIC IMPACT ASSESSMENT

(No. 1B/63) Dr. M. R. Sorefan (Fourth Member for La Caverne & Phoenix) asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport & Shipping whether, in regard to the proposed putting up of a supermarket at St Pierre by the Winners Group, he will state if he has received any complaint from the Promoters with regard to undue delays by the Road Development Authority for the granting of the Traffic Impact Assessment and, if so, whether an inquiry has been carried out thereinto, indicating where matters stand.

Reply: I wish to inform the House that my Ministry has not received any complaint from the promoters with regard to undue delays by the RDA on the Traffic Impact Assessment.

In fact, I am informed that it is not the RDA, but the TMRSU which is dealing with the promoters on traffic and road safety issues.

I am further informed that several correspondences have already been exchanged between the TMRSU and the promoters and the matter is still under consideration.

NHDC FLATS – SYNDIC - MAINTENANCE

(No. 1B/65) Dr. M. R. Sorefan (Fourth Member for La Caverne & Phoenix) asked the Minister of Housing and Lands whether, in regard to NHDC flats, he will state if Government proposes to set up a Government Fund to help the NHDC syndic in the maintenance of the apartments and more particularly the sewerage plants thereat.

Reply: Inhabitants of the high rise NHDC apartments are co-owners of their housing units and are as such bound to constitute a “*syndic*” to look after the maintenance and upkeep of “*les parties communes*” in accordance with the “*règlement de copropriété*” as provided for in Article 664 of the Civil Code.

However, we are all aware that syndics, still not in the “*moeurs*” of our fellow citizens, have so far been a failure.

It is a fact that in most cases either the required “*syndic*” has not been set up at all, or if set up is not working properly. I am informed that to date, syndics are operational and functional in only 10 housing estates. The main reason reported is that residents are reluctant to contribute financially to the “*syndic*”. The monthly contribution to “*syndic*” ranges usually from Rs200 to Rs400/- depending on the housing estate.

Rather than instituting a Government Fund, my Ministry and the NHDC will continue to advise the inhabitants on their collective responsibility and encourage them to join the “*syndic*”.

To that effect, I have already convened the 10 syndics which are operational and impress upon them to continue their good work. My Ministry and the NHDC will undertake a PR exercise and try to get the owners of the NHDC apartment to regroup into “*syndic*”.

With particular regard to sewerage plants, I wish to inform members of the House that, with the collaboration of the Wastewater Management Authority, procedures for the rehabilitation of sewerage plants in NHDC estates have already started. Thereafter, the WMA, which is the competent authority and which has the necessary expertise will take over these sewerage plants.

In the meantime, whenever the need arises, the NHDC arranges for the desludging of sewerage plants and foots the bill as well.

JIN-FEI PROJECT - FRAMEWORK AGREEMENT

(No. 1B/66) Mr E. Guimbeau (First Member for Curepipe & Midlands) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to the Jin-Fei, ex-Tianli project, in Riche Terre, he will now consider tabling the Framework Agreement and, if not, why not.

(Vide reply to PQ 1B/60)

ANSE LA RAIE - PRESIDENT'S BUNGALOW - LEASE

(No. 1B/67) Mr E. Guimbeau (First Member for Curepipe & Midlands) asked the Minister of Housing and Lands whether, in regard to the President's bungalow located on the *Pas Géométriques* at Anse La Raie, he will state if the lease has been transferred to a private promoter and, if so, state -

- (a) the name of the promoter;
- (b) the purpose of the lease, indicating the extent of the land leased; and
- (c) the terms and conditions indicating the annual rental and premium to be paid, and
- (d) the amount of taxes, fees and levies paid to Government.

Reply: The reply is in the negative

CUREPIPE MARKET - RENOVATION WORKS

(No. 1B/68) Mr E. Guimbeau (First Member for Curepipe & Midlands) asked the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the Curepipe market, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Municipal Council of Curepipe, information as to if the renovation works have been completed and, if so, indicate -

- (a) the amount quoted by each tenderer;
- (b) the scope of the works, and
- (c) whether the deadline for the works was met and, if not, the amount of penalties paid, if any, and the final cost of the renovation works.

Reply: I am informed by the Municipal Council of Curepipe that the renovation works at the Curepipe market have been partly completed and the market was re-opened to the public on 12 April 2010. The Curepipe market is an old building which was inaugurated in 1978. Renovation works had to be undertaken in a phased manner, particularly in the face of financial constraints.

With regard to parts (a), (b) and (c) of the question, the relevant information is being compiled and it will be placed in the Library.

SALE BY LEVY - VICTIMS - AMOUNT DISBURSED

(No. 1B/69) Mr Guimbeau (First Member for Curepipe & Midlands) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to the Rs100 m. earmarked for the victims of sale by levy, he will state the amount disbursed as at to-date and the names of the beneficiaries.

Reply: Following the setting up of the Sale by Levy Solidarity Fund to financially assist deserving families who have lost their only residence through sale by levy to acquire a house, an initial exercise to determine potential beneficiaries was carried out from September 2007 to January 2009 and a second one from May 2009 to November 2009.

Out of a total of 421 applications for assistance received, only 49 families satisfied the eligibility criteria for financial assistance under the Fund.

I am informed that to date, disbursements to the tune of Rs12.9 m. have been effected in respect of 38 out of the 49 eligible families qualifying for assistance. As regards the remaining 11 beneficiaries, an amount of Rs5.5 m. has been earmarked and will be disbursed once negotiations for acquisition of their houses will have been completed and the deeds of sale finalised at the notary.

In 2009, decision was taken to extend financial assistance from the Sale by Levy Solidarity Fund to cover cases of families with a monthly household income of less than Rs7,500 and who were facing difficulties to service their loans following the death or serious incapacity of a wage earner.

In this context, a call for applications was launched in May 2009. 47 additional applications were received, out of which 35 did not meet the income and death/incapacity

criteria. As at date, disbursements to the tune of Rs467,000 have been made in respect of 2 beneficiaries. The remaining 10 applications are currently being examined.

It would not be appropriate, as requested by the hon. Member, to reveal the names of either the beneficiaries or of those who have been found not to be eligible for financial assistance under the Sale by Levy Solidarity Fund.