

No. 10 of 2011



**FIFTH NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**PARLIAMENTARY**

**DEBATES**

**(HANSARD)**

**FIRST SESSION**

**TUESDAY 31 MAY 2011**

## **CONTENTS**

**PAPERS LAID**

**QUESTIONS** (*Oral*)

**STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS**

**MOTIONS**

**BILLS** (*Public*)

**ADJOURNMENT**

**QUESTIONS** (*Written*)

*Members*

*Members*

## **THE CABINET**

**(Formed by Dr. the Hon. Navinchandra Ramgoolam)**

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Hossen, Hon. Abdullah Hafeez

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**MAURITIUS**

**Fifth National Assembly**

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**FIRST SESSION**

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**Debate No. 10 of 2011**

**Sitting of Tuesday 31 May 2011**

**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 -**

The Digest of Business Activity Statistics for Financial Year 2009-2010.

**B. Ministry of Social Security, National Solidarity and Senior Citizens Welfare and Reforms Institutions -**

The Report of the Director of Audit on the Financial Statements of the Non-Governmental Organisation Trust Fund for the year ended 30 June 2009 (In Original).

**C. Ministry of Industry and Commerce -**

The Annual Report 2008-2009 of the Mauritius Standard Bureau.

**D. Ministry of Health and Quality of Life -**

- (a) The Public Health (Control of Places of Entertainment) (Amendment) Regulations 2011 (Government Notice No.75 of 2011).
- (b) The Pharmacy (Amendment) Regulations 2011 (Government Notice No.76 of 2011).
- (c) The Dangerous Chemicals Control (Fees) (Amendment) Regulations 2011 (Government Notice No.77 of 2011).
- (d) The Quarantine (Charges for Services) (Amendment) Rules 2011 (Government Notice No.78 of 2011).

## ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

### MPs & PUBLIC OFFICERS - DECLARATION OF ASSETS & LIABILITIES

**The Leader of the Opposition (Mr P. Bérenger)** (*By Private Notice*) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in regard to the Declaration of Assets Act, he will state if –

- (a) the Independent Commission Against Corruption has caused declarations of assets and liabilities made by Members of the National Assembly to be laid before the Assembly as per the Act, and if not, why not, and
- (b) by regulations, he will consider extending the application thereof to such categories of public officers and officers of any statutory body as he may designate.

**The Prime Minister:** Mr Speaker, Sir, first of all, I wish to remind the House that the Declaration of Assets Act 1991, was expressly amended by section 88(2)(a) of the Prevention of Corruption Act 2002 in order to provide that, on receipt of a declaration of assets and liabilities of any Member of the National Assembly, it would be the Independent Commission Against Corruption, and no longer the Clerk of the Assembly who would, in accordance with such directions as the Speaker may give, cause such declarations to be laid before the National Assembly.

I am informed, Mr Speaker, Sir, that the reference in the former Declaration of Assets Act 1985 to directions being given by the Speaker was in relation to non-disclosure of such declarations by the Clerk once they have already been filed with him.

Section 5(1) of the 1985 Act reads as follows -

“Subject to subsection (2), the Clerk shall not communicate to any person other than the Speaker any declaration filed with him except in accordance with such directions as the Speaker may give.”

Notwithstanding what I have stated at the beginning of my reply, it is strongly arguable that when the 1991 Act was amended in 2002 to replace “*Clerk*” by “*Commission*”, the words “*in accordance with such directions as the Speaker may give*” in section 5 became redundant and should therefore have been deleted.

I understand that the Speaker has therefore not deemed it appropriate to issue any directions under section 5 of the Prevention of Corruption Act.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the filing of Declaration of Assets with the ICAC possesses two objectives -

(a) to discourage corruption and ensure greater transparency by exposing Members of the National Assembly to the risk of being investigated for ill-gotten assets; in that regard it is noteworthy that section 84 of the Prevention of Corruption Act provides, *inter alia*, for the power of the ICAC to investigate any public official or any person for having committed a corruption offence where he owns or is in control of property to an extent which is disproportionate to his emoluments or other income, and

(b) the better preservation of the confidentiality of the declarations of assets and the protection of those who make the declarations from being subjected to unwarranted publicity and an unsubstantiated, irresponsible and malicious allegation regarding the source of the assets.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Director-General of the ICAC that, subject to what I have stated earlier, the declaration of assets and liabilities made by Members of the National Assembly have not been laid before the National Assembly, but consultations, I believe, with Mr Speaker are ongoing regarding the modalities and the specific circumstances that would warrant the issue of a direction from the Speaker. If the law requires to be amended following such consultations, this will be done at the earliest opportunity.

Mr Speaker, Sir, in regard to part (b) of the question, the House will recall that in my replies to PQ B/1282 and PQ B/414, I emphasised the desirability of extending the requirements of the Declaration of Assets Act to all categories of officers and office holders who performed duties and exercised powers of such a nature that people may be tempted to offer them gratification. I also stated that I am in favour of extending the application of the Act to Chairpersons of parastatal bodies. However, regarding Chairpersons of parastatal bodies, I was advised that they cannot be brought under the ambit of the Act by way of Regulations. This will require an amendment to the Declaration of Assets Act.

I wish to add that notwithstanding that the Regulations and amendments are not ready, it is open to the ICAC, under section 84(1) to order any public official or other person suspected of having committed a corruption offence, to make a statement under oath about his assets and liabilities.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I have always been a strong advocate of transparency in public affairs. However, we must strike a balance between the proper and legitimate public interest in transparency and the interest of the public in attracting talented people to public life and retaining experienced officers in the public service; thus a proper respect for privacy and protection from ill-informed and irresponsible publicity.

It is also worth reminding ourselves that the objective of a declaration of asset legislation is not to label any public official as a corrupt individual. Its purpose is to monitor and to keep in view their assets. In a document published by the World Bank in November 2009, relating to

income and assets declaration, specific mention is made of the central issue at stake which is, I quote -

“Whether or not public access to this information violates the privacy of public officials, or poses a threat to their security”.

Mr Speaker, Sir, as announced in the Government Programme 2010-2015, Government has reorganised the former Management Audit Bureau into the Office of Public Sector Governance which is now operating under the aegis of my Office. The main responsibility of this Office is to ensure that Public Sector Management is in line with best practices of governance, in particular those relating to transparency and accountability. I wish to restate our unequivocal subscription to public governance and our commitment to continue enhancing our governance framework in order to maintain the integrity of our institutions.

**Mr Bérenger:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I believe the hon. Prime Minister will agree with me that section 5 Publication of declaration of the Declaration of Assets Act is perfectly clear and mandatory. It reads -

“On receipt of a declaration the Commission shall cause such declaration to be laid before the Assembly through Mr Speaker.”

I take it that it cannot mean anything else. So, it is mandatory on the Commission to send such declarations to Mr Speaker. What Mr Speaker does is something different. Whether he makes or does not make it, gives directions is something different. Will the hon. Prime Minister agree that it is, therefore, unacceptable that the Independent Commission Against Corruption should have taken upon itself not to abide by the law, not to send to Mr Speaker, to the Assembly, the declarations of assets?

**The Prime Minister:** Mr Speaker, Sir, it is not as clear as the hon. Leader of the Opposition is making it. In fact, it appears that there are different interpretations. The Legal Adviser of ICAC has interpreted it differently. He believes the two should be taken together, that is, section 5, which says that -

“On receipt of a declaration under section 3 or 4, the Commission shall, in accordance with such directions as the Speaker may give”.

He interpreted that the ‘shall’ and the ‘may give’ should be taken together and not separated. His interpretation is that the Commission should await the directions of the Speaker before causing such declaration to be laid before the National Assembly and that, in the absence of such a direction from Mr Speaker, he cannot cause such a declaration to be laid before the National Assembly. That’s his interpretation.

I have tried to check with other people what should be the interpretation. It is very difficult; there are different views on that interpretation. In fact, when the change of law happened in 1982, it appears, maybe, there was room for clarification for the procedures concerned. The fundamentals are clear; there is no difficulty about the fundamentals, what is the objective. But regarding how ICAC should send it to the Speaker, it seems the procedure is not

very clear. Perhaps we should have to modify this part of the law, Mr Speaker, Sir, because, quite rightly I think, it is not appropriate for Mr Speaker to give directions to an independent body, and neither do they feel they can send it, and in what procedure they should send it to the Speaker, unless there is such directive. That is the interpretation from ICAC.

Therefore, it is clear that we need to relook at this, and clarify the procedures as far as they are concerned. The fundamentals, as I said, are clear, but the procedures, how an independent body should give it to the Speaker, are not clear. I really believe that when the amendment was brought in 2002, this should have been looked at. Perhaps, this is where the difficulty is.

**Mr Bérenger:** With regard to the first part of his statement, the hon. Prime Minister himself said that the only interpretation that can be put on any directions, as the Speaker may give, must be targeting the Clerk, as it was under the previous law. So, in the first part of his statement, the Prime Minister says that and, now, he quotes ICAC. Why quote ICAC's Legal Adviser? Has the State Law Office's opinion on that been taken instead of ICAC's lawyer?

**The Prime Minister:** Obviously, we have taken the opinion of the State Law Office, but we also have to take the opinion of ICAC as to why they have not sent it; and that is the interpretation. The hon. Leader of the Opposition makes remarks about the beginning of my reply. I am just saying what the law is at the moment. I am not saying whether the interpretation is right or wrong.

**Mr Bérenger:** What is clear at any rate is the intention of the law to make these declarations of assets public; transparency to which the hon. Prime Minister has referred to, and we have obtained the opposite result. Will, therefore, urgent amendments be brought to clarify the situation and have it that all the declarations of assets and liabilities of all Members of Parliament will be, through Mr Speaker, placed in the Library of the Assembly? Because the whole purpose was for transparency.

**The Prime Minister:** Yes, I agree. In fact, Mr Speaker, Sir, I should say that, since the law was passed in April 2002, from 2002 to 2005, ICAC never sent any declaration to Mr Speaker. It was like this; perhaps nobody raised the issue at that time. There is clearly confusion, different interpretations of the law and, clearly, we need to amend it. I think it would be a simple amendment; personally, I don't think it should be a difficult amendment. Maybe, we should say that ICAC should send the declaration of assets to the Clerk of the National Assembly, who should then perhaps lay it on the Table of the Assembly, upon such directions given by Mr Speaker. I think it should be a small amendment.

**Mr Bérenger:** Mr Speaker, Sir, being given that there has been no transparency at all, can I know from the hon. Prime Minister whether he has been made aware of any case of failing to comply with the law or of making a false declaration under the Declaration of Assets Act?

**The Prime Minister:** Neither one nor the other, Mr Speaker, Sir.

**Mr Bérenger:** Can I, again, put the question, which I put just before the last one? Will urgent amendments be brought to the Declaration of Assets Act, to clarify the situation and achieve the goal of having the Declaration of Assets Act of all Members placed in the Library?

**The Prime Minister:** That's what I said, Mr Speaker, Sir. In fact, as I said, I believe there have been consultations between your Office and ICAC. I think it should not take that long, and we could then bring the amendments that need to be made.

**Mr Bérenger:** I move to the second part of my question. I will have to check on this opinion received that, for officers in parastatal bodies, the law does not apply. But, as far as public officers are concerned, there is no need to amend the law. The hon. Prime Minister has the power to make regulations under section 7 of the Declaration of Assets Act. We just had the most shocking example of the Chief Government Valuer. Will the hon. Prime Minister agree that it is urgent to have such regulations, and provide that officers like the Chief Government Valuer will also have to declare their assets and liabilities - to be made public there also?

**The Prime Minister:** As I said, Mr Speaker, Sir, in my answer, I have been advised that Chairpersons of parastatal bodies - I am taking the whole lot and not just the person being referred to - cannot be brought under the ambit of the Act by way of regulations. An amendment of the law will be required; we can look at that amendment at the same time, I suppose.

**Mr Bérenger:** In the meantime, can I ask the hon. Prime Minister whether he has given due consideration to the categories of officers that should be governed by such regulations?

**The Prime Minister:** We are looking at it but, like in all laws, we must be able to balance between competing public interest. That is why we have to look at it very carefully. We must also remember that we not only need to attract but retain talented and experienced people in the service. At the same time, there is the public interest that we have to look at. I think we have to strike a balance between the two.

**Mr Bhagwan:** I have not heard the hon. Prime Minister talking about Government-owned companies. We have heard about parastatal bodies. There are 100% State-owned companies, and we would like to know whether these would be included in the list of those who have to declare their assets.

**The Prime Minister:** The question was asked to me about this some time back in 2009, and I made the remark that the Government owned companies are already reporting the remuneration of Directors, including those of the Chairpersons, in their financial statements, as part of their compliance with the principle of good governance laid down in the code of corporate governance. As to whether it would be appropriate to extend that to them, we will have to look at it very carefully.

**Mr Bhagwan:** What about the assets and liabilities? Can they be included? Because now we are mentioning assets and liabilities.

**The Prime Minister:** We will look at all this together. There is no need to do it separately.

**Mr Ganoo:** The hon. Prime Minister has just talked about the advisability of reviewing the law. The Declaration of Assets Act defines the word 'assets', and this dates back to 1985 when the law was passed. But, now, with the passage of time, with the new financial crisis and economic evolution, we know that the word 'assets' has a wider meaning. Does the hon. Prime Minister think that we should review the definition of 'assets', and not include only property, vehicles, boats and shares as in the law, but widen it so that it can include promissory notes, other derivatives, gold and even other new instruments that have now come into existence?

**The Prime Minister:** I suppose we will have to look at that. Perhaps, the hon. Member could give me idea of what he thinks, how wide it has to be.

**Mr Guimbeau:** *Mr Speaker, Sir, I am referring to the Declaration of Assets Act. Je voudrais savoir du Premier ministre si the Declaration of Assets Act de ce jour couvre aussi les comptes bancaires et autres avoirs des honorables membres de l'assemblée nationale à l'étranger et, si non, est-ce que le Premier ministre va proposer des amendements à la Chambre afin que les membres de l'assemblée déclarent aussi leurs avoirs à l'étranger?*

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Speaker:** Order!

**Mr Guimbeau:** Foreign countries!

**The Prime Minister:** We must look at the practicability of this. I believe - I am talking from memory - a long time back, there was an article in "*L'Express*", citing a Judge of the Supreme Court having an account abroad and that he should have declared it. The Judge sued the paper and won the case, I believe, because he suggested that this was money that he earned abroad and not here. So, we must look at it very carefully; whether it is practical or not.

**Mr Guimbeau:** The Prime Minister is referring to accounts; that's good. But also, about the flats and all the *châteaux* abroad, Mr Speaker, Sir!

*(Interruptions)*

**The Prime Minister:** You will be surprised to know how many people have flats and all these abroad - and not flats - in the best places; you can think of in Paris and England. You will be surprised!

*(Interruptions)*

That is why I said, Mr Speaker, Sir, we must balance the two. We must look at the public interest but, at the same time, they are competing public interest. We have to look at that very carefully.

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Speaker:** Order! Hon. Bhagwan, please! Yes, hon. Leader of the Opposition!

**Mr Bérenger:** Can I ask a general question? Would the hon. Prime Minister agree with me that the mood at present in the country is crying for new measures to combat fraud and corruption and doing what has been mentioned, what I have proposed here would send a strong signal? Would the hon. Prime Minister agree with me?

**The Prime Minister:** I have always maintained that, Mr Speaker, Sir. As I said, even between 2002 and 2005, nothing was sent to Mr Speaker because that was the interpretation by ICAC at that time as well. So, it's not new.

*(Interruptions)*

I am sorry! Well, you were such "competent", you should have seen it yourself!

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Speaker:** Order! No more questions! Questions addressed to Dr. the hon. Prime Minister! Hon. Ms Deerpalsing!

#### **MR M. G. - BELLE ROSE - ROAD ACCIDENT**

**(No. B/419) Ms K. R. Deerpalsing (Third Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes)** asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in regard to the road accident which occurred on the Royal Road, Belle Rose, on or about 26 March 2011, and which caused the death of one Mr M. G., he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to where matters stand as to the inquiry carried out thereinto.

**The Prime Minister:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that on 26 March 2011 at about 22 00 hours, following an anonymous phone call received at Rose Hill Police Station, the Police attended to a case of road accident along Royal Road, Belle Rose, involving a private car and a motorcycle.

One Mr M. G., aged 50 who was on the motorcycle was found injured. He was conveyed to Victoria Hospital by SAMU personnel.

An alcohol test was performed by the personnel of the Emergency Response Service of the Western Division on the driver, one Mr S. P. of the private car involved in the accident. The test was positive. The driver refused to give further specimens of his breath as well as specimens of blood and urine. He was duly cautioned and later allowed to go on the condition that he calls back at the Police station on the following day for further enquiry. The next morning at 08 30 hours, the driver duly called at the Police station and his statement was recorded.

On 29 March 2011, Mr M. G. passed away in hospital without giving any statement to the Police. Autopsy performed on the same day by the Police Medical Officer revealed that death was caused by shock due to multiple injuries.

On the same day, a provisional charge of Involuntary Homicide by Imprudence was lodged against the driver of the car before the Rose Hill Court. He was allowed bail on the same day upon furnishing a surety of Rs8,000 and a recognizance of Rs20,000.

Enquiry into the matter is ongoing.

**Ms Deerpalsing:** Mr Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Prime Minister whether, in these cases - in this case it appears to be a hit and run - there are the possibilities that the...

**Mr Speaker:** In this case! Not these cases!

**Ms Deerpalsing:** In this case. Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. I would like to know whether, in this case, the alleged culprit could go to the clinic and whether the laws should not be amended to prevent the Police from furthering their inquiry.

**The Prime Minister:** In fact, I think we need to re-look at that law also, Mr Speaker, Sir, to make it even a stronger piece of legislation. One of the things that hon. Minister Bachoo did, quite rightly, which a lot of people could not understand, for example, people do hit and run and you can't identify the number plate. With the new number plates, at least, it's easier to identify - I don't say you could always identify - and even from a long distance you can see it. There is also the obligation for the person who is driving to assist. For any person failing to render assistance is also an offence. The person is supposed to report within four hours at the very latest about the accident.

Now, we have seen in cases what they do; they do not go to the hospital, because if they go to the hospital, the Police can go to them and ask questions and do whatever they want to do; but when they go to clinic, apparently this cannot be done. So, that's the way of avoiding all the tests that need to be done. This, we will have a look at, because this would be an easy way. And, very often, what happens, you get a barrister who comes and advises him to go to the clinic so that Police cannot have access to him; that we have to change.

**Mr Ganoo:** Can I ask the hon. Prime Minister one question? Even though a driver refuses to undergo the breath test, the blood test or the urine test, if the Police officer suspects him of being under the influence of alcohol, he has the power to arrest him. In that case, he might have refused, but I understand that the Police allowed him to go. But he should have been...

**The Prime Minister:** The hon. Member misunderstood me. He was already in custody and he did accept to have the breath test in that case, which was positive. But what he refused was to have the specimens of his blood and urine to be collected. He was then cautioned and, only later on, he was allowed to go, that is, not himself driving, but somebody else. That's the law as it is, and not just here. It's also the same in other countries. Once you have done the blood test, you cannot just lock him up. After a while, he was allowed to go; not himself driving, but somebody else driving him.

**Mr Ganoo:** The point I was making is that the Police in that case had power to arrest him for the night in question.

**The Prime Minister:** In fact, he was under arrest - so to speak - because he was in custody of the Police. He was taken, I think, to some station where he refused to have his blood and urine taken. Maybe, we should look at this while we look at the law - amend it. My understanding is that, in other countries, it is the same as it is here, that is, you don't lock him up. You can allow him to go, but then he goes to court and have all the procedures that have been followed here. But we can look at this.

**Ms Deerpalsing:** Mr Speaker, Sir, in the case of this Police inquiry, the fact is that the widow of this person does not work and has no revenue and they are waiting for the Police inquiry to end before they can go to the insurance, before they can do a lot of other things, where they can make payments for their house and so on. Can I ask the hon. Prime Minister whether, in this case or in such cases, the Police could fast track the inquiry and, at least, give some administrative help to the widow of this person?

**The Prime Minister:** I will have to ask the Commissioner of Police, but my understanding is that what takes a long time is the forensic, what they have done on the forensic side; they need to have all this before they can do this, unfortunately. But I will certainly pass this to the Commissioner of Police to see whether this can be done, not just in this case but in any case.

**Ms Deerpalsing:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I have one last question about this. In this case again, - it's a case that happens many times - would it be necessary to amend the law so that the financial institutions which are putting pressure waiting for the Police inquiry would give a *période de grâce* to these people?

**The Prime Minister:** Sorry, I did not quite understand. What does the hon. Member mean by '*période de grâce*'?

**Mr Speaker:** I think the hon. Member has to be specific on the financial institution. Which financial institution is she referring to? Is it an insurance company?

**Ms Deerpalsing:** Yes.

**Mr Speaker:** Yes, insurance company.

**The Prime Minister:** Is it whether the insurance company should not press for payments? Does the insurance company give them loan? I am not quite clear.

**Mr Speaker:** I don't know. I am just trying to guide the hon. Member. This is a case; even if there is a Police inquiry going on, it does not stop the civil action to proceed. You can proceed concurrently with the civil action. It is only a question of liability; who is liable and who is not liable. The Police inquiry does not stop the civil matter to proceed.

*(Interruptions)*

**Ms Deerpalsing:** Mr Speaker, Sir, what I am trying to say is that, pending the completion of the Police inquiry, the insurance company is putting pressure for the widow to pay the loans and the woman does not have any revenue. They are waiting for the Police papers to go to the insurance company.

**Mr Speaker:** I think we have an institution which has been created by this House - I don't remember the name - in the wake of the sale by levy, she can address her problem there and have the loan rescheduled.

**The Prime Minister:** What I will do, Mr Speaker, Sir, is to take up the matter with the authorities concerned to see whether this can be accelerated.

**Mr Speaker:** Exactly!

**The Prime Minister:** Now I understand what the hon. Member is saying.

### **HORSE RACING BOOKMAKERS - RELOCATION**

**(No. B/420) Ms K. R. Deerpalsing (Third Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes)** asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in regard to the horse racing bookmakers, he will state if the High Level Committee on gambling will consider the relocation thereof back to the Champ de Mars, as a matter of priority.

**The Prime Minister:** Mr Speaker, Sir, as the House is aware, Government set up a High Level Committee, under my chairmanship, to examine the issue of proliferation of gaming houses and discotheques in the country. Then a Technical Committee was instituted under the chairmanship of the Secretary to the Cabinet and Head of the Civil Service to examine the consequences of the proliferation of gaming houses and discotheques and to make recommendations to the High Level Committee.

The terms of reference of the Technical Committee were restricted to 'gaming houses and discotheques'. However, in order to address the problem in a comprehensive manner, the Committee did cover other types of gambling activities, including those of bookmakers operating outside the Champ de Mars.

As I stated in my reply to PQ B/165 at our sitting of 12 April last, the Technical Committee has already submitted its report in which it has made numerous recommendations to mitigate the unintended consequences of gambling activities, including the activities of bookmakers operating outside the race course.

As the law stands, Mr Speaker, Sir, bookmakers are entitled to operate outside the race course or "off course", inside and outside Champ de Mars. There are at present 11 such bookmakers who are operating off course, including one in Rodrigues. In order to attenuate the negative consequences of the activities of these off course bookmakers, the Technical Committee has recommended that all bookmakers be eventually confined to the Champ de Mars. However, this will require an amendment to the Gambling Regulatory Authority Act.

In my reply to PQ B/165, I informed that consultations are under way with the Attorney-General's Office for the implementation of the measures which have been recommended by the Technical Committee. I also elaborated on the measures envisaged by the Gambling Regulatory Authority (GRA) to address the problems associated with gambling in general and I indicated that a review of the functions of the GRA is also being undertaken at the same time.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I wish to stress on the fact that, since the setting up of the High Level Committee, I believe no new licence has been granted to any bookmaker to operate either on or off course. Furthermore, the licences of existing gaming houses which have become a threat to public order are not being renewed on expiry. In this regard, at the request of the Gambling Regulatory Authority, the Local Authorities, with the assistance of the Police, are conducting an exercise with a view to identifying those gambling houses which constitute a public nuisance.

The House will recall, Mr Speaker, Sir, that the vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Finance also announced measures in his last Budget Speech which are aimed at minimising the harm caused by compulsive gambling. The measures included a 67% increase in the licence fees of all bookmakers. Moreover, in his replies to several Parliamentary Questions on this matter, the vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Finance explained that the GRA is looking into the whole issue of gambling advertisement in consultation with all stakeholders. He also informed that the licences of two on course bookmakers have not been renewed due to indebtedness to the MRA.

As announced, Mr Speaker, Sir, in the Government Programme 2010-2015, Government will relocate gambling activities either in specifically designated areas, or at one designated area, away from residential and commercial areas, with a view to mitigating the unintended consequences of gambling. I wish to reassure the House that we shall, as a responsible Government, continue to exercise the necessary oversight and control on gambling activities so as to ensure that children, vulnerable people and the society at large are protected from the unintended consequences of gambling.

**Ms Deerpalsing:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I am very happy to hear that the Technical Committee has recommended that bookmakers be moved back to Champ de Mars. May I ask the hon. Prime Minister whether there is a time frame, sort of a deadline because in the meantime the bookmakers are laughing all the way to the bank while the society is being dilapidated?

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Speaker:** No comments, please!

**The Prime Minister:** We haven't put a time frame, but we are practically finalising it. So, I don't think it will take that long. As I explained, Mr Speaker, Sir, the GRA together with the local authorities, with the assistance of the Police are looking one by one the cases. As soon as they finish, I suppose we should be ready by then.

**Ms Deerpalsing:** So, may I just ask where matters stand with respect to the consultations with the Attorney General's office for the Technical Committee to implement this recommendation?

**The Prime Minister:** I think I did say, Mr Speaker, Sir, that a review of the functions of the GRA are also being looked at, at the same time so that once we do it, we do it all in one go, not bits and pieces. So, what the Technical Committee recommended has already been looked at by the Attorney General's office, but we are waiting for the other to finish so that we can pursue the matter.

**Ms Deerpalsing:** Mr Speaker, Sir, just one last question. My question was about horse racing, bookmakers, but, in his answer, the hon. Prime Minister talked about gambling activities and referred to the paragraph in the Government-Programme to move all of these gambling activities, not just horse racing bookmakers into one spot. May I ask the hon. Prime Minister to enlighten the House as to where matters stand on that aspect of moving all these gambling activities away from residential areas?

**The Prime Minister:** I must clarify, Mr Speaker, Sir. I don't think we can mix the bookmakers with all the other gambling activities. The bookmakers, if we move them to Champ de Mars, would be at Champ de Mars, but not to the same place as the other gambling activities are being carried out. What I did say was that we are looking at whether we should move them to specific areas, away from residential areas, or should we move them to one specific area and then only one place where all these gambling activities will take place.

**Mr Fakeemeeah:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I would like to come with a more direct question to the hon. Prime Minister. Is his Government for the promotion of gambling or against it?

**The Prime Minister:** That will give rise to a long debate, but there are two things we must look at. We must also look at the freedom of people. If somebody wants to gamble, we don't want, like a complete authoritarian say 'you can do this, but not that.' People also have to be responsible themselves. But what we can do is not to encourage compulsive gambling.

*(Interruptions)*

That is also a point the Government does.

*(Interruptions)*

No. In all countries it is like this. Even in a country like Singapore which did not want to have any gambling, as you know, now they have gambling. I must tell the hon. Member when I was last in Singapore, I did ask the actual Prime Minister: how is it that you have changed the policy? His answer was: we regret we didn't do it before, but it has to be controlled.

**Mr Speaker:** Last question!

**Ms Deerpalsing:** Mr Speaker, Sir, precisely regarding the answer that the hon. Prime Minister gave about earmarking a site for all the other places, I would like to ask the hon. Prime

Minister whether the Technical Committee has started to identify a site where the other gambling activities could be relocated to.

**The Prime Minister:** A few possible sites have been looked at. Whether we should proceed with one or the other, we haven't decided, but a few possible sites have been looked at.

**Mr Speaker:** Last question, hon. Ganoo!

**Mr Ganoo:** In the event of the relocation taking place at Champ de Mars or any other specified area, who will bear the cost of that relocation? Has the hon. Prime Minister given thought of the advisability of asking the bookmakers to contribute to that relocation exercise?

**The Prime Minister:** I think what we need to do is to give them notice, Mr Speaker, Sir, and they will have to bear the cost from what I see. Government cannot go and carry their stuff to whatever place, but I think what is important is that we give them reasonable notice of what we intend to do.

#### **'LE VIGILANT' VESSEL**

**(No. B/421) 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 'Le Vigilant', he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to if it is operational and, if not, why not.

**The Prime Minister:** Mr Speaker, Sir, the contract for the construction of the Vigilant between the Government of Mauritius and the Western Canada Marine Group was signed on 17 February 1994.

Since its commissioning, the vessel had repeated shaft problems and had undergone major repairs on various occasions at the Naval Dockyard, Mumbai, in the years 2000, 2001, 2003 and 2004.

However, the vessel continued to have problem with its shaft and it has not been deployed since March 2006.

After several unsuccessful attempts to repair the vessel, a Board of Survey was set up in July 2007 by the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development for the disposal of the vessel.

In September 2009, the Board of Survey submitted its report to the Commissioner of Police and recommended that some repairs be carried out to the vessel in order to obtain a better sale price and that the vessel be disposed of through an international broker, specialised in sales of navy vessels.

Subsequently, in June 2010, repairs amounting to Rs1,955,000 were carried out to the vessel at the Taylor Smith Ltd, as recommended by the Board of Survey.

I am informed that so far, three tendering exercises have been carried out by the Commissioner of Police for the disposal of the Vigilant.

The first one, in July 2010, where 11 international brokers specialised in the sale of navy vessels, was invited to submit their bids. By the closing date on 06 October 2010, no bids were received.

The second exercise was carried out in November 2010, after consultation with the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development again by the closing date on 14 December 2010, no bids were received.

A third tendering exercise is now being carried out. The closing date for submission of bids has been set for 20 July 2011.

Mr Speaker, Sir, we have already made arrangements to replace the *Vigilant* by a new and modern offshore patrol vessel.

In fact, during my visit to India in October 2005, the Government of India agreed to provide an offshore patrol vessel to the Government of Mauritius.

An agreement has already been signed with the Government of India for the acquisition of an offshore patrol vessel which is at the moment being constructed by the Garden Reach Shipbuilders and Engineers Ltd, India. In this regard, the Government of India has provided a one-time grant of US\$ 10 million and a Line of Credit of US\$ 48.5 million extended through the Exim Bank of India to the Government of the Republic of Mauritius. The delivery of the vessel is expected in September 2014.

**Mr Bérenger:** Since the Prime Minister told us that the last time ‘*Le Vigilant*’ took to sea was in 2006, can I ask him whether he has a figure of how much, in terms of maintenance cost and staffing, “*Le Vigilant*” costs every year?

**The Prime Minister:** I have the cost here. In 1997, the cost was Rs1,507,000; between 1999 and 2000 it was Rs9,157,826. It includes the cost of repairs and everything together. From January 2001 to September 2001 it was Rs16 m.; from 2002 and 2003 it was Rs10,852,688; 2003 to 2004 it was Rs7,519,580; 2004 to 2005 it was Rs4,389,988; 2005 to 2006 it was Rs18,433,328; in 2010 it has cost us Rs1,955,000; that is the sum that we paid for the dockyard.

## **PRISONS - CHILDREN**

**(No. B/422) 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 children who are staying with their mothers in the prisons, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Prisons, information as to the number thereof, indicating -

- (a) their respective age, and
- (b) the number of hours that they spend outside the cells.

**The Prime Minister:** Mr Speaker, Sir, according to section 27(2) of the Reform Institutions Act, a female detainee, if she so wishes, is allowed to keep her child with her in prison until the child attains the age of five.

I am informed by the Commissioner of Prisons that there are currently nine children who are staying at the Women Prison, Beau Bassin with their mothers, of whom three are foreigners. Two of the children are three years old, four are two years old, two are one year old and one is four months old.

In regard to the last part of the question, I am informed that the mothers along with their children remain outside their cells in the recreation area at the Mother and Child Care Unit during the day from 0600 hrs to 1800 hrs.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I wish to inform the House that, at the initiative of the vice-President of the Republic of Mauritius, the Child and Family Development Programme of the National Empowerment Foundation, in collaboration with the Mauritius Prisons Service, is working on a project for the setting up of a Crèche in a compound outside the Prisons at Beau Bassin. The Crèche will accommodate 20 children up to three years of age and will cater for children of prisons staff, those of detainees as well as those coming from families under NEF programmes.

The main objective of the project will be to ensure the psycho-social development of the babies whilst freeing the mothers to engage in productive activities.

**Mrs Labelle:** Mr Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Prime Minister whether he will consider asking the Commissioner of Police to make arrangements for these children? Because at the age of five, they will have to leave the mother, if she is still having the sentence and go outside and live with the person who will take care of them just to avoid the trauma that they are experiencing. To let them go at regular visits to those people who will care for them after the age of five!

**The Prime Minister:** My understanding is that, once they reach the age of five, this is what they try to do. But, very often, you can't find people also who want to take care of them. Then I think the Ministry has provisions to take them to different Child Care Units.

**Mr Obeegadoo:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I am happy to hear that kindergarten facilities may be provided, but what about nutrition? It is now well-established that the quality of nutrition is fundamental to the development of cognitive abilities of children. Children up to five are imprisoned. Are they being offered a prison diet?

**The Prime Minister:** I will have to look into that. I am sure they give them proper diet, Mr Speaker, Sir. It won't be the same diet as the prisoners, I would think so.

**Mr Bérenger:** Can I ask the hon. Prime Minister whether special efforts are being made to get the countries - because we are told that several foreigners are among those lady prisoners - where they came from to have them to serve their remaining sentence in that country, including South Africa? South Africa has refused until now, but I think with a case like that, with young

kids and the mother, it strengthens our arguments to have them accept that these ladies should terminate their sentence in their home country.

**The Prime Minister:** I would be always trying to do this, Mr Speaker, Sir. As the hon. Leader of the Opposition is saying, South Africa completely refuses to change the position on this. We have tried to stress on them that this could be important. I can renew the effort, but they have so far refused to do so.

### **MBC - NEWS BULLETINS**

(No. B/423) **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 television news bulletins, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation, information as to if all of them, broadcast in the different languages, on any one day, contain substantially the same elements of information and, if not, why not.

**The Prime Minister:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Director-General of the Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation that all television news bulletins, which are broadcast in different languages, on any one day, do contain, substantially the same elements of information.

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Speaker:** Order!

**The Prime Minister:** However, the Director-General has pointed out that, news items regarding events which take place late in the afternoon are, due to time constraints, broadcast in the French news bulletin only and not in the Hindustani, Creole or English bulletins on any one day as this depends on the availability of the material in the broadcast format. These news items are taken up in a concise form on the next day in the other TV news bulletins.

According to the Director-General of the Corporation, this practice has been consistently followed by the MBC in order to inform the public immediately after an important event has taken place.

I am further informed, Mr Speaker, Sir, by the Director-General of the MBC that, reports on Parliamentary questions and National Assembly debates have also been integrated into the French news bulletin in order to reach the widest possible audience.

**Dr. S. Boolell:** May I ask the hon. Prime Minister whether translation from the original language the local news are recorded in is made into our different languages of the news bulletin by qualified translators?

**The Prime Minister:** I have found that, even when I speak Creole, it is sometimes not - because some people do not understand the subtlety of one word, and even in the newspapers, it is the same thing. So, it is not just the MBC. It is training that we have to look at.

**Mr Bhagwan:** Can I ask the Prime Minister whether he finds it normal that we are given news as from 6.00, 7.00, 7.30, *coumadir potion tousser*. At 11.30 at night, I was watching the hon. Prime Minister the other day for five minutes on TV. Is it normal?

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Speaker:** Order, now!

**The Prime Minister:** Let me say...

*(Interruptions)*

Well, thank you...

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Speaker:** Order, now!

**The Prime Minister:** At least, I know now that the hon. Member has better sentiments towards me.

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Speaker:** Order, now!

**The Prime Minister:** In fact, is the hon. Member saying that we should not have the news at 11.00 p.m.?

**Mr Bhagwan:** Not at 11.30 p.m.

**The Prime Minister:** But, sometimes, people claim that they have not been able to see the news. I, myself, have never got a chance to see the news.

*(Interruptions)*

In other countries, if you look at Skype television or LCI, they give it every...

**Mr Bhagwan:** There, it is balanced...

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Speaker:** Order! Order! The question is not about balance but about time.

**The Prime Minister:** In fact, Mr Speaker, Sir, last time I was in my office and - because the hon. Member was saying his voice is not heard - I was surprised that there was just the hon. Member and nobody else.

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Speaker:** Order! I have to inform the House that Parliamentary Question No. B/428 has been withdrawn. Time is over! Questions addressed to Ministers! Hon. Ms Anquetil!

## ***ILES VANILLE CONCEPT***

**(No. B/433) Ms S. Anquetil (Fourth Member for Vacoas & Floreal)** asked the Minister of Tourism and Leisure whether, in regard to the “*Iles Vanille*” concept, he will state where matters stand.

**Mr Bodha:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I would like to thank the hon. Member for giving us the opportunity to share with the House the vision and the status of the “*Iles Vanille*” concept.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the idea behind this concept is to bring the whole Indian Ocean region into an extended global recognition along the same lines as the Caribbean or the Bahamas region.

The label was chosen because of the common heritage among all these islands. Mauritius, Seychelles, Reunion, Madagascar, Comoros and Mayotte have shown their willingness to work together in synergy, so that the Vanilla Islands present a unique experience in the Indian Ocean for travellers.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the reason behind the setting up of the Vanilla Islands experience for travellers is fourfold -

- (i) adapting to the demand of the new commercial environment; in fact, multi-destination is now becoming a very important trend in the tourism sector;
- (ii) reinforcing the attractiveness of the Indian Ocean;
- (iii) the conquest of a share of the new markets such as India, China, Middle East and the Nordic Countries, and
- (iv) promoting the islands as complementary destinations.

Mr Speaker, Sir, our traditional markets such as France, UK, Germany, Italy and Switzerland are being targeted, together with the new emerging markets of India and China, where we are laying a lot of focus. This is in line with our endeavour to diversify our tourism generating markets by tapping new and emerging possibilities. The Vanilla Islands concept as a marketing tool has been a success and will be very appealing.

This concept is being crystallized on the three markets I mentioned, and last week, in my reply to PQ B/379, I highlighted the initiatives that we are taking in that connection.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the ball has been set rolling since August last year, and since then a number of initiatives have already been undertaken -

- (i) a meeting of all Tour Operators of the neighbouring countries was held in September 2010;

- (ii) a joint presentation with Reunion, Seychelles and Madagascar was made in Berlin in March 2010;
- (iii) a number of press trips are being currently organised;
- (iv) a website has been developed, and
- (v) during my last mission in China, I unveiled a brand-new travel concept of ‘Vanilla Islands Travel Itinerary’ in Beijing and Shanghai, in the Road Show which was held this year.

In addition, as a further step, new cruise routes between Mauritius, Reunion, Madagascar and the Seychelles are being envisaged, with a view to facilitating the diverse experience of the Indian Ocean.

Mr Speaker, Sir, furthermore, with a view to giving added dynamism to the concept, I am proposing to organise a Forum with the participation of Ministers of SADC of the Indian Ocean, together with the Minister of Tourism of China, in the beginning of 2012, so as to create a synergy between the South African and Indian Ocean countries, and marketing the regions of China.

Mr Speaker, Sir, accessibility is, however, a key issue in the success of this project and inter island accessibility will definitely trigger and boost the demand.

I would like to point out the active participation of Air Mauritius in this endeavour. In fact, Air Mauritius has introduced a symbolical fee of one euro from its European destinations and one pound from the UK for all those wishing to extend their stay to Reunion, that is, the trip will cost only one euro.

I would also like to point out that the airfare of Shanghai-Mauritius will be the same for Shanghai-Mauritius-Reunion and the same for Shanghai-Mauritius-Madagascar, that is, the legs between Mauritius-Reunion and Mauritius-Madagascar will be free to the Chinese traveller.

Along the same lines, Mr Speaker, Sir, we have convened a meeting of 15 airlines of the Indian Ocean on Monday next, so as to see to it that we can have an air access possibility.

**Mr Bodha:** Mr Speaker, Sir, the success will depend on visa-free travel, air access facilities, close cooperation...

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Speaker:** Order! Order!

**Mr Bodha:** ...between tour operators and the authorities.

Mr Speaker, Sir, concerning visa facilities, I am pleased to inform the House that, following the official visit of Dr. the hon. Prime Minister to France and his meeting with President Sarkozy, the French authorities have...

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Speaker:** Order! Order! Order!

**Mr Bodha:** ...decided to issue visa on arrival to Reunion Island to Chinese, Indian, Russian and South African tourists coming from Mauritius. The measure will be effective as from 01 June 2011. This is considered to be *une mesure d'exception et une mesure exceptionnelle*.

This measure will no doubt give a new boost to tourist arrivals from these islands, Mr Speaker, Sir, and I am convinced that, in the coming years, we will see the result of this concept.

**Mr Bérenger:** Since the hon. Minister insisted that the idea is to promote market, the whole of our region, and he included Mayotte in the islands that he mentioned, can I know what the situation is exactly, what is the attitude of the Comoros authorities and of Mayotte authorities?

**Mr Bodha:** As regards to the Comoros, they are on board and...

**Mr Bérenger:** I can rephrase it.

**Mr Bodha:** Please!

**Mr Bérenger:** Do the Comoros authorities agree to Mayotte being part of all that campaign?

**Mr Bodha:** From the information I have, the answer is yes.

**Ms Anquetil:** Merci, M. le président. En vendant plusieurs îles de l'océan Indien à la fois, est-ce que le concept 'Iles Vanille' est à l'avantage de notre destination ou ne va-t-il pas diluer notre campagne de marketing parce que, quelque part, le client aurait passé quinze jours chez nous et, du coup, il se retrouve à la Réunion ou ailleurs.

**Mr Bodha:** Mr Speaker, Sir, this question has been asked but multi-destination is becoming the new trend because the tourist is spending one day or two in Reunion Island, he will spend four days in Mauritius.

In fact, to ask a tourist to fly 9 to 10 hours from China and to stay just in Mauritius is not at all attractive. On the contrary, once we have crystallized the Vanilla concept, we can be the stopover between China, India and Africa. The concept, in fact, is later to package the Vanilla Islands together with South Africa and Kenya.

**Mr Bérenger:** Can I ask the hon. Minister that we can do this joint marketing, this joint promotion and so on, without getting stuck with the *Iles Vanille* concept? What we have to do

with *Vanille*? We have other assets to market. We can market it together, but *Vanille* is Comores, *Vanille* is Madagascar. Where is our *Vanille* here?

**Mr Bodha:** This concept was conceived before I arrived, Mr Speaker, Sir, and I have continued with it.

**Ms Anquetil:** I just want to ask the hon. Minister how many potential combinations within the South West Islands of the Indian Ocean will be proposed to the travellers.

**Mr Bodha:** The cruise today involves all the islands...

*(Interruptions)*

The cruise already includes all the islands, Mr Speaker, Sir.

As regards the combination, we can combine Mauritius with Reunion Island, Mauritius with Madagascar, Mauritius with the Seychelles, Mauritius with Rodrigues, Mauritius with South Africa or Mauritius with Kenya.

**Mr Lesjongard:** Mr Speaker, Sir, with regard to this new concept, may I ask the hon. Minister how will he ensure that not only the big players but also the small players will benefit from that concept, especially in the context of that *démocratisation de l'économie*?

**Mr Bodha:** That was the case when we went to China, Mr Speaker, Sir. All the big groups were with us together with the small players.

**Mr Balo Moody:** The hon. Minister just mentioned that this concept is working on very well with regard to all these countries mentioned. Has he received complaints from the Reunion tourist operators, namely they are complaining about the fact that the tourists will have to come to Mauritius first before they go to Reunion Island?

**Mr Bodha:** There have been some complaints and some remarks from the Reunion Authorities as regards why should the Chinese tourists or the Indian tourists come to Mauritius before going to Reunion Island and why they cannot do the flight directly. I would like to point out to the House, Mr Speaker, Sir, that it is the French Authorities themselves who have agreed, as a *mesure d'exception*, that the tourists should first come to Mauritius and then extend their stay to Reunion Island; otherwise, they would need a Schengen visa. To get a Schengen visa in their country of origin would be very difficult and would not facilitate at all access to Reunion Island.

**Mr Bhagwan:** Can the hon. Minister inform the House how much the taxpayers of Mauritius have spent up to now in putting up this new concept of *Iles Vanille*? Because the taxpayers have spent millions of rupees for...

**Mr Speaker:** No, no! No comment! How much money has been spent? Please answer.

*(Interruptions)*

No comment!

**Mr Bodha:** We have been using the funds of the campaign in different markets that we have been using so far.

**Mr François:** Certainly the concept as a material tool will be attractive for inbound tourists. Is the hon. Minister agreeable that regular flights between these islands is fundamental? Does he consider to reopening the direct flight between Rodrigues and Reunion Island by Air Mauritius or other airlines and, if yes, when?

**Mr Bodha:** This is a very specific question. As regards air links, it relates to the Prime Minister's Office. Yesterday, there was *un atelier de travail* as regards Rodrigues. What we are working at is the possibility of having what we call opportunity flights between Reunion and Rodrigues, for example, for Easter, end-of-the-year or the vacation period, so that we do not need to have a scheduled weekly flight, but we can have a number of flights between Reunion and Rodrigues as and when required.

**Mr Ameer Meea:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I did not hear the hon. Minister answering how much this has cost the country. Can I ask him if the cost is being shared among the islands and in what proportion?

**Mr Bodha:** I cannot give the proportion. What we have done so far was a common workshop in Berlin where all the countries were present. The second one was when we went to Beijing and there was a sharing of cost. If there is a specific question, I can come with the exact quantum of costs.

**Mr Speaker:** Hon. Seeruttun, last question!

**Mr Seeruttun:** We, in Mauritius, have always targeted the high end tourist market. With that new product on offer now, are we still on the same line of targeting of that market or are we diversifying into other markets now?

**Mr Bodha:** The upper segment of the market is the only possibility for Mauritius. We have to remain in that segment.

### **MSA – TOP CADRES - SALARIES & BENEFITS**

**(No. B/434) Ms K. R. Deerpalsing (Third Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes)** asked the Minister of Agro-Industry and Food Security whether, in regard to the Mauritius Sugar Authority, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Authority, information as to the updated salaries and benefits drawn by the top five cadres thereof.

**The Minister of Arts and Culture (Mr M. Choonee):** Mr Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I will be replying to the questions addressed to the Minister of Agro-Industry and Food Security.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I have been informed by the Mauritius Sugar Authority that there are only 3 posts in the top cadres which are presently filled.

The salaries and benefits drawn by the three top cadres are as follows –

- (i) The Executive Director draws a monthly salary of Rs125,000.
- Rs13,000 as entertainment and chauffeur-driven allowances,
  - Rs2,500 as telephone allowances,
  - Rs4,000 as member of the project implementation committee for the Field Operations Regrouping & Irrigation Project (FORIP).
- (ii) The Deputy Executive Director draws a salary of Rs91,758,
- Rs2,200 as entertainment allowance,
  - Rs10,000 as additional responsibility allowance,
  - Rs5,250 as allowance for Field Operations Regrouping & Irrigation Project (FORIP),
  - Rs11,000 as travel grant, and also
  - Rs500 as telephone allowance.
- (iii) Four Technical Officers/Senior Technical Officers draw a monthly salary of Rs47,312.
- In addition, their benefits are based on responsibility. The average is about Rs21,000. The benefits cover the member of Boards, and Board and Staff Committee, FORIP Committee and travel grant.
- (iv) Three posts, namely Technical Manager; Finance Manager and Scientific Officers are vacant and carry basic salary of Rs72,000, Rs30,000 to Rs47,312 respectively.

**Ms Deerpalsing:** Can I ask the hon. Minister whether one of these cadres that he mentioned also doubles up as an adviser to the substantive Minister?

*(Interruptions)*

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

**Ms Deerpalsing:** Mr Speaker, Sir, can I ask the hon. Minister, at a time when small planters – because these salaries are being subsidised by all planters, but the small planters also - are feeling the hit of a decrease in price, of an increase in cost of production, where do matters stand in terms of the cess reform?

**Mr Choonee:** Mr Speaker, Sir, Government has undertaken two measures. One is for cess reform to institutions funded by cess.

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Speaker:** Order, please!

**Mr Choonee:** In this regard, Government has already taken up a commitment...

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Speaker:** Hon. Bhagwan, you are going a bit too far now. Can you stop interrupting the House like this? You have to behave as a hon. Member, please! Carry on!

**Mr Choonee:** I repeat this part, Mr Speaker, Sir. The main measure which is undertaken by Government to reduce cess is the reform of cess funded institutions. In this regard, Government has already taken up the commitment with the European Union to bring down cess for the crop of 2011. Based on a crop of 450 *tonnes*, the cess would be reduced to some Rs630 per *tonne*, thus the planter will benefit an additional amount of Rs500 for crop season 2011.

**Ms Deerpalsing:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I know that the substantive Minister is not here. May I ask the hon. Minister whether the three posts that he mentioned, that are vacant at the moment, that these posts should not be filled pending the reform?

**Mr Choonee:** This is what is expected, Mr Speaker, Sir, the posts won't be filled.

**Mr Ganoo:** Can the hon. Minister table a list of the qualifications of the top cadres and those at the managerial level especially which he referred to?

**Mr Choonee:** I don't have any objection, Sir.

#### **MSIRI - TOP CADRES - SALARIES & BENEFITS**

**(No. B/435) Ms K. R. Deerpalsing (Third Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes)** asked the Minister of Agro-Industry and Food Security whether, in regard to the Mauritius Sugar Industry Research Institute, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Institute, information as to the updated salaries and benefits drawn by the top five cadres of the Institute.

**The Minister of Arts and Culture (Mr M. Choonee):** Mr Speaker Sir, with your permission, I shall reply to this question.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I have been informed by the Mauritius Sugar Industry Research Institute (MSIRI) that the salaries and benefits drawn by the top five cadres of the Institute are as follows

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- (i) The Director draws a monthly salary of Rs140,000.  
Benefits:
  - Rs39,000 as non-pensionable duty allowance;
  - Rs31,770 as passage benefits;
  - Rs10,700 as petrol allowance;
  - Rs750 for medical insurance coverage;
  - Rs28,096 as car allowance.

*(Interruptions)*

The hon. Member wants the top five cadres, isn't it?

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Speaker:** Yes, the question is about the top five. The hon. Minister can carry on.

**Mr Choonee:** (ii) Three (3) Principal Research Managers each drawing a monthly salary of Rs80,000;

Benefits:

- Rs6,500 as Head of Department non-pensionable allowance,
- Rs6,900 as passage benefits;
- Rs8,000 as petrol allowance;
- Rs12,000 as housing allowance;
- Rs400 for communication purposes;
- Rs950 as medical insurance coverage, on top of that he gets a car allowance which is provided.

(iii) The Finance and Administrative Manager draws a monthly salary of Rs80,000.

Benefits:

- Rs6,500 as Head of Department non-pensionable allowance;
- Rs6,928 as passage benefits;
- Rs8,000 as petrol allowance;
- Rs12,000 as housing allowance;
- Rs400 for communication purposes;
- Rs950 for medical insurance coverage, and a car allowance.

(iv) Ten Research Managers with basic salaries varying between Rs59,000 to Rs75,000.

(v) (21) Research Officers with basic salaries varying between Rs38,500 to Rs60,500.

Other benefits comprise of passage benefits, car allowance, medical insurance coverage, travelling allowance per kilometre.

**Ms Deerpalsing:** Mr Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Minister whether these fat-cat salaries are regimented by the PRB or whether the Board of the MSIRI can do whatever they

want in an environment where the price of sugar is going down and planters are feeling the brunt of the increase in cost of production?

**Mr Choonee:** Mr Speaker, Sir, the salary structure and package benefits at the institute were determined not by PRB but by an independent institution, the Core Services Mauritius Ltd which was appointed by the Board in 2008.

**Ms Deerpalsing:** Mr Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Minister what kind of difficult job these people are doing that warrants a salary more than the Prime Minister of this country?

**Mr Choonee:** I can't...

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Speaker:** The hon. Minister can't answer! Order! Hon. Dr. Sorefan!

**Dr. Sorefan:** Mr Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister has not mentioned one benefit for the Director. There are eight projects financed by the EU on ACP Sugar Cane Programme. Can we know from the hon. Minister how much the Director is benefiting from this fund?

**Mr Choonee:** I don't have the information, Sir.

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Speaker:** The hon. Minister needs notice of the question. Hon. Bhagwan!

**Mr Bhagwan:** Mr Speaker, Sir, can we know from the hon. Minister who chairs the Board of the MSIRI?

**Mr Choonee:** I don't have this information as well, Sir, but I can provide it definitely.

**Mr Speaker:** The hon. Minister can. Yes.

**Ms Deerpalsing:** Mr Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Minister whether the MSIRI, which we have now heard is not regimented by the PRB and by a Board that can do anything they want, is there any reform programme going on at the MSIRI and are these people aware of the reality of what is happening outside?

**Mr Choonee:** Mr Speaker, Sir, as I mentioned earlier, even the MSIRI is financed by the cess. Even for that, Government is coming up with some reforms. We wait for the recommendations from Government.

### **CITÉ JOACHIM SOCIAL CENTRE**

**(No. B/436) Mr E. Guimbeau (First Member for Curepipe & Midlands)** asked the Minister of Social Security, National Solidarity and Reform Institutions whether, in regard to the Cité Joachim Social Centre, she will state if consideration will be given for same to be vested in her Ministry and, if not, why not.

**Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed that the Résidence Joachim Multi-purpose Complex (commonly known as Cité Joachim Social Centre) is run by the Municipality of Curepipe.

My Ministry, on its part, runs 18 Day Care Centres for the organisation of activities for the elderly.

The hon. Member may also wish to note that no request has been made by the Municipal Council of Curepipe to my Ministry for the taking over of the Cité Joachim Social Centre.

Should such a request be made to the Ministry, the matter may be considered.

**Mr Guimbeau:** M. le président, ce projet date de 2004 sous le gouvernement MMM/MSM. Nous avons construit quatre centres communautaires dans la circonscription No. 17.

**Mr Speaker:** The question is: whether, in regard to the Cité Joachim Social Centre, she will state if consideration will be given for same to be vested in her Ministry and, if not, why not. The hon. Minister has said if she gets a request from the Municipality, she will consider. That's the end of the matter.

**Mr Guimbeau:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I would like to table some pictures.

**Mr Speaker:** There is no need for it. This is where the hon. Member goes wrong. He has a specific question. The answer has come. His supplementary must ask for clarification on the answer that the hon. Minister has given.

**Mr Guimbeau:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I am not going wrong. I am just asking because this was a project on community centres in Curepipe.

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Speaker:** It is not about all centres; it is a specific question about the vesting of one particular social centre. If the hon. Member has questions to ask for clarification on what the hon. Minister has said, I will allow him, otherwise I will pass on to the next question.

**Mr Guimbeau:** Je demande au ministre pourquoi le centre de la Cité Joachim n'est pas sous la responsabilité de son ministère comme les trois autres centres, M. le président.

**Mr Speaker:** Elle a explicitement répondu à la question. Elle a expliqué que c'est sous le contrôle de la municipalité et si la municipalité fait une requête à son ministère, elle va considérer la requête.

**Mr Guimbeau:** Mr Speaker, Sir, why is it that only the Cité Joachim centre ...

**Mr Speaker:** This question is not allowed. Next question, hon. Dayal!

**ALCOHOLIC DRINKS - SALE**

(No. B/437) **Mr S. Dayal (Third Member for Quartier Militaire & Moka)** asked the vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to alcoholic drinks, he will state the number of litres thereof sold, since January 2011 to date, indicating if there is any indication that the sale thereof has decreased, compared to the same period last year, following the last increase in the excise and other duties thereon.

**The vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development (Mr P. Jugnauth):** Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Mauritius Revenue Authority that the records it keeps on alcoholic drinks relate to production and imports that are cleared for sale on the local market by Customs and Excises.

During the period 01 January 2011 to 26 May 2011, a total of 18.5 million litres of alcoholic drinks have been cleared for home consumption which includes consumption by tourists.

There has been a decrease of 5 percent concerning hard spirits such as whisky, rum, and liquor. Concerning beer, there has been an increase of 3.3 percent, whilst for wine there has been a decrease of 3.8 percent.

As I explained in the Budget Speech, one of the objectives of the measures was to curb alcoholism and the figures I have just mentioned speak for themselves.

**Mr Dayal:** Mr Speaker, Sir, can I ask the hon. vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development what additional measures are being envisaged by his Ministry to further curb, that is, reduce consumption of alcohol which is becoming a scourge in the society?

**Mr Jugnauth:** Mr Speaker, Sir, we have, as I mentioned, a number of measures in the Budget and there is also the banning of issuing of liquor licence on and off. We are also reviewing the criteria in fact with regard to off licence. Therefore, there are a number of things that we are looking at in order to see to it that the number of operators are, at least, limited to whatever practicable extent that is possible.

*At 1.00 p.m. the sitting was suspended.*

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

### **ROSE HILL MARKET - CLEANING**

(No. B/438) **Mrs L. Ribot (Third Member for Stanley & Rose Hill)** asked the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the market place in Rose-Hill, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Municipal Council of Beau Bassin/Rose Hill, information as to if same and the bins placed thereat are cleaned regularly and, if not, the date they were last cleaned, indicating the –

- (a) reasons therefor, and
- (b) remedial measures that will be taken.

**Mr Aimée:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Municipal Council of Beau Bassin/Rose Hill that there are 19 plastic bins, one wheelie bin and one huge plastic bin in use at the Rose Hill Market. The plastic bins are cleaned every morning by the Council's attendants posted at the market whereas the wheelie and huge bins are cleaned and washed on a fortnightly basis. The huge bin was last cleaned in the first week of May 2011.

As regards the market premises, I am informed that sweeping and removal of all left-overs are undertaken on a daily basis by 10 attendants working on two shifts.

I am informed that a general cleaning of the market has been undertaken during the last weekend.

**Mrs Ribot:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, according to our information, there has been no cleaning since November 2010 for the simple reason that the Karcher is broken and that, owing to financial constraints, no Karcher has been bought since. I would like to ask the hon. Minister whether he is aware of that.

**Mr Aimée:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it is only now that I have been informed that there is a Karcher to clean. But I mentioned here that the market has been cleaned, and we have 10 attendants working on a two-shift system.

**Mrs Ribot:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would like also to ask the hon. Minister whether he could pay a visit at the Rose Hill market place, because at the time I am speaking, the market is infested with rats and *moutouk*.

**Mr Aimée:** Being invited by the hon. Member, I would pay a visit at the market place.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The Table has been advised that PQ Nos. B/439 and B/467 have been withdrawn.

### **VEGETABLES - PESTICIDES - CONTROL**

(No. B/439) **Mr S. Dayal (Third Member for Quartier Militaire & Moka)** asked the Minister of Agro-Industry & Food Security whether, in regard to the vegetables sold on the market, he will state if his Ministry has set up a unit to analyse the content of pesticides therein and, if so, indicate the -

- (a) number of persons employed and their respective qualifications;
- (b) methods used to -
  - (i) collect the vegetables for testing, and
  - (ii) carry out the tests
- (c) number of times vegetables were collected for testing over the past year;
- (d) number of cases where vegetables were found to be unfit for consumption and the remedial actions taken, and

- (e) mechanism put in place to ensure that the vegetables put for sale on the market are free from harmful pesticides.

*(Withdrawn)*

**TERTIARY EDUCATION COMMISSION - EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR  
- POST**

**(No. B/440) Mrs F. Labelle (Third Member for Vacoas & Floreal)** asked the Minister of Tertiary Education, Science, Research and Technology whether, in regard to the post of Executive Director of the Tertiary Education Commission, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commission, information as to -

- (a) the date the vacancy therefor was advertised;
- (b) the conditions as per the advertisement;
- (c) the number of -
  - (i) applications received, and
  - (ii) applicants who were interviewed, and
- (d) if the post has been offered to the best candidate.

**Dr. Jeetah:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Tertiary Education Commission as follows -

- (a) The post of Executive Director was advertised both locally and internationally on 17 September 2008 and the closing date was 20 October 2008;
- (b) I am tabling a copy of the advertisement;
- (c)
  - (i) 29 applications from 12 foreign and 17 local candidates were received by the closing date, and
  - (ii) 11 candidates, comprising 4 foreign and 7 local applicants, were interviewed following short-listing by a selection panel of the TEC Board.
- (d) The post was offered to the first candidate on the shortlist, namely Dr. R. Watkins. However, he made a counter offer and as the financial implications were on the high side, the post was offered to the second candidate shortlisted.

**Mrs Labelle:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, according to the advertisement, it was stated that those who submit application need as requirement 15 years teaching and research experience. May I ask the hon. Minister how many years of teaching experience and experience at academia does the second best candidate have?

**Dr. Jeetah:** I can certainly provide the information, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. I can lay it on the Table of the Assembly.

**Mrs Labelle:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, is the hon. Minister prepared to give the names of the candidates, because he mentioned only two? Was the person selected the one who had more years of teaching experience and research at academia? Maybe, he has this information!

**Dr. Jeetah:** I can provide the whole list of people who actually applied.

**Mrs Labelle:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in a reply to a question dated 24 November 2009, the then responsible Minister stated in the House that he was laying on the Table the list of candidates who applied but, as at yesterday, there was no list in the Library, after two and a half years.

**Dr. Jeetah:** As I said, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, last week, the hon. Member asked me a question, and I am laying down the information requested. In fact, there is a small correction which I need to make. This judicial review was for the post of Head Research and Planning Division.

**The Deputy Speaker:** This is another issue. We are not with this one now?

**Mrs Labelle:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, according to my information, the person who was second best has been an auditor at MAB. He has been a financial controller and a Deputy Executive Director. Is the Minister aware of that?

**Dr. Jeetah:** Yes, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, but I am also aware that the gentleman in question acted as officer in charge of TEC between 2000 and 2004 on eight occasions.

**Mrs Labelle:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, must I take it from the hon. Minister that this has been accounted for 15 years of teaching and research experience?

**Dr. Jeetah:** As I said, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I will certainly lay down all the information requested.

**Dr. Sorefan:** There was an inquiry on the second best selected Director; an inquiry of vested interest chaired by Prof. Torul. May we know what the outcome is?

**Dr. Jeetah:** I can certainly lay a copy of the outcome with regard to that. I must say, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that all these have been viewed by the Board of TEC and, in their wisdom, they have maintained the application of the current Director of TEC.

**Mrs Labelle:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, since the hon. Minister seems to state that the Board had every information which he is going to lay, maybe, I can ask the hon. Minister whether this person had more teaching and research experience at academia than persons like Prof. Bunwaree, Prof. Gurib-Fakim and so on. Maybe, this is being stated in the information that he had.

**Dr. Jeetah:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have here legal advice from Sir Marc David who was the TEC's legal adviser, and I can lay a copy of his advice whereby he stated that the qualification and experience of applicants - there were two other applicants - meet the above criteria, that is, the criteria required in the advertisement and should, therefore, be shortlisted for interview.

I can lay copy of Sir Marc David's advice.

#### **STATE LAND - LEASE**

**(No. B/441) Mr A. Ameer Meea (First Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East)** asked the Minister of Housing and Lands whether, in regard to the lease of State land to individuals and to companies, he will state if Government proposes to review the procedures therefor, indicating if consideration will be given for the launching of tenders.

**Dr. Kasenally:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, there are different types of leases, namely residential, agricultural, industrial/commercial, landscaping, *campement*, and for social and religious purposes. The procedures for the lease of State lands are different according to the type of lease applied for. These procedures are clearly established and posted on my Ministry's website.

In regard to the question, I presume the hon. Member is referring to the procedures relating to State lands leased for industrial or commercial purposes. In that respect, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the promoter needs, in the first instance, to identify the plot on which he wants to implement his project and thereafter submit an application to my Ministry with a comprehensive project write-up. Subject to the availability of the land applied for, the application is examined by my Ministry, with particular attention to the scope and viability of the project, the amount of investment, including Foreign Direct Investment and the credibility of the investor. Thereafter, the appropriate recommendations are submitted to Cabinet for consideration. If the request is approved, a reservation letter is issued to the promoter. Following compliance with the terms and conditions mentioned in the reservation letter, a letter of intent is issued on terms and

conditions provided in the State Lands Act, as amended by the Finance Act of 2008 and 2009. The lease agreement is drawn after the promoter has paid the rental for the first year.

As regards the launching of tenders for the grant of State land leases, I would like to refer the hon. Member to my reply to part (c) of PQ No. 1B/148 of 29 June 2010. I quote from my reply -

“The State Lands Act provides that leases of State lands shall be either by public auction or by private contract. But it has never been the practice to invite tenders for the lease of State lands. Public auctions which are no longer resorted to as leases, through this process, would be awarded only to the highest bidders, thus, favouring only the rich and wealthy and running counter to Government policy to democratise access to land.”

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, there is no justification to review the procedures to include launching of tenders for the lease of State lands for industrial or commercial purposes, as the rental for such purposes are already established by the law and there is no revenue forgone by Government.

**Mr Ameer Meea:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, can I ask the hon. Minister in what way we are democratising land by not calling for public tenders?

**Dr. Kasenally:** I have already mentioned it.

**Mr François:** Is the hon. Minister agreeable to the fact that the current 20-year lease for residential and industrial purposes is causing a lot of burden to the lessee and the lessor? Will he consider reviewing the 20-year lease policy to, at least, 40 years, to avoid recurrent request for extension by the lessees, with all the necessary conditions that may prevail?

**Dr. Kasenally:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, industrialists are now awarded up to a term of 60 years. Maybe, it is a bit difficult in Rodrigues, but we are looking at ways and means and the way land has been leased in Rodrigues over the past few years.

**Mr Bhagwan:** Can the hon. Minister inform us whether there are cases where leases have been given, especially on *Pas Géométriques*, for hotel projects, where work itself has not started and where there are speculations by these people to sell in a way these letters of intent or letters of reservation? Can the House be provided with a list of all the cases of lease given on *Pas Géométriques* where work has not yet started?

**Dr. Kasenally:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, there are instances where land has been leased on *Pas Géométriques* and the project has not started for many reasons, like access of road. But one thing I would inform the House and the hon. Member is that there is an article which we have introduced, namely article 18, where all forms of speculation will not be possible. Any form of land speculation will not be allowed.

**Mr Bérenger:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have heard the hon. Minister say that launching of tenders will not be resorted to, because the rich only will be able to come in and win those tenders. Will the Minister agree that there is nothing preventing Government from doing two

things? First, giving small plots of land and so on to supposedly democratise ownership; second, there are not many prime sites left, and when giving leases for hotel industrial sites, then you go through tenders to get value for money.

**Dr. Kasenally:** So far, we have never been resorting to that. Certainly, we will consider it in the future. But there are certain rules and regulations which have to be promulgated.

**Mr Ameer Meea:** Can I ask the hon. Minister what is the criteria for an individual to be allocated a lease for land?

**Dr. Kasenally:** Actually, I have mentioned it. If the hon. Member reads the answer to my question, he will get it. If somebody wants to set up a small business, especially the less rich people and the common people, they apply for it, and it goes through a procedure. My Ministry evaluates and recommends. It is the Cabinet which approves it. There are people who want a piece of land for residential purposes, and we give them as well on the basis of their needs. There are also the poor, the squatters; these people who have nowhere to go. But we tend to make a social enquiry, and most of them get it. But no one, who is owner of a piece of land, will be given State land under any circumstances.

**Mr Li Kwong Wing:** In order to ensure that there is equity and transparency in the allocation of land, is Government having a Master Plan for the optimum use of all State lands that are still available for lease?

**Dr. Kasenally:** Yes, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, for industrial developments, we have a Master Plan. We have a Master Plan for Palmar and at Rivière Noire but, as far as residential is concerned, we try to make optimal use of each and every plot of land available, and we vest most of the land with the National Housing Development Corporation for social housing.

#### **MRA - GAMING REVENUE - 2010-MAY 2011**

**(No. B/442) 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 gambling, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the -

- (a) Mauritius Revenue Authority, information as to the total amount of gaming revenue, licence fees and taxes collected in 2010 and for the period January 2011 to date, from
  - (i) betting on horse racing and overseas football;
  - (ii) totalisers;
  - (iii) National Lottery;
  - (iv) casinos and gaming houses, and
- (b) Gambling Regulatory Authority, information as to the -

- (i) number of cases of alleged illegal gaming investigated, prosecuted and in which convictions have been secured, and
- (ii) measures taken to track down illegal betting.

**The vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development (Mr P. Jugnauth):** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in regard to parts (a) and (b) (i) of the question, the information is being tabled.

Regarding part (b) (ii), I am informed by GRA that the following measures have been taken to track down illegal betting -

- (i) carrying out more frequent crack down operations by the “*Police des Jeux*” throughout the island;
- (ii) strengthening the Licensing and Inspectorate Unit of the Authority by recruiting additional Licensing and Inspectorate Officers, and
- (iii) providing more stringent conditions of licence.

In addition, the GRA is looking ahead towards the implementation of an integrated system to link all gaming and betting transactions on licensed gaming machines, totalisators, bookmakers and lottery operators to one Central Electronic Monitoring System. This system will also allow the MRA to obtain real time information on gambling activities, as stipulated under section 109 of the GRA Act.

**Mr Li Kwong Wing:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, is the hon. Minister able to inform the House whether a study has been carried out to estimate the extent of illegal betting in Mauritius and the amount of this business and how much revenue Government is foregoing?

**Mr Jugnauth:** I cannot recollect if there has been any formal study that has been carried, but I gather that there have been information that have been provided by the Police and the GRA with regard to illegal betting. But, as such, I cannot recall. Probably, I will have to check and see if there has been a study.

**Mr Li Kwong Wing:** Is the hon. Minister also aware that, recently, an Assistant Principal of a secondary school has been arrested for illegal gambling, and can he inform the House whether there are any additional measures that have been taken to ensure that school children are not being enticed into illegal betting?

**Mr Jugnauth:** If there is a particular person who has been arrested, the hon. Member needs to be specific so that I can check that case, because the question that has been asked is with regard to the number of cases of illegal betting which have been investigated. I have tabled the number; it's 22 for 2010, 9 for 2011. If the hon. Member would provide the information, I can check whether this one is correct.

**Mr Li Kwong Wing:** The information is the College Bhujoharry where the arrest has been made, and I am just asking about the additional measures that are now required to track down such type of illegal betting in schools.

The other question, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, concerns the MRA. The MRA has been complaining recently that it has no access to the central server at the GRA. Is the hon. Minister aware that this lack of access on a real time basis by the MRA to the GRA server is causing a lot of illegal betting which is going untracked?

**Mr Jugnauth:** This has been the issue that has been debated in the House with regard to a number of PQs that have been asked, and the position of the Ministry and Government is that, in fact, we have to connect - and this is according to law - the MRA with the central server. So, GRA will be working towards that end in order to have better control of that sector.

**Mr Li Kwong Wing:** Can we know from the hon. Minister when - because since a year he is in office now, and the MRA still has no access on a real time basis to the server - will the MRA have access to the server of the GRA, and how is the GRA taking measures to control online betting? Because even at Montagne Ory, Ladbrokes has a big billboard advertising online betting worldwide.

**Mr Jugnauth:** The information has been given to the House with regard to, in fact, cancellation of a system that was about to be implemented by the GRA. In line with what the hon. Member is saying, this is where we want to have an integrated monitoring system that will be connected eventually to the MRA. When will that be implemented? What I can say at this time is that it's difficult to say when, but we are working towards that.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Last two questions: one from hon. Bhagwan and one from hon. Lesjongard!

**Mr Bhagwan:** Can we have an idea as to how much money leaves Mauritius in terms of foreign currency with people betting for overseas football and racing?

**Mr Jugnauth:** I will have to seek this information, and eventually table it to the Assembly.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Last question, hon. Lesjongard!

**Mr Lesjongard:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, does the vice-Prime Minister has an indication of the loss of revenue, let's say, since 2008, when that centrally computerised system was supposed to be functioning? Do we have an indication of loss in revenue? Because we do not have that centrally monitored computerised system.

**Mr Jugnauth:** Let me, again, probably, emphasise to the hon. Member. The issue is to have a system, whereby the MRA would have online connections, so that there can be checks with regard to betting being carried on. Therefore, this is the whole purpose of having this system.

**Mr Ganoo:** Has the hon. Minister given thought to the new form of betting, the e-betting and the loss of revenue to Government? Would he consider legislating also and look into that matter?

**Mr Jugnauth:** We will look into that also.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Last question!

**Mr Li Kwong Wing:** Is the hon. Minister aware that there are also certain gaming houses giving free bets or discounted bets, and that there are gaming revenues that are not being taxed in that case? When is there going to be an open advertising, to have a proper qualified Chief Executive recruited for the GRA?

**Mr Jugnauth:** With regard to the Chief Executive of the GRA, from memory, I can inform the House that the advert has been put. There are a number of candidates who have applied. I can't recall the closing date, but, I suppose, it must have been over, and shortly, therefore, the exercise will be carried out. But again, with regard to the loss of revenue, this is, in fact - I think that was the first part of your question - the whole point, to try to have maximum information and if there are discounted bets or free bets are being given. That is why we need to have this online connection with the MRA so that they will be able to monitor, in fact, all the betting activities.

#### **WATER PARK LEISURE VILLAGE - LOSSES**

**(No. B/443) Mr K. Li Kwong Wing (Second Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière)** asked the Minister of Agro-Industry and Food Security whether, in regard to the Water Park Leisure Village, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Sugar Investment Trust, information as to -

- (a) the losses incurred in 2009 and 2010 and the accumulated losses as at to date, indicating the causes therefor;
- (b) the total amount of fees paid in 2010 to the -
  - (i) director, and
  - (ii) each member of the Board of the company;
- (c) where matters stand in relation to the -
  - (i) valuation thereof, and
  - (ii) search for a strategic partner.

**The Minister of Arts and Culture (Mr M. Choonee):** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the information is being compiled and will be placed in the Library as soon as it is available.

**Mr Li Kwong Wing:** With regard to this Water Park Leisure Village, is the hon. Minister able to inform us whether there has been any feasibility study carried out to establish

this Leisure Park Village, because it has been making losses since the opening and the losses are now being compounded by mismanagement and wasteful expenditure by the person in charge?

**Mr Choonee:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it's true that the Water Park is incurring losses and they are in search of a strategic partner to go for a joint venture. I have no other details.

**CONSEIL INTERNATIONAL DES JEUX & COMMISSION JEUNESSE ET  
SPORTS DE L'OCEAN INDIEN - OFFICERS - ATTENDANCE**

**(No. B/444) Mr F. Quirin (Third Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière)** asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether, in regard to the *Conseil International des Jeux* and Expert Meeting of the *Commission Jeunesse et Sports de L'Océan Indien*, he will give a list of the officers of his Ministry who have attended thereto, since 2007 to date, indicating the amount of *per diem* allocated to each of them.

**Mr Ritoo:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I wish to inform the House that the *CIJ (Conseil International des Jeux)* is normally held once every year in the country hosting the Indian Ocean Island Games. Those persons invited to attend the *CIJ* Meeting are officials of the Mauritian National Olympic Committee (MNOC) and the Permanent Secretary of my Ministry or his representative.

All costs of participation for the representative of my Ministry on the *CIJ* are borne by Government and the allowance payable is as per the official rate approved by the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development.

As regards the *CJSOI* Experts Meetings, these are held twice every year on a rotational basis in a member country. Mauritius last hosted the Experts Meeting in April 2010.

*CJSOI* Experts also meet prior to the Ministerial Meeting, which is held once a year. The Permanent Secretary and an expert from the Youth or Sports Sector or the Desk Officer dealing with *CJSOI* administrative issues may also attend the meetings.

The *CJSOI* provides board and lodging to participants while airfare and an allowance as per the official rate approved by the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development is paid to the Mauritian delegation.

I am tabling a list of officers of my Ministry who have attended the *CIJ* and *CJSOI* meetings since 2007.

**Mr Quirin:** M. le président, j'aimerais que le ministre nous confirme si son directeur des sports a assisté à toutes ces réunions depuis 2007?

**Mr Ritoo:** The Director of Sports has attended nearly all the meetings of the *CIJ* as an expert in this *Conseil International des Jeux*.

**Mr Quirin:** M. le président, est-ce que le ministre peut nous préciser quels sont les critères qui sont pris en considération dans le choix de ces officiers pour assister à ces réunions?

**Mr Ritoo:** Le Conseil International des Jeux *deals mainly* - prioritairement - *with* l'organisation des Jeux des îles. Donc, tous les règlements techniques et généraux sont pris en considération dans ce comité. L'expert c'est bien sûr le directeur des sports, qui connaît tous ces règlements depuis belle lurette.

**Mr Quirin:** M. le président, est-ce que le ministre peut nous dire qui a été choisi pour présenter le dossier de Maurice pour les jeux de 2019 à La Réunion, à une réunion du CIJ qui est prévue pour le 03 août prochain ?

**Mr Ritoo:** C'est le directeur des sports qui va compiler les données et me représenter. Ensuite, on va faire une demande au niveau du conseil des ministres.

### **RODRIGUES - ROOF SLAB SCHEME**

(No. B/445) **Mr J. F. François (Third Member for Rodrigues)** asked the Minister of Housing and Lands whether, in regard to the Casting of Slab Grant Scheme for Rodrigues, he will state if Government proposes to review the grant value and eligibility criteria therefor, in view of the 30% freight increase on construction materials between Mauritius and Rodrigues.

**The vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development (Mr P. Jugnauth):** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I shall reply to this question.

Currently, the Roof Slab Scheme assists families, both in Mauritius and Rodrigues with household income less than Rs8,500 to construct a house of their own on land owned privately or through leasehold rights, with a grant of up to Rs65,000 for a slab of 100 square metres with a proportionate reduction according to area below 100 square metres.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the House is aware that in the 2011 Budget the maximum grant for casting of slabs was increased from Rs60,000 to Rs65,000.

This programme is available to all citizens of the Republic wherever they may reside on our national territory. In fact, since 1997, about 25% of Rodriguan families, in fact, 2,430 families have benefitted from an amount of around Rs75.6 m. under this Scheme. In contrast, in the island of Mauritius about 13 percent of families have benefitted from the scheme.

In April 2011, the Mauritius Shipping Corporation Ltd (MSCL) had to raise the tariff on the Rodrigues route by 30% for freight to keep the subsidy on this route at a sustainable level so as to be able to continue offering its services to Rodrigues. In a gesture of solidarity to Rodrigues, Government has provided additional income support to Rodriguans least able to meet the additional costs.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the House may also take note that although the freight to Rodrigues has increased, thanks to an increased subsidy by the State Trading Corporation to Rodrigues, the price of cement in Rodrigues (which is, in fact, one of the main components for casting of slab) has not increased.

Although, the decision to review the amount of grant for Casting of Slab is normally taken at Budget time, as I announced to the House on 29 March 2011, I am looking into the various representations that have been made concerning the casting of slabs.

### **LE BOUCHON - IRS PROJECT**

**(No. B/446) Mr K. Ramano (Second Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes)** asked the Minister of Agro-Industry and Food Security whether, in regard to the Integrated Resort Scheme Project of the Sugar Investment Trust at Le Bouchon, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Trust, information as to where matters stand.

**The Minister of Arts and Culture (Mr M. Choonee):** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the State Investment Trust that the Board of Investment has approved the Integrated Resort Scheme Project at Le Bouchon in January 2010. In view of the global economic situation, the project is being reviewed.

**Mr Ramano:** *Est-ce que je pourrais savoir du ministre si un partenariat a été signé entre le Sugar Investment Trust Property Development Ltd et une compagnie anglaise, basée avec des mauriciens à la tête, avec pour nom ONC Mauritius Ltd?*

**Mr Choonee:** I don't have this information, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

**Mr Ramano:** Est-ce que le ministre pourra éventuellement nous donner des informations s'il y a eu des sommes qui ont été déboursées comme *professional fees, consultancy fees*, et qui a encouru ces frais-là ?

**Mr Choonee:** Bien sûr, on pourra vous donner les informations après; pas tout de suite.

**Mr Bhagwan:** Can the hon. Minister, at least, transmit our request to the substantive Minister to have all the amounts incurred by the SIT in connection with the feasibility study, overseas travel and all expenditures surrounding that project?

**Mr Choonee:** Yes, Sir.

### **LYCÉE POLYTECHNIQUE SIR GUY FORGET, FLACQ - STUDENT STRIKE**

**(No. B/447) Mr S. Obeegadoo (Third Member for Curepipe & Midlands)** asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether, in regard to the student strike at the Lycée Polytechnique of Flacq, he will state if an inquiry has been carried out into the causes thereof and, if so, the measures taken, if any.

**Dr. Bunwaree:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with the coming into effect of the MITD Act in 2009, the Lycée Polytechnique Sir Guy Forget, which was operating previously under the aegis of the former Technical School Management Trust Fund (TSMTF), now falls under the purview of the MITD.

This is in the context and in line with the overall reform of the Education and Human Resources Sector and to give a new direction to Technical, Vocational Education and Training, TVET as it is commonly called.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, on 19 May last, the students of the Lycée Polytechnique Sir Guy Forget started staging a sit in and the management of the MITD inquired, and following discussions it had with students and parents, certain grievances and apprehensions came to light and were in relation to the following -

- (i) recognition of the “*Brevet de Technicien*” (BT) course, currently run by the *Lycée Polytechnique Sir Guy Forget* of Flacq;
- (ii) enrolment of students for the “*Diplôme Universitaire Supérieur de Technologie*” (DUST) at the *Institut Supérieur de Technologie* (IST) after completion of the BT course, and
- (iii) award of Scholarship to best students of BT course for pursuing studies at the IST.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it is necessary to point out that the MITD has been empowered under the MITD Act 2009 to award certificates and diplomas or any other technical and vocational qualifications. Before the establishment of the MITD, the Mauritius Examinations Syndicate (MES) was awarding certificates and diplomas for technical courses jointly with the former IVTB and TSMTF.

In line with the provisions of the MITD Act 2009, the MITD is now in the process of developing its own Awarding and Certification Unit. The process has started for the conversion of the MITD into an awarding institution. MES and MQA are collaborating for the conversion. This process however takes time as it involves laying appropriate process for assessment and evaluation, putting up fool-proof system of confidentiality and providing training to personnel on arrangements and procedures for conduct of examinations and certification of qualifications.

In the meantime, there will be no change as MES will continue to collaborate with MITD and the *Brevet de Technicien* qualification will continue to be awarded with the collaboration of the MES. In the same way, after the completion of the BT courses, successful students will be admitted at the *Institut Supérieur de Technologie*, as has been the case in the past.

Similarly, the best student of the *Lycée Polytechnique de Flacq* will continue to benefit from scholarships to pursue studies at the IST.

I must here point out, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that there has been no change brought to the curriculum and the course certificate previously issued by MES together with the former TSMTF, now MITD continues to be duly recognised.

It is therefore clear that there is absolutely no reason to have any apprehension as regards to the recognition of the BT certificate, award of certificate and grant of scholarships to students to follow their studies at IST. Assurance has already been given in writing by Management to students and a communiqué has already been issued in the press on Wednesday 25 May 2011. A copy of the communiqué has also been sent to the parents.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the merging of the *Lycée Polytechnique de Flacq* with MITD is in line with international trend to rationalise and consolidate the Technical Vocational Education and Training Sector in order to equip our young to meet the requirements of the world of work.

I also wish to inform the House, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that the Director, MITD paid a visit to the *Lycée Polytechnique de Flacq* on Monday 30 May - yesterday - and had a positive meeting with the students. A second meeting is being held today in the morning with both parents and students in the presence of the Director of the Mauritius Examinations Syndicate. The students have, again, I am told, raised issues pertaining to the validity of the certificates and stated that the word 'MITD' does not appear on the certificate. The students have been given the guarantee, however, that relevant authorities will be consulted in view of finding a positive solution, especially during the transitional period.

**Mr Obeegadoo:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, being given that the hon. Minister has given a statement in defence of Government policy and not answered the question, which was to state if an inquiry has been carried out, and being given that the hon. Minister is not just the Minister of Education, but also the Minister of Human Resources, with direct responsibility for the MITD and the *Lycée Polytechnique*, will he tell us why is it that he himself and his Ministry have washed their hands from this whole affair of the *Lycée Polytechnique*, which is now at its 12<sup>th</sup> day of strike? Even this morning, the meeting held by the Director of the MITD could not succeed, because there was no representative of the Ministry and, yet, another meeting has had to be fixed to Friday.

**Dr. Bunwaree:** First of all, an inquiry has been conducted because I have given the results of what have been the findings so far. The inquiry is continuing because I do not believe that the students are acting on their own, and this is one of the main reasons why we have been following this thing very closely and not entering directly in that; not to use the students as *boucs emissaires* in this business. The hon. Member, I believe, has had meetings with those concerned there and I would appeal to him that they do not use the students as scapegoat.

(Interruptions)

**Mr Obeegadoo:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I do my work as an MP, and I am here to meet any person, any member of the public who wants to meet me.

**Dr. Bunwaree:** This is what I said. I said yes...

**Mr Obeegadoo:** I am paid for that. I am on my feet, and I will not give way. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, will the Minister confirm that the *Lycée Polytechnique* has not had a full-fledged

manager ever since 2003 or 2004, and there is only an officer in charge who has serious health problems and is not in a position to run this institution properly?

**Dr. Bunwaree:** The hon. Member is remembering well, because he removed the manager from there and he appointed the officer in charge.

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Obeegadoo:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, will the hon. Minister confirm as a fact? Because I put it to him that when the merger took place in 2009, there was never any communication, any explanation vis-à-vis students or parents or staff and that, as at to date, there is no PTA that exists. There is no Student Council with members chosen by the students; the staff and the trade union have had to go and demonstrate before the Ministry in front of the IVTB House because there is no dialogue with the authorities.

**Dr. Bunwaree:** The hon. Member is mixing issues. What I have to say is that the union has been consulted, and I myself chaired a meeting where they were present. But then, we were not agreeing on certain issues, and the matter had to be sent to the mediator for mediation. That took time, and we are in the process or in a transitional period. What I am sensible to insofar as what the students are saying, is that many of them have joined the courses before the MITD was set up and, therefore, they were under the impression that whatever was being done previously would continue. I am very open to that, and I am trying to find a solution.

**Mr Obeegadoo:** No answer has been given to the fact that there is no Student Council and PTA, etc. The public will know! Is the hon. Minister aware - he must surely be aware - and explain why no diplomas have been awarded to students ever since 2009 and that when students pay their fees the receipts are still there - the name and logo of the TSMTF - two years after?

**Dr. Bunwaree:** This is the reason, because we are in a transitional period and, of course...

*(Interruptions)*

**The Deputy Speaker:** Order! Let the hon. Minister answer, please!

**Dr. Bunwaree:** The hon. Member is speaking of the Student Council.

*(Interruptions)*

**The Deputy Speaker:** Let the hon. Minister answer!

**Dr. Bunwaree:** The hon. Member is speaking of Student Council, why did he during four and a half years or five years not put a Student Council when he was Minister.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Last question!

**Mr Obeegadoo:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, is the hon. Minister aware that the equipment at this *polytechnique* is not being replaced, is not being properly maintained? There are serious

security threats, and for the last two years there is not even a photocopy machine at *Lycée Polytechnique* of Flacq.

**Dr. Bunwaree:** This is not only at the *Lycée Polytechnique* de Flacq.

*(Interruptions)*

I can, again, go back in time to give the reasons why he was probably responsible for that. Now we are changing and the hon. Member has to bear with me.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Please!

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Obeegadoo:** Why will the hon. Minister not confirm that just...

*(Interruptions)*

**The Deputy Speaker:** Order!

**Mr Obeegadoo:** Why will the hon. Minister not confirm that, just as in the case of the ZEP, just as the case of the Pre voc, the *Lycée Polytechnique* is not receiving any attention from the Ministry, because these are children coming from poor families?

*(Interruptions)*

**The Deputy Speaker:** Please don't impute motives.

*(Interruptions)*

**Dr. Bunwaree:** I will never accept that. Shame! Shame on you!

**The Deputy Speaker:** The hon. Member should not impute motives.

**Dr. Bunwaree:** He is responsible for the failure of what is happening there. He is responsible for the *manquement* that is being found there. Shame! A man of this calibre! *Je n'aurais jamais pensé à cela! La honte!*

**The Deputy Speaker:** Order! Order, please! Next question! Hon. Lesjongard!

## **WASTEWATER MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY - SEWERAGE PROJECTS**

**(No. B/448) Mr G. Lesjongard (Second Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue)** asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to the sewerage projects, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Wastewater Management Authority, information, for each of the contracts 110A and WW73F, as to the -

- (a) project value on award of the contract,
- (b) project value on completion,
- (c) percentage increase on project value, and
- (d) reasons for the increase in project values.

**The Deputy Prime Minister:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with regard to Contract 110A, Baie du Tombeau Sewerage Project, I am advised by the Wastewater Management Authority that the Contract was awarded with the approval of the Central Procurement Board to Consortium Patel/Sotravic in August 2007 in the sum of Rs464,131,994 plus VAT.

*(Interruptions)*

**The Deputy Speaker:** I can't hear the reply, please!

**The Deputy Prime Minister:** The project was completed in April 2010...

**The Deputy Speaker:** Hon. Mrs Labelle, please!

**The Deputy Prime Minister:** ... and the cost of Rs750 m. plus VAT representing 61.1 % increase in the initial contract price. The increase in the project value is mainly due to additional sewerage and water supply works, full width reinstatement of all classified and secondary roads instead of trench width reinstatement as provided in the contract, as well as price escalation.

As for the Contract 73F, Plaines Wilhems Trunk Sewer project, the contract was awarded to Jan de Nul N.V in April 2005 in the sum of Rs886,207,028 plus VAT. The project was completed in February 2008 at the cost of Rs1,332,200 plus VAT representing an increase of 50.3% of the original contract price.

The increase in contract price was due to a number of variations under the contract, namely the construction of a collector sewer at Cité Kennedy, excavation of deeper trenches than provided for in the contract and additional trial pits, full width resurfacing of the Sivananda Avenue and price escalation.

**Mr Lesjongard:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, may I ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether he finds it normal that for projects of such values there is a percentage increase of above 50% of the contract value?

**The Deputy Prime Minister:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, even above 30% increase, we have questioned and what I would say is that we have learned a lot of lessons from this and we have contacted the Procurement Office, the Procurement Board. We have conducted surveys and inquiries and the conclusion is as follows: for future projects a full topographical study and house to house survey is to be carried out in order to better define scope of works in the work contract, but this is only one of the problems, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. In sewerage works when we start, we often find by the time that it takes - two or three years – the project has expanded beyond what was provided for. Then came the question of wayleave. Next, road reinstatement: it used to be trench but now it is full road reinstatement and then again reinstatement works done by RDA and this has cost a lot of money. As from now on, the contract will stipulate repairs by RDA only. As I have said, provisions in the contracts and proper management of the contract will be considered as well. We are looking into all these issues and I hope such increases will

not be replaced. But I can reassure the House on one thing. Every cent spent had been accounted for, there has not been overspending in the sense that it can't be accounted for.

**Mr Lesjongard:** With regard to ongoing contracts, can the hon. Minister give us an indication on what measures have been taken in order to ensure that we do not go above a certain percentage increase?

**The Deputy Prime Minister:** As I have said, for future contracts, we will make sure that supervision is carried on as we go along and that there is a feedback to the Ministry and to the WMA about the status of work as it goes along.

**Mr Bhagwan:** May I ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether he is aware that during the sewerage works, the drains are damaged. When the reinstatement works are made, the drains are not being attended to. Can the Deputy Prime Minister at least give instructions to the Wastewater Management Authority or to the relevant consultant that the drains also be taken care of as far as reinstatement works are concerned?

**The Deputy Prime Minister:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I take good note of the suggestion. We are already attending to the problem. It also includes the CWA, that is, the broken pipes of the CWA during works.

**Mr Lesjongard:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, concerning the answer that the Deputy Prime Minister has given, we can understand that we have a serious lack of supervisory staff at Wastewater Management Authority level. Can the Deputy Prime Minister inform the House when the top team of the Wastewater Management Authority will be fully active? We understand that the Director of the Wastewater Management Authority has not been recruited until now.

**The Deputy Prime Minister:** We are in the process of replacing all of them, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

### **HOTEL AMBRE & PLANTATION HOTEL - WORKERS**

**(No. B/449) Mr V. Baloomoody (Third Member for GRNW & Port Louis West)** asked the Minister of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment whether, in regard to the Hotel Ambre and The Plantation Hotel, he will state if his Ministry has been notified by the owners thereof that they are proposing to lay off workers, following a commercial deal and, if so, will he state the actions Government proposes to take to ensure that there is no job loss as a result thereof.

**Mr Mohamed:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in a letter dated 19 May 2011, which I received and addressed to myself, the Appavou Hotels Resort & Spa, owner of Hotel Ambre Resort & Spa and La Plantation Hotel Resort & Spa, notified me of its intention to proceed with the laying off of 292 employees of Ambre Resort & Spa for the following reason, and the reason they used in their letter, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, is *stratégie de développement*.

I have had a first meeting with management of Appavou Hotels and that of Sun Resorts together. We met them together and that was approximately some seven to eight days ago. I have basically been informed, and they have confirmed to me that the management of Sun Resorts Ltd would be taking over the Ambre Resort & Spa and the organisation of hotel, private club and catering workers unit. On 25 May, we met them. I was informed during the meeting that discussions are still ongoing between the parties, that is, between Sun and *le groupe Appavou*, and nothing has been made final. But at that meeting what I did request from the *préposé* of Ambre and Sun was that they communicate to the Ministry all the financial details, even the draft agreement even though it has not been signed, that it be sent to my Ministry so that we may look into it. Also the reason why we want to have all those documents is to make sure that, at the time of signature, there is provision in the agreement that would protect and secure the workers and would ensure that they would not be put in a situation where there is a loss of approximately twenty years of service. I also would like to know, as Minister, what are the financials, the deal, what is the lump sum that is going to be paid as a deposit, if any; what would be the monthly payments in terms of rent, if any, and what clauses are going to be included in the agreement before they sign it that would protect, as I have explained, the years of service of those employees.

**Mr Baloomoody:** Can I ask the hon. Minister whether he has had the opportunity to meet representatives of the workers?

**Mr Mohamed:** As I have explained, on 25 May, and slightly before that, we met the workers first, but then when I called the representatives of Sun Resorts and Ambre, I called the workers as well. So, it was a tripartite meeting. Initially the Sun Resorts was not asked to join the bandwagon, but Sun Resorts decided to invite themselves to the party and they decided to sit around the table and talk. They were welcome. The workers were present as well as Sun Resorts, Ambre and myself were present. The officers of the Ministry were also present. We are supposed to meet again very soon. I am expecting some documents from them in order for us, as I have said, to secure the position of the workers.

**Mr Baloomoody:** Can I ask the hon. Minister, once he gets the documents, especially the financial documents of Ambre and Plantation Hotels, whether he will make these available to the workers because not all of the information that the workers have will reflect in the documents?

**Mr Mohamed:** The specific and only reason why I made a request for those financial documents was precisely because I believe that any ongoing negotiations that are taking place at the moment between the trade unions, the workers - because not all of them are unionised - and management of Ambre and Sun, there should, at least, be some transparency and the workers should be aware as to what are the financials. Once they have this information in hand, it puts them in a better position to negotiate. May I also inform the House, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that the management of Sun Resorts has agreed to take at least 90% of Ambre staff back in employment at Sun when Sun takes over the hotel. But what is important to the Ministry at the

moment is to ensure that the years of service put to the good service of Ambre are not forgotten and that there is compensation irrelevant of them continuing to work for Sun Resorts.

**Mr Ganoo:** May I ask the hon. Minister what has been the criterion chosen by the employers to lay off ten per cent of the workers? Was it on the term of service basis? Was it because of their grades? What was the criterion chosen to lay off these ten per cent?

**Mr Mohamed:** I thank the hon. Member for his question. I believe the hon. Member, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, is jumping the gun; no one has been laid off as yet. No one has received any notice of termination of agreement and what I have obtained in negotiations with the Ambre management is that they have not signed the agreement, the Memorandum of Understanding yet with Sun. Therefore, they cannot and will not be given any notice of termination yet. In the meantime, everything goes on as normal. In other words, they are still in employment and they get their salaries.

**Mr Baloomoody:** Can I ask the hon. Minister whether he will ensure that, when Sun International takes over, the terms of service of the ninety per cent of the workers will be recognised by Sun?

**Mr Mohamed:** Sun has already said that they will not recognise the years of service. That is why we are insisting that compensation be paid. Because if there was recognition of years of service, the issue of compensation will itself be *caduque*. There cannot be years of service recognition, at the same time compensation. If they are not to recognise years of service, which they say they would not, I have asked them to do two things. Ambre should pay compensation and if Sun, at all, can help in the compensation, they should. This is where we are at the moment. As I have said, at the outset, what I would like to have is the figure, the financials. If Mr Appavou is receiving enough money entering his coffers, I believe that he should be made to share what is in the coffers to the workers because they deserve it first and not him.

**Mr Bérenger:** We have been informed that Sun is not going to recognise the years of service, therefore, the Minister is pushing for compensation. Can I know compensation on which criteria, compensation on what basis?

**Mr Mohamed:** When I received the letter, as I have said earlier on, from Appavou Hotels, by law, they have to send me a letter mandatorily to tell me that they are going to make certain people redundant and if they are to make use of certain terms therein such as technological reasons, structural reasons or economic reasons, fair enough! Then there will be issue of the Workfare Programme. But in the letter that they have sent me, I quote -

*‘Nous venons par la présente vous informer que dans le cadre de notre stratégie de développement, nous sommes en discussion avec les groupes Sun et TOI Travel France en vue de leur céder respectivement l’exploitation d’Ambre Resort & Spa et de nos hôtels du Sud’.*

In other words, nowhere in this letter do I, as Minister of Labour and Industrial Relations and Employment, find economic reason as a reason to make them redundant, structural or otherwise as provided for under sections 37 and 46 of the Employment Rights Act. In the absence of those reasons, that would automatically direct them towards a Workfare Programme, I am of the humble opinion that they should humbly pay compensation at punitive rate. This is the view I share, this is my view, this is the view of the advice I have obtained. If they are not going to listen to the case, we are going to go to court with this.

**Mr Ganoo:** Can I ask the hon. Minister a last question if you will allow me, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir? The hon. Minister has talked about the procedural agreement between the two parties, that is, the management of Ambre Hotel and Sun. Can I ask him very humbly to see to it that this procedural agreement is respected, as most of the time, this type of agreement is not worth the paper on which it is signed? The case of Berjaya is a case in point. The Minister is approving by nodding his head. There was an agreement between the old management and the new management that took over. This agreement has never been respected and we know what has been the fate of these workers who have been laid off. So, can I appeal to him to see to it, especially in view of the fact that Appavou Hotels have already earned a reputation in terms of anti-worker behaviour! I am glad the Minister was nodding the head in approval. So, let us see to it that this time they do not get away with murder.

**Mr Mohamed:** I have taken a good note of what the hon. Member has said and I can assure him that, on this side, we are all pro-justice and we will see to it that justice is done.

#### **VANDERMEERSCH STREET, ROSE HILL - TRAFFIC CONGESTION**

**(No. B/450) Mr D. Nagalingum (Second Member for Stanley & Rose Hill)** asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to the traffic congestion during peak hours at the roundabout on Vandermeersch Street, Rose Hill, he will state the remedial measures taken, if any, under the Road Decongestion Programme.

**Mr Bachoo:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Road Decongestion Programme does not include measures to alleviate traffic congestion problems in this particular area. This programme deals specifically with five major national projects.

However, the problem at Vandermeersch Street roundabout is of serious concern to Government and a consultant is being appointed to undertake a thorough analysis of the traffic congestion situation in the Beau Bassin/Rose Hill region and to propose feasible solutions.

I wish to inform the House that the proposed bridge between Coromandel and Sorèze will also bring a degree of relief to this problem.

**Mr Bhagwan:** Pending this consultancy work, everyday *c'est un enfer dans ce petit coin de Vandermeersch Street.*

**The Deputy Speaker:** The hon. Member should put his question, please!

**Mr Bhagwan:** It is a whole day, not only in the morning, but especially during weekend. Can the hon. Minister, at least, pending whatever action Government may take - I don't see it in the coming days – liaise with the Police so that, at least, there can be some relief? The people are under stress and any problem can happen at any time. We have the Queen Elizabeth College, the Ebène SSS and other colleges in the region. Can the hon. Minister act urgently, deal with the Police so that immediate action be taken?

**Mr Bachoo:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am definitely going to request the Police and at the same time the Traffic Management Unit to do the needful. But I would like to inform the hon. Member that there was a proposal to construct a bridge behind Queen Elizabeth College. We had conducted site visits, but given the topography of the land, the project is regarded to be technically complex and it has not been recommended by the engineers. We have got a project to de-locate the traffic centre from Margéot to Ebène, opposite Ebène SSS (Girls) behind CEB; a portion of land to the extent of 3.4 Ha. has been earmarked for the new traffic centre. We are working on the design and funding will be sought thereafter.

#### **PLAZA THEATRE - REHABILITATION WORKS**

**(No. B/451) Mr D. Nagalingum (Second Member for Stanley & Rose Hill)** asked the vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to the Plaza Theatre, he will state if his Ministry has received an application for the release of funds for the completion of the rehabilitation works thereof and, if so, indicate -

- (a) the date of application, and
- (b) if approval has been given and, if so, the amount earmarked therefor.

**The vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development (Mr P. Jugnauth):** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as stated last week by my colleague, the hon. Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands, the renovation of the Plaza theatre consists of three phases -

- Phase I is the “renovation of the roof”;
- Phase II is the “Renovation of ‘*Facades*’, ‘*Salle des fêtes*’ and the “administrative wing”, and
- Phase III concerns the “Refurbishment of the theatre and auxiliary works”.

Phase I of the project has been fully financed by the Government at the cost of Rs87 m. and completed in 2008.

As regards Phases II and III, a request for funding was transmitted to my Ministry on 31 March 2010 by the then Ministry of Education, Culture and Human Resources for the upgrading of the Plaza Theatre to serve as an Opera House, as announced in the Budget Speech of 2010.

The project value proposed by the Ministry was Rs267.2 m. As this request was three and a half times higher than the Rs75 m. earmarked by Government in February 2010 for the project, the Ministry was requested on 14 April 2010 to submit its project proposal to the Project Plan Committee (PPC).

On 28 June 2010, that is, some two months later, the Ministry of Arts and Culture informed my Ministry that the Municipal Council of Beau Bassin/Rose Hill had reviewed the project value to Rs457 m. Consequently, amended Project Request Forms were referred to the Ministry of Local Government by the Ministry of Arts and Culture for follow up and coordination of the project.

As regards part (b) of the question, I am informed that in its 5<sup>th</sup> Report issued in May 2011, the PPC has recommended that Phase II, i.e. the renovation of the *Facades*, the *Salle des Fêtes* and the administrative wing of the building, for a project value of Rs67 m., be included in the PSIP, conditional to all possible funding options being thoroughly considered.

As regards Phase III of the project, the PPC has also recommended that same be put on hold.

**Mr Bhagwan:** The Prime Minister has just stated in one of his statements about the opening of the *Gallerie d'Art* recently, that the Plaza would be given, as Municipal Council of Port Louis, priority. Being given that Government has already spent Rs87 m., what immediate action, at least, Government can take in the public interest as far as the protection of this building is concerned? I raised the issue and the Minister confirmed to the House that there was no insurance at this particular time on the existing building. As a priority, does the Minister of Finance, at least, intervene to see to it that the building be covered by an insurance, if possible, and also release funds as rapidly as possible?

**Mr Jugnauth:** I am informed that to obtain the insurance cover, there is need to produce a mechanical/electrical certificate and a fire certificate. I understand also that from the Rs67 m. of project value that have been approved by the PPC, it also includes an amount for putting in place of fire alarms and fire fighting system, in fact, for the very purpose of getting this insurance cover. I am also informed that it will cost around Rs6.3 m. in order to do that work. So, I hope that we can probably move forward in the future.

**Mr Bérenger:** The hon. Minister has himself given us figures how the Municipality of Beau Bassin/Rose Hill changed the project value, increased it massively. Would he agree with me that, as at present constituted, there is no way the Municipal Council of Beau Bassin/Rose Hill can carry out that job? Will Government consider resorting to another way of doing it, vesting it back into the Municipality later on? They will never be able to do Phase II. Now, I hear that they are going to try and do Phase II and Phase III. When will the Plaza theatre be operational? So, can I appeal to Government, as constituted, there is no way this Municipal Council will carry out this project? No way!

**Mr Jugnauth:** With regard to the amount of money that has to be spent for Phase II and hit of a decrease, it is very clear that the Municipality will not be in a position to earmark sufficient funds.

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Bérenger:** I am not speaking financially; operationally.

**Mr Jugnauth:** Probably, we have to look at that aspect also. But the first issue, apart from the management side of it, is the financial aspect of it. As I said, the EPPC has approved it. Therefore, we are looking into ways and means of moving forward for Phase II, but we have to look at Phase III also. I fully agree that we have to look into the management side of it because, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, let us say, theoretically, the project is completed. There is also the running aspect of it. The insurance cover for this will be quite a sum. We have to look at both the financial and technical aspects of it.

**Mr Bérenger:** Being given that only last Sunday the hon. Prime Minister has raised expectations immensely - last Tuesday he presented the Plaza Theatre, rightly so, as *patrimoine national*, and priority must be given to it - can I request the hon. Minister to liaise with the hon. Prime Minister and to find together ways of finding finance and of carrying out the works also?

**Mr Jugnauth:** In fact, as a Government, we are working together and we fully agree with the vision of the hon. Prime Minister that these are the *patrimoines* that we have to try to not only protect but maintain also.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Last question!

**Mr Bhagwan:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, on the same line as the hon. Leader of the Opposition, I raised that issue last time. Being given that this is a *patrimoine national* and Government has already invested Rs87 m., can the hon. Minister of Public Infrastructure, who has the knowhow, the engineers and so on, be given the responsibility, through the Ministry of Local Government, to follow up the implementation of Phases II and III, and then to vest it to the municipality afterwards? From what I am hearing from the Deputy Prime Minister, that money would be given for fire fighting and so on. But pending that, there is no insurance; the danger is there; it is a wooden building, and I think the Minister can intervene with SICOM.

**Mr Jugnauth:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, my colleague, the hon. Minister for Local Government, has replied to that issue of insurance. But, of course, at the level of Government, all the expertise of different Ministries will be taken on board.

## **NTC – RESTRUCTURING PLAN**

**(No. B/452) Mr A. Ganoo (First Member for Savanne & Black River)** asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to the National Transport Corporation, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Corporation, information as to if -

- (a) the Technical Committee set up to examine the Restructuring Plan thereof has recommended to the Board the privatisation thereof or the injection of private capital thereinto by a private company, and
- (b) any decision has been taken regarding the building owned thereby at Ebène.

**Mr Bachoo:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I wish to inform the House that the restructuring plan to ensure the financial sustainability of the National Transport Corporation has been examined by the Technical Committee and has now been submitted to the office of the Public Sector Governance for further consideration. The plan consists of 8 scenarios. The office of the Public Sector Governance may come up with other recommendations. I wish to emphasise that privatisation of the Corporation or injection of private capital by a private company or laying off of personnel do not form part of any of the options being considered.

As regards part (b), no decision has yet been taken and I wish to point out that the sale of the said building form part of the restructuring plan.

**Mr Ganoo:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, can the hon. Minister give us a foretaste of the recommendations of the Technical Committee because I suppose this will be made public soon?

**Mr Bachoo:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this matter is being looked into by the Public Sector Governance. Once decision has been taken, I don't have any problem in circulating all the eight scenarios.

#### **MINISTRY OF YOUTH AND SPORTS – SPORTS COACHES**

**(No. B/453) Mr F. Quirin (Third Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière)** asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether, in regard to the sports coaches of his Ministry, he will give a list thereof, indicating in each case the -

- (a) date of appointment;
- (b) sport discipline to which each one is attached, and job description.

**Mr Ritoo:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I wish to inform the House that in my Ministry, there are 4 senior sports coaches and 29 sports coaches employed on the Permanent and Pensionable Establishment and 15 Adviser/Coaches employed on contract. All of them perform work of a similar nature.

The information requested for by the hon. Member is being tabled.

**Mr Quirin:** M. le président, j'aimerais demander au ministre combien de catégories de *sports coach* il y en a au sein de son ministère; c'est bien trois d'après sa réponse?

**Mr Ritoo:** We have Senior Sports Coaches, Sports Coaches and Adviser Coaches.

**Mr Quirin:** M. le président, est-ce que le ministre peut nous dire si certains sont employés sur une base temporaire et d'autres sur une base permanente?

**Mr Ritoo:** Yes, I think I gave it in my answer that we have got Adviser Coaches who work on a contract basis and the Senior Sports Coaches and the 29 Coaches work on permanent and pensionable establishment. We have got 15 on contract basis.

**Mr Quirin:** M. le président, il paraît qu'il y a un *coach* qui agit au lieu d'être sur son site de travail - le site auquel il est attaché. D'après les informations que j'ai eues, il passe tout son temps au bureau du ministère des sports. Est-ce que le ministre pourrait nous donner plus de précision là-dessus?

**Mr Ritoo:** I don't know who is exactly the Sports Coach the hon. Member is talking about, but, anyway, the Sports Coaches normally do the administrative work during the day and after school hours, they are posted to their respective sports discipline for the coaching of the *École des Sports*, the technical centres, supervision of training, detection of talents, *Jeux de l'Avenir* and *Jeux de l'Espoir*.

### **RICHE TERRE - SEWERAGE NETWORK PROJECT**

**(No. B/454) Mrs A. Perraud (Fourth Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue)** asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to the region of Riche Terre, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Wastewater Management Authority, information as to if there is any sewerage network project therefor.

**The Deputy Prime Minister:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Wastewater Management Authority that the industrial zone of Riche Terre is already sewered. The remaining part of Riche Terre and other adjoining localities will be sewered under the Baie du Tombeau Sewerage Project, Phase III.

The contract for the consultancy services for feasibility study, EIA, detailed design and preparation of bid documents for this project, funded by the World Bank was awarded on 12 January 2011. The consultant is expected to complete its assignment by early 2012.

**Mrs Perraud:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, would the hon. Minister inform the House whether his Ministry has received representations from the inhabitants concerning request for a sewerage network in this region and when were the representations made?

**The Deputy Prime Minister:** I am not aware, but I will find out.

### **CREVE COEUR - BUS TERMINAL - CONSTRUCTION**

**(No. B/455) Mrs A. Perraud (Fourth Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue)** asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to the project for the construction of a bus terminal at Crève Coeur, he will state where matters stand.

**Mr Bachoo:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, on 03 June 2008, the cost estimates were proposed for the construction of a bus park at Crève Coeur, but the project could not be implemented because of unavailability of land for that purpose.

I wish to inform the House that the Ministry of Housing and Lands has vested a plot of land of an extent of 4,184 m<sup>2</sup> for the construction of a bus terminus at Crève Coeur in March 2011.

The design for the bus terminal has already been prepared by the Traffic Management and Road Safety Unit and costs implications are being worked out for the implementation of this project.

### **LONG MOUNTAIN VILLAGE HALL - ACTIVITIES**

**(No. B/456) Mrs A. Perraud (Fourth Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue)** asked the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the Long Mountain Village Hall, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Pamplemousses and Rivière du Rempart District Council, information as to -

- (a) the activities that have been held thereat, since 2008 to date, and
- (b) if the conditions of the building and of the equipment thereat are up to the standard and, if not, the remedial measures that will be taken.

**Mr Aimée:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with regard to part (a) of the question, the information submitted by the Pamplemousses and Rivière du Rempart District Council is being laid in the Library.

As far as part (b) of the question is concerned, I am informed by the Pamplemousses and Rivière du Rempart District Council that the Long Mountain Village Hall, a one storey building is in good state except there are two damaged wooden doors in the toilets. The Council is taking necessary action to replace these doors by aluminium ones within one week. The village hall provides various indoor games as well as chairs, tarpaulins and aluminium bier to the inhabitants of the region for funeral purposes.

### **ANJALAY COOPEN & GERMAIN COMARMOND STADIA - INCIDENTS**

**(No. B/457) Mr D. Khamajeet (Second Member for Flacq & Bon Accueil)** asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether, in regard to the incidents that occurred in the Anjalay Coopen and the Germain Comarmond stadia recently, he will state if -

- (a) inquiries have been carried out thereinto, indicating the actions taken, if any, and
- (b) the stadia meet the security norms and, if not, the remedial measures that will be taken.

**Mr Ritoo:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have been informed by the officer in charge of Anjalay Coopen Stadium that, during the Final of the Republic Cup, played on 13 March 2011, between Pamplémousses S.C. and Petite Rivière Noire Football Club, the supporters of Petite Rivière Noire Football Club started throwing objects towards the playfield, showing their disagreement to the decision of the referee to send off a player and thus caused minor damages at the stadium.

A statement was registered at the Piton Police station on Monday 14 March 2011 by the officer in charge of the Stadium on this issue. Police enquiry is still on.

Concerning Germain Comarmond stadium, no incident has been reported to my Ministry. However, I understand that during Mauritius Secondary Schools Sports Associations (MSSSA) heats on Tuesday 17 May 2011, for Port Louis region, a few members of the public tried to have access to the stadium through the main gate, but were not allowed to do so by the Police present, as this activity was not meant for the public.

As regards part (b) of the question, both Anjalay and Comarmond Stadia meet the required security norms. Security is also reinforced during matches and other events through the presence of the Police and officials of the organising bodies.

**Mr Khamajeet:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, according to information that we have, those supporters got access to the store of the stadium and...

**The Deputy Speaker:** Which incident?

**Mr Khamajeet:** PQ No. B/457.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Which of these two?

**Mr Khamajeet:** On Anjalay Stadium, they got access to the store and they also stole bicycles which we have got for the cyclists. In the store, there is cyclist equipment which is kept in the north and being given that there is a...

**The Deputy Speaker:** No, the hon. Member should ask the question first, if it is true.

**Mr Khamajeet:** Can I ask the Minister if necessary action was taken against those troublemakers?

**Mr Ritoo:** Actually, I stated in my answer that there is a Police inquiry going on and we have got bicycles damaged because the cycling federation is there and they store all their bicycles in the stadium. Obviously, these have been damaged and there is a Police inquiry going on.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The Table has been advised that PQ No. B/463 has been withdrawn. Next question!

**TROU VIRE ISLET - FOOD HAWKERS – ECOLOGICAL IMPACT**

(No. B/458) **Mr D. Khamajeet (Second Member for Flacq & Bon Accueil)** asked the Minister of Environment and Sustainable Development whether, in regard to the Trou Viré islet, he will state if, following the decision to relocate the food hawkers from the Ile aux Cerfs thereto, his Ministry has carried out any assessment regarding the ecological impact thereof on the islet and on the marine eco-system around the islet indicating if the mangroves found around the islet will have to be uprooted in favour of any development thereof.

**The Minister of Tourism and Leisure (Mr N. Bodha):** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I shall reply to this question.

I am pleased to note that, further to the reply I made to PQ Nos. B/250 and B/256 at the sitting of the National Assembly on 19 April 2011, we have triggered some healthy debates regarding the upliftment, preservation and maintenance of Ile aux Cerfs and the neighbouring islets.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, there is a general consensus for an urgent need to cater for the preservation of the ecosystem of all our islets and to provide the best facilities for all the stakeholders carrying an activity there.

In fact, it is good to point out that we are concerned, not only with Ile aux Cerfs, but also with the other islets such as Ile aux Bénitiers and Ile d'Ambre, which also have high touristic potential and which need to be preserved.

The Trou Viré islet project actually forms part of the Ile aux Cerfs project which needs to be preserved in view of its iconic status, as I stated last time.

One of the priorities of my Ministry is, in fact, to ensure the sustainable development of the industry and to take appropriate initiatives to preserve the pristine cachet of the natural touristic sites of Mauritius which we market extensively as an eco-friendly destination.

We have, in this context, been at all times working in close collaboration with the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development, the Ministry of Agro-Industry and other stakeholders. *M. le président, nous avons un devoir de donner l'exemple.*

Let me reassure the House that my Ministry will ensure that all necessary clearances are sought and obtained and all procedures are duly complied with prior to the starting of any work at Trou Viré islet. As I said, we should set the example.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed that, at this stage, a consultant has already been appointed to work on the concept plan in order to transform the Trou Viré islet into a suitable location for all the barbecue operators. For the purpose of this assignment, the consultant has been advised to be guided by the following main principles -

- (a) sanitary and hygienic requirements of the project;
- (b) security, and

- (c) above all, integration of the project within the existing environmental set-up and need to preserve the natural cachet of the islet and also to cater for all those stakeholders who are already present on the islets.

I am further informed that the Forestry Division of the Ministry of Agro-Industry has already carried out a survey of the islet as regards to the fauna on 09 May 2011.

The proposed development at Trou Viré islet will be strictly in line with the recommendations of the report to be submitted by the Forestry Division.

Insofar as the mangroves are concerned, I have been advised that none will be uprooted.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, once the concept plan will be ready, my Ministry will ensure that any further study, including all ecological assessments on the islet, as appropriate, as well as an application for an EIA will be undertaken accordingly. We will then present the plan to all stakeholders.

**Mr Khamajeet:** Having heard the Minister saying that everything will be protected for any development, many operators are saying that they are being removed from Ilot Mangénie and are displaced to Trou Viré in order to allow high market villa development on these islands. Can I ask the hon. Minister if he can confirm whether there will be any such development there?

**Mr Bodha:** I can confirm to the House, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that there has never been such a project and I do not think that we should allow such a project on Ilot Mangénie. I can assure the House on this.

**Mr Bérenger:** Can I know who the consultant is and how he was chosen?

**Mr Bodha:** In fact, the services of the consultant have been chosen by the hotel group and we have approved it. In fact, it is Gilles Moorghen who was the consultant who designed the La Cuvette project when we implemented the project together.

### **LES SALINES, PORT LOUIS - HARBOUR BRIDGE PROJECT**

(No. B/ 459) **Mr J. C. Barbier (Second Member for GRNW & Port Louis West)** asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to the Harbour Bridge Project in Les Salines, Port Louis, he will state the –

- (a) number of properties that will be compulsorily acquired;
- (b) value ascribed to each property;
- (c) last date for the inhabitants to vacate their respective properties, and
- (d) if any relocation of the inhabitants has been envisaged.

**Mr Bachoo:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have to inform the House that the Ministry of Housing and Lands has already issued notices under Section 6 of the Land Acquisition Act on

owners of some 63 properties along Reserves Street in Port Louis which were identified for compulsory acquisition in the context of implementation of the Harbour Bridge Project.

However, with a view to minimising the impact of land requirement for the implementation of the project, Government requested last year that the possibility of reviewing the alignment be explored. The Transaction Adviser for the project has proposed a fresh alignment which would impact on properties on one side of Reserves Street only. This revised alignment was approved by Government earlier this month.

The Ministry of Housing and Lands has been informed accordingly and will be issuing fresh notices for land acquisition shortly.

With regard to parts (b), (c) and (d) of the question, I am advised as follows.

The properties will have to be surveyed before the Valuation and Real Estate Consultancy Services Department can carry out the valuation of each property, on the basis of which compensation will be paid. The normal procedures will apply.

**Mr Barbier:** On November last, the Minister replied to a Parliamentary question that consultations with the inhabitants, whose land will be affected, will start shortly. This is as far back as November last. May I know from the Minister whether there have been such consultations with the inhabitants and, if so, when, and if not, why not?

**Mr Bachoo:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, normally when we publish section 6, it is then that the real consultation starts. We inform the landowners that, in fact, Government intends to go ahead with such a project. We do not start it earlier; we have to wait for section 6. If we start it earlier, there will be too much of speculations and that can create problems also. That is why section 6 is the beginning and it has to be publicised - if I am not mistaken - twice, and all the procedures will be followed, negotiations will be undertaken, not by my Ministry, but by the Valuation Department. If they have to negotiate, I do not have anything to do as far as acquisition is concerned.

**Mr Barbier:** In his answer in November last, the Minister also informed the House and I quote -

“In parallel, a technical committee chaired by my Ministry and comprising representatives of the Ministry of Housing and Lands, Road Development Authority, Mauritius Port Authority, Municipality of Port Louis and the Valuation Office is working on streamlining procedures to ensure that acquisition process runs smoothly and compensation and relocation issues are resolved early.”

May I know the relocation the Minister mentioned then? May I know whether there is any proposal in that direction?

**Mr Bachoo:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, there are two things that I am going to say on this. First, the committee had been working and that is the reason why a new alignment had been proposed where we can minimise the extent of land that we are going to acquire.

As far as the relocation issue is concerned, Government has already taken the decision to put up a committee chaired by the Minister of Housing and Lands to look into the issues, because each case has to be dealt with separately. There are people who will like to have, for example, a plot of land elsewhere and others may like to have compensation. That is the reason why Government has set up the committee.

**Mr Bérenger:** To clarify that point, therefore, relocation was mentioned and is being considered. Will the hon. Minister agree with me that, in this case, it cannot be business as usual, with just compensation, compulsory acquisition? There are two precedents; Mare Chicose and the landslide at Vallée des Prêtres, where a Committee was set up for land swaps. Does the hon. Minister agree with me that this is a case which should be treated the same way? Those who want compensation under the law, fair enough. But, as in the case of Mare Chicose and Vallée des Prêtres, relocation through land swaps should be actively considered.

**Mr Bachoo:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this is one of the options. Particularly this question was raised when the issue of Roche Bois cropped up. This issue was raised up particularly for Roche Bois. But if towards Les Salines, this question will crop up, we are supposed to have a look at it. We are very flexible, and that is the reason why we have got negotiations.

**Mr Lesjongard:** May I ask the hon. Minister whether the report of the Transaction Adviser will be made public? Because we are dealing with a toll bridge.

**Mr Bachoo:** In fact, the report of the adviser, if I am not mistaken, is a very bulky one. This question relates to only one part of it, that is, the alignment. Once everything is ready, I don't have any problem in declaring it public.

**Mr Ganoo:** Can I ask the hon. Minister one question? He has informed the House that there is a new alignment that has been designed, with the result that lesser number of owners now will be asked to vacate their premises. From 63, I understand it has gone down to 40 approximately. So, can I ask the hon. Minister why is that the case? With all the experts, the technicians that were working on that project, what was the reason for putting 20 families under due and constant stress for that long period of time? It is only after *la levée de boucliers* of these inhabitants that the new alignment has been designed, and now it has been found out that 20 families have to vacate their property. Why is that so?

**Mr Bachoo:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this is not the case. I do not agree with the hon. Member; it is not a *levée de boucliers*. In the beginning, the consultant who worked on the original alignment was Arup. Last year, in May, the decision was taken to request them to find out a new alignment. But, in the meantime, the Ministry of Housing had to do its work. The consultations were on, and, secondly, the procedures were on for the publication of section 6. Last year, in the month of May, we had taken the decision, and decided that we could minimise the amount of land that had to be acquired, and take only one side. Ultimately the Transaction Adviser has agreed to our proposal. But there is no question that, because there was an outcry, we had taken the decision. The decision was taken before.

**Mr Baloomoody:** The hon. Minister mentioned relocation. Can he say whether certain plots of land have already been identified to be proposed to those whose houses will be taken over?

**Mr Bachoo:** The Ministerial Committee has recently been set up, and I am not aware whether any land has been located.

#### ***LA FERME MARINE DE MAHEBOURG LTD - FISH PRODUCTION***

**(No. B/460) Mr J. C. Barbier (Second Member for GRNW & Port Louis West)** asked the Minister of Fisheries and Rodrigues whether, in regard to the fish farm at Pointe aux Feuilles, Mahebourg, he will state the -

- (a) total fish production over the last five years;
- (b) quantity exported, and
- (c) retail price thereof on the local market.

**Mr Von-Mally:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed that for the last five years, that is, for the period 2006-2010, La Ferme Marine de Mahebourg Ltd has -

- (a) produced total quantity of 1,244.4 tons of fish;
- (b) exported a total quantity of 568.7 tons, and
- (c) sold a total quantity of 675.7 tons of fish from 2006-2010 on the local market, at a price varying between Rs150 to Rs180 per kilo.

**Mr Bérenger:** I would like to ask the hon. Minister whether consideration is being given to the starting operations of any other fish farm around the island.

**Mr Von-Mally:** In fact, scientists are still studying any proposal for the setting up of any fish farm. In fact, no promoters have asked for another fish farm but, we, at the Ministry, want to start the raising of sea cucumber, pearl culture, but not from other promoters.

**Mr Barbier:** It seems that the project at Pointe aux Feuilles *n'est pas économiquement viable*. May I know from the Minister whether, despite this adverse economic report on this project, he is still considering having a new fish farm development at Bambous Virieux?

**Mr Von-Mally:** In fact, here, we are talking of Mahebourg. Nobody talked about Bambous Virieux.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Time is over! I am advised that PQ No. B/461 has been withdrawn.

#### **PROJECT PLAN COMMITTEE**

(No. B/461) Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to the Project Plan Committee, he will state -

- (a) when it was set up;
- (b) the terms of reference thereof;
- (c) the composition thereof;
- (d) the projects which have been considered and recommended, in the second half of 2010, mainly in relation to the construction of new buildings and the acquisition of existing buildings, indicating in each case -
  - (i) when decision was taken, and
  - (ii) the budget amount recommended, and
- (e) if the acquisition of the Med Point Clinic was channelled through the Committee, prior to the purchase thereof and, if so -
  - (i) when, and
  - (ii) table Minutes of the Committee in relation thereto.

*(Withdrawn)*

**Mr Dayal:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, on a point of order. In relation to PQ No. B/447, hon. Obeegadoo made a very serious and unacceptable allegation against the hon. Minister of Education, by saying that the Minister is not paying attention *inter alia* to ZEP and pre voc schools, because these children come from a poor background. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I consider this unacceptable and not in order, and might have far-reaching implications. Therefore, hon. Obeegadoo should withdraw what he said. I am asking for your ruling.

**The Deputy Speaker:** I draw the attention of the hon. Member that he should not impute motives and should, therefore, withdraw this allegation.

**Mr Obeegadoo:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, may I know under which Standing Order the point was taken?

**The Deputy Speaker:** The point of order was taken under Standing Order 41.

**Mr Bérenger:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I take it that the so-called point of order refers to a question that was put today. Can we have the record? I would press for the record before you rule, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

**The Deputy Speaker:** I will give my decision on that issue later.

**MOTION**

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

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

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

*Question put and agreed to.*

## STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS

### DBM LTD - LOAN TO MED POINT LTD

**The vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development (Mr P. Jugnauth):** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, following PQ No. B/392 of last week, I wish to make the following statement.

I am advised by the Development Bank of Mauritius as follows -

- In February 1992, the Board of DBM Ltd sanctioned a loan of Rs24 m. in favour of Modern Clinic Ltd, a private company incorporated on 30 May 1990, which changed its name to Med Point Ltd in November 1992.
- The main promoters of the company are Dr. Krishan Kumar Malhotra and Mrs Shalini Devi Malhotra.
- The purpose of the loan was to finance the setting-up of a modern clinic of 65 beds with all latest medical facilities.
- The loan carried interest at the rate of 10% p.a. for the equipment and 13% p.a. for the construction of building.
- The repayment period was six years after a moratorium period of three years.
- The security for the loan was -
  - (i) a fixed charge on 10,362.23 m<sup>2</sup> of land situated at Paillotte, together with building to be constructed thereon, and belonging to the company;
  - (ii) a fixed charge on the equipment, and
  - (iii) a floating charge on the company's assets.
- The loan was disbursed in 19 tranches, based on the progress of the works and the site visit reports submitted by DBM's officers. The last disbursement was effected in September 1996.

- After disbursement of the loan, the company had been effecting its payments in advance until year 1998 when the main promoter, Dr. Malhotra, had to undergo urgent medical treatment abroad. The company requested several times the postponement of the capital repayment date of the loan. As the company had been meeting its interest commitments regularly, the DBM agreed to the company's requests.
- From 1998 to 2005, the company made numerous payments amounting to Rs13.66 m. and reduced the capital balance of its loan to Rs10.34 m.
- In July 2005, the company requested the DBM to reschedule the loan balance of Rs10.34 m. explaining that the company has had to invest in new equipment and in the refurbishment of its lift. The company was also undergoing a financial restructuring. The loan balance of Rs10.34 m. was rescheduled in January 2006 over a period of 5 years after negotiations with the company.
- However, in April 2008, the company wrote to the DBM to inform that it was incurring losses since the occupancy rate of the clinic had been adversely affected because the access road to the clinic had been closed for over six months owing to sewerage works being carried out by the authorities. The company informed DBM that it was not in a position to service its loan according to schedule. The company therefore requested the DBM to reschedule the loan again.
- The DBM was not agreeable for another reschedulement. Negotiations continued between both parties and in December 2009, a proposal for the settlement of the liabilities was made to the Arrears Committee of the DBM.
- At that stage, the total payments effected by the company amounted to Rs33.665 m., representing capital repayment of Rs15.17 m. and interests of Rs18.495 m.
- The remaining liabilities still due by the company amounted to Rs12.07 m., representing capital of Rs8.83 m., interests of Rs1.68 m. and penalty interests of Rs1.56 m.
- The proposal made by the company to the Arrears Committee was submitted to DBM's Board on 17 December 2009 for consideration. It was recommended to the Board that DBM accept a one-time payment of Rs9.64 m. in full and final settlement of the total liabilities of Rs12.07 m. The recommendation was approved by the Board. This represented a waiver of Rs2.43 m. in respect of penalty interests of Rs1.56 m. and normal interests of Rs0.87 m.
- DBM's decision as regards the waiver on interests was in line with the criteria set out in the Manual of Procedures of Arrears Collection. In this case, the main promoter met with an accident and due to physical injuries, he has become permanently disabled. The decision was also motivated by the fact that the main

promoter effected advance payments at the beginning and the interest component ought to have been adjusted accordingly.

- The House would wish to know that waivers on interests have been provided to 4,726 small borrowers over the period of May 2008 to December 2010 to the tune of Rs335 m.
- Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the final settlement by Med Point Ltd of Rs9.64 m. as approved by the Board of the DBM was effected on 25 March 2010.
- Overall, total payments effected by the company over the period of the loan amount to Rs43.305 m. As the loan amount was Rs24 m., the total interests paid by the company amount to Rs19.305 m.
- On 10 June 2010, the DBM issued a letter to the Conservator of Mortgages for the erasure of all charges in respect of the loan. Same was reissued on 23 December 2010 upon request from the promoter.
- Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am advised that there has never been any write-off of debt to the tune of Rs24 m.

**The Deputy Speaker:** I suspend the sitting for half an hour!

*At 4.17 p.m. the sitting was suspended.*

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

### **CHAGOS ARCHIPELAGO - MARINE PROTECTED AREA**

**The Prime Minister:** Mr Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I would like to make a statement on the case brought by Mauritius against the UK with regard to the ‘marine protected area’ which the United Kingdom has purported to establish around the Chagos Archipelago.

As the House is aware, the Government of Mauritius initiated proceedings on 20 December 2010 against the UK Government under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) to challenge the legality of the ‘marine protected area’. Mauritius considers that the UK, not being a “coastal State” under UNCLOS and international law, had no authority to purport to establish a marine protected area around the Chagos Archipelago.

Since Mauritius and the UK have not agreed on the means for the settlement of the dispute, it has been submitted to arbitration in accordance with Annex VII to the UNCLOS.

Annex VII to UNCLOS provides for the constitution of an Arbitral Tribunal consisting of five members. In accordance with the requirements of Article 3(b) of Annex VII, Mauritius has appointed Judge Rüdiger Wolfrum, Judge of the International Tribunal on the Law of the Sea (ITLOS), as a member of the Arbitral Tribunal. As for the UK, it has appointed on 19 January 2011, Sir Christopher Greenwood, Judge of the International Court of Justice, as arbitrator. The

other three members of the Arbitral Tribunal had to be appointed by agreement between Mauritius and the UK.

Since Mauritius and the UK could not reach agreement on the appointment of the other three arbitrators, Mauritius requested the President of ITLOS, Judge José Luis Jesus, to assume the role of appointing authority pursuant to Article 3(e) of Annex VII to UNCLOS. After consultations with the Parties, the President of ITLOS appointed on 25 March 2011 Professor Ivan Shearer of Australia, and two ITLOS Judges, Judge James Kateka of Tanzania and Judge Albert Hoffmann of South Africa, as the three remaining arbitrators. He also appointed Professor Ivan Shearer as President of the Arbitral Tribunal.

Following their appointment, the five arbitrators submitted Declarations of Acceptance and Statements of Impartiality and Independence which were transmitted to the Parties for comments by 23 May 2011.

It is a matter of public record that Judge Greenwood, while in private practice at the English Bar, has had a long-standing and close working relationship with the UK Government, including advising on many of the most sensitive issues of international law and foreign policy. According to his disclosure statement, he has acted for the UK within the past three years, in the period before he became a Judge at the International Court. He has also recently participated on a panel that selected the new Legal Adviser at the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office, showing the continuing relationship he has with the UK Government.

Mauritius is concerned to ensure the independence and impartiality of the Arbitral Tribunal and each of its members. Mauritius expressed serious concerns about whether it is appropriate for Judge Greenwood to sit on a case raising issues of strategic importance for the UK in circumstances in which he may be said to have such a close relationship with the party appointing him. We therefore requested additional disclosure from Judge Greenwood. A further disclosure statement was submitted by Judge Greenwood on 20 May 2011. This provided further details as to the timing of his contribution as a member of the panel that selected the new Foreign Office Legal Adviser. It made clear that, having been appointed to the Arbitral Tribunal in January 2011, he then served on a panel that decided on 14 March 2011 on the appointment of the new Foreign Office Legal Adviser.

I am bound to share with you my surprise at this regrettable turn of events. In fact, because of the urgency and sensitive nature of this matter, I personally met and discussed the whole issue with our Leading Counsel, Mr Philippe Sands, QC, last week in London. In our opinion, there are strong grounds for the view that a sitting arbitrator who has plainly been advising the British Government on matters proximate to, and which arguably have a bearing upon, issues before the Arbitral Tribunal and in addition who contributes to the selection of the new legal adviser of the party that appointed him and who may possibly form part of the team appearing in the case before him, should not sit as a member of the Tribunal. We have noted, in this regard, that the International Bar Association Guidelines on Conflicts of Interest state, and I quote: “There is an unacceptable appearance of bias if: (...) the circumstances would lead a

reasonable observer, properly informed, to reasonably apprehend bias.” Members of this House and members of the public may form their own view as to how a reasonable observer would react to such facts.

Judge Greenwood is an international Judge of great distinction and of impeccable reputation whom both the Government and I personally hold in considerable esteem. Therefore, it is with regret that we have concluded that we cannot submit to the appointment of Judge Greenwood without inviting the Tribunal to consider whether his continued tenure as a member of the Arbitral Tribunal is compatible with the well-established principles of objective independence and impartiality applicable to all judicial and arbitral proceedings. Having taken advice from our legal advisers, Mauritius has decided to challenge Judge Greenwood’s appointment. We regret the delay that this will cause, but we see no alternative.

The Arbitral Tribunal has invited the Permanent Court of Arbitration, which acts as the Registry for the case between Mauritius and the UK, to consult with the Parties with respect to the procedure for resolving the challenge to Judge Greenwood’s appointment with a view to reaching an agreement between the Parties. Should the Parties be unable to agree on any matters relating to the challenge procedure, the Arbitral Tribunal will decide on how to proceed in consultation with the parties.

A procedural meeting of the Arbitral Tribunal had been scheduled for 9 June 2011 in London to decide on the order of the proceedings. That has now been postponed until the challenge to Judge Greenwood’s appointment is resolved, which we hope will be done expeditiously. I will keep the National Assembly informed of further developments.

Thank you.

## MOTION

### HIS EXCELLENCY, MR SELLAPAN RAMA NATHAN, PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF SINGAPORE – NATIONAL ASSEMBLY – SPECIAL SITTING

**The Prime Minister:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I beg to move the motion standing in my name which reads as follows -

*“That, this Assembly is of opinion that a special sitting of the National Assembly be held on Tuesday 07 June 2011, at such time as may be fixed by Mr Speaker, to enable His Excellency, Mr S R Nathan, President of the Republic of Singapore, to address the House and that such sitting be exempted from the provisions of all the Standing Orders of the National Assembly, other than Standing Order 8 insofar as it relates to the election of a Speaker for the day, Standing Order 11 insofar as it relates to the adjournment of the Assembly by a Minister, and Standing Order 14 insofar as it relates to the issue of the Order Paper.”*

Mr Speaker, Sir, the aim of this motion is to allow for a special sitting of the National Assembly during the course of which we shall have the opportunity to hear, His Excellency, Mr Sellapan Rama Nathan, President of the Republic of Singapore who will be on official visit to Mauritius from 04 to 07 June 2011. It will indeed be a privilege for us to receive, in this August Assembly, His Excellency, Mr Rama Nathan, who is the second elected and longest serving President of the Republic of Singapore.

Mr Rama Nathan began his career in the Singapore Civil Service as a Medical Social Worker in 1955. In 1962, he was seconded to the Labour Research Unit of the Labour Movement where he served until 1966. He was later transferred to the foreign Ministry where he served as Assistant Secretary and rose to become Deputy Secretary before being appointed to the position of Ag. Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Home Affairs in 1971. In August of the same year, he moved to the Ministry of Defence where he was a Director of Internal Security Department. In 1974, he handled a serious incident when members of the famous terrorists group, the Japanese Red Army, bombed petroleum tanks off the coast of Singapore. Mr Rama Nathan was among a group of Government officers, who volunteered to be held hostage by the terrorists in exchange of the release of civilian hostages.

Mr Rama Nathan later served as High Commissioner of Singapore in Malaysia and as Ambassador to the United States where he served until 1996. On his return from the US, Mr Rama Nathan was made Ambassador at large and was concurrently Director of the Institute of Defence and Strategic Studies at the Nanyang Technological University. He also held a directorship in the Singapore International Media Limited.

Mr Rama Nathan was elected President of the Republic of Singapore on 18 August 1999 for a six-year term starting from 01 September 1999. He was re-elected for a second term of office on 01 September 2005 unopposed. On his first appointment as President of Singapore, he is remembered to have said and I quote -

“Every community here of Singaporeans belongs to my parish and indeed took interest in building a caring society for the nation.”

His Excellency, Mr Rama Nathan was conferred the Public Service Star in 1964 and the Public Administration Medal in 1967. In 1974, he was awarded the meritorious service medal for his contribution in shaping the fundamental foreign policies of Singapore and also for the setting up of the first diplomatic missions abroad. His Excellency, Mr Rama Nathan has also made remarkable contributions for the welfare of the Indian community in Singapore. He was, in fact, a founding member of the Singapore Indian Development Association.

Mr Speaker, Sir, Mauritius and Singapore share certain affinities as island countries and our common affiliation to organisations like the United Nations, the Commonwealth, the Non-Alliance Movement and SIDS. We also share diversity of cultures and enthralling variety of languages and most of the important religions of the world. All imbued with an incredible sense of unity and diversity. We are guided by the same spirit of our entrepreneurship in developing our resource deficient islands into vibrant and robust economic entities. Mauritius has excellent relations with Singapore and attaches great importance to the friendship existing between our two countries.

Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew visited us in 1979 and now, after 32 years, we shall be welcoming the President of the Republic of Singapore. The visit of the President of the Republic of Singapore will further enhance and add impetus to the cooperation and relation between Mauritius and Singapore and also provide an opportunity to discuss issues of mutual interest. I consider that it will be a privilege for this House to hear the message of our distinguished guest.

With these words, Mr Speaker, Sir, I commend the motion to the House.

**Mr Bérenger rose and seconded.**

*The motion was, on question put, agreed to.*

**Mr Speaker:** I fix the special sitting for Tuesday 07 June 2011 at 11.30 a.m.

## **PUBLIC BILLS**

### *Second Reading*

*Order read for resuming adjourned debate on the following Bills -*

### **THE ARABIC-SPEAKING UNION BILL**

**(NO. VII OF 2010)**

### **THE BHOJPURI-SPEAKING UNION BILL**

**(NO. VIII OF 2010)**

### **THE CHINESE-SPEAKING UNION BILL**

**(NO. VII OF 2011)**

**THE CREOLE-SPEAKING UNION BILL**

**(NO. IX OF 2010)**

**THE SANSKRIT-SPEAKING UNION BILL**

**(NO. XI OF 2010)**

*Question again proposed.*

**Mr C. Sayed-Hossen (Fourth Member for Montagne Blanche & GRSE):** Mr Speaker, Sir, I wish to start my intervention by congratulating my good friend, the hon. Minister of Arts and Culture.

**ANNOUNCEMENT**

**POINT OF ORDER RE. PQ B/447**

**Mr Speaker:** Before the hon. Member starts, I think there was a Point of Order which was raised by hon. Dayal insofar as it relates to PQ No. B/447 set by hon. Obeegadoo, and we have checked the transcript. In fact, the hon. Member referred to the Ministry collectively and, therefore, the Point of Order does not arise.

*(Interruptions)*

No, there is no need to make any comment. He made a confusion, that's all! He thought he heard 'Minister', but it was 'Ministry'.

*(Interruptions)*

**THE ARABIC-SPEAKING UNION BILL**

**(NO. VII OF 2010)**

**THE BHOJPURI-SPEAKING UNION BILL**

**(NO. VIII OF 2010)**

**THE CHINESE-SPEAKING UNION BILL**

**(NO. VII OF 2011)**

**THE CREOLE-SPEAKING UNION BILL**

**(NO. IX OF 2010)**

**THE SANSKRIT-SPEAKING UNION BILL**

**(NO. XI OF 2010)**

**Mr Sayed-Hossen:** I was saying, Mr Speaker, Sir, I wish to congratulate my good friend, the hon. Minister of Arts and Culture, for introducing these Bills on Speaking Unions to the House. All the orators who have taken the Floor before me, Mr Speaker, Sir, have made the point that Speaking Unions are about languages and their promotion thereof.

I took the pain of looking for the very common definition of language in the dictionary and it is described as a set of common sounds and symbols by which individuals communicate and I found this was a very arid description, Mr Speaker, Sir, and as such it is nothing more than a tool. But we know that languages are more than just a tool. They are vehicles and vectors of culture and culture itself is defined in a variety of ways and this definition usually includes some notion of shared values, beliefs, expectations, customs, language, jargon and rituals, and societies may include a varying number of cultures and languages.

If we take the case of Mauritius, Mr Speaker, Sir, the unfolding of our history over three centuries has seen the settlement of our country by immigrants from different parts of the world: from Europe, Africa, that offshoot of Africa which is Madagascar, India and China. That settlement has been more than just a demographic phenomenon. What we have seen actually over three centuries is the genesis of a microcosm of humanity.

One very important question which is often raised by anthropologists and linguists, Mr Speaker, Sir is: do the languages that we speak shape the way we think and do they shape what we think? Do they merely express thoughts? In other words, are they just communication tools or do the structures in languages shape the very thoughts we wish to express? The issue actually is about the ideological and philosophical neutrality, not of languages.

The question of whether languages that we speak shape the way we think goes back centuries. Emperor Charlemagne, a number of centuries ago, proclaimed that, I quote: “to have a second language is to have a second soul.” But then little by little, especially in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, that idea went out of favour with scientists like Noam Chomsky issuing theories of language which gained popularity in the 1960s and 1970s.

Dr. Chomsky proposed that there is a universal grammar for all human languages - essentially, that languages don't differ really from one another in significant ways. And because languages don't differ from one another, the theory goes; it made no sense to ask whether linguistic differences led to differences in thinking. Again, this sounds very arid to me, Mr Speaker, Sir. I must confess that I have great admiration for Professor Noam Chomsky, but then the question I am asking is: what about diversity? That theory about languages not really differing from one another in significant ways makes no provision for diversity, especially the sort of diversity that we know here.

I would wish to believe that the series of Bills on Speaking Unions - I think there are six of them in addition to three or five which exist already - is precisely about promoting and safeguarding our linguistic and cultural diversity. What we are doing is gradually setting up Speaking Unions for all languages spoken and written in our society.

Mr Speaker, Sir, language is a uniquely human gift. We don't know of any other creature who can claim to have the privilege of having a language and when we study a language, we are uncovering in part what makes us human, getting a peek at the very deepest nature of human nature.

As we uncover how languages and their speakers differ from one another, we discover that our human nature too can differ dramatically, depending on the languages that we speak and the cultural background wherefrom we draw our philosophical references.

Again, I would wish to believe that these series of Bills and Speaking Unions are about more than language. It is about culture, values, those most profound creations that human beings can master, that is, harmony and understanding. It is also, as we shall see later, about economics and trade. As I have said a little bit earlier, if we push the borders of analytical argumentation that is devoid of any emotional bias to the extreme, language is simply a tool for communication - full stop. Of course, we know it is more than that. But, primarily, it is a bridge between individuals and groups, and it is, in that sense, an essential tool for trade and business. For example, the predominance of English as a global medium is linked to the predominance of the US and, at one time, of the United Kingdom, as an economic power. We, as a people, have the good fortune of being articulate and literate in English and French. Many of us have the further good fortune of being articulate in other languages, and we know that we have the new emerging powers: China, India, the Arab world; thence, the importance of learning the languages that will allow us to trade and to do business with these countries, with these groups.

As I have said, Mr Speaker, Sir, languages are also about culture. Pour emprunter une phrase de André Malraux, M. le président, je cite -

« En un temps où les empires morts ont fait place à de vastes républiques de l'esprit », je ...

... propose que nous nous concentrons sur les valeurs que nous défendons ensemble pour favoriser l'émergence d'une nation aux valeurs de différentes cultures dont nous avons hérité, afin de mieux répondre aux questions décisives que nous pose à tous notre société aujourd'hui et aux questions encore plus difficiles que nous poseront nos enfants à l'avenir, et aux questions encore plus difficiles, M. le président, que nous poseront les générations à venir, à voir ce que nous avons fait du pays qui nous a été confié.

Alors que pour être totalement honnête, M. le président, nous cherchons à tâtons, dans l'obscurité de nos cloisonnements intellectuels et culturels, la présence concrète des premiers balbutiements d'une identité nationale multiple - parce que c'est de cela qu'il s'agit - nous prenons à la fois conscience des frontières qui pourraient morceler cette conscience nationale. Nous prenons conscience de l'impossible dialogue, par exemple, entre les civilisations dont nous sommes tous ici les héritiers mais, en même temps - et notre vie sociale nous le prouve - nous prenons conscience des sentiments profonds et fraternels qui nous unissent.

J'ai écouté, M. le président, avec attention, avec sympathie aussi, un certain nombre de discours qui ont été prononcés ici dans le cadre de ces projets de loi. Je ne tiens pas à faire un procès d'intention. Je ne m'érige pas du tout en juge, avec tout le respect que je dois à cette Chambre, à vous-même, M. le président, à mes honorables collègues de chaque côté de la Chambre. J'ai entendu des discours qui faisaient la promotion et qui défendaient le Bhojpuri, d'autres le Créole, d'autres encore l'Arabe, et je souhaiterais personnellement prendre une perspective différente, parce que je n'estime pas que nous sommes les héritiers, ici à Maurice, d'une juxtaposition de connaissances ou de civilisations. Nous ne sommes pas les héritiers de cultures fractionnées, cloisonnées, saucissonnées ou différenciées. Les langues de la Chine ou le Créole qui entrent à côté de l'Urdu, du Bhojpuri, du Sanskrit ou de l'Arabe ou encore d'autres langues ne sont pas des langues en plus. Il ne s'agit pas de rivalité de l'une contre l'autre. Tout comme la statue africaine n'est pas meilleure ou moins bonne que la statue grecque ou dravidienne ou que le vase Ming, ou encore que la miniature Moghol ; elle est tout simplement différente.

Cette autreté, si je peux utiliser ce mot, M. le président, met en question notre notion même du savoir vivre ensemble, parce que c'est de cela qu'il s'agit. Quand nous parlons de langue, quand nous parlons de culture, l'objectif - *the ultimate goal* - M. le président, c'est la genèse d'une nation mauricienne harmonieuse et fraternelle. Donc, cette autreté met en question notre notion même du savoir vivre ensemble, comme l'entrée en scène presque simultanée de toutes les langues et de toutes les cultures met en cause le confort douillet mais souvent obscurantiste de nos préjugés premiers.

M. le président, ici à Maurice, nous avons, par un destin singulier, été chargés de l'héritage du monde, mais cet héritage prendra la forme que nous lui donnerons par nos actions. C'est ici justement qu'entrent en jeu les grandes cultures historiques et traditionnelles dont nous sommes les dépositaires. Il ne s'agit pas pour nous de nous couvrir de réconfort. Faux! Car, en même temps que notre siècle et que nous, à Maurice, nous découvrons la culture nationale, la culture patriotique, nous découvrons très souvent, malheureusement, et souvent à notre grande surprise, le renforcement des communautarismes et des sectarismes. Notre problème n'est donc nullement dans l'opposition des langues, n'est nullement dans l'opposition des cultures historiques et traditionnelles, mais dans l'esprit particulier que ces cultures peuvent donner à notre culture nationale, patriotique et mondiale en devenir.

En fait, M. le président, que ce soit dans nos différentes cultures dont nous avons hérité ou dans n'importe quelle autre culture qui existe sur la terre, toutes ces différentes cultures que véhiculent les différentes langues nous renvoient toujours aux mêmes grandes émotions humaines, que ce soit devant le Cid de Corneille, devant Macbeth de Shakespeare, devant l'Antigone de Sophocle, devant le Rubaiyat de Omar Khayyam ou encore dans les thèmes d'un opéra chinois ou dans les nuances d'un film de Satyajit Ray. Nous découvrons que ce qui s'oppose au plus mesquin langage des instincts de cloisonnement et de division, ce sont les paroles et les formes universelles qui ont triomphé des siècles.

Je me permets de citer ce cri d'Antigone dans la pièce de Sophocle, quand elle s'écrie au pied de l'Acropole 'Je ne suis pas venue sur la terre pour partager la haine, mais pour partager l'amour'. Notre culture commune, M. le président, c'est cela l'essentiel. Notre culture commune c'est ce que nous choisissons de développer et de mettre en œuvre pour permettre à notre société de lutter contre cette multitude d'usines de destruction de nos rêves d'harmonie; de lutter contre cette multitude d'usines de destruction d'harmonie et d'unité que sont le repli communautaire, le mépris de l'autre, les amalgames douteux dont notre société est trop souvent friande, et surtout l'ignorance entretenue, délibérée et sereine de l'autre.

Ainsi, M. le président, je le dis encore une fois, avec tout le respect que je dois à mes honorables collègues - et j'espère que j'ai mal compris - c'est ainsi qu'apparaît clairement l'absurdité que j'appelle l'absurdité du problème de rivalité de nos cultures vivantes. Il est sans intérêt de chercher, si nous devons préférer notre culture d'origine à une autre; si nous devons préférer la culture créole ou la culture anglaise ou la culture française ou la culture indienne, parce que nous pouvons connaître et nous devons connaître d'autres cultures que la notre, même s'il est vrai nous ne les connaissons pas de la même manière.

Le colonel Lawrence, M. le président, le fameux Lawrence d'Arabie disait, je suppose par expérience, que tout homme qui appartenait réellement à deux cultures - dans son cas, l'Anglaise et l'Arabe - perdait son âme. Je ne sais pas si c'est vrai. J'ai trouvé cette citation intéressante, donc, je l'ai reprise.

Mais pour atteindre cette culture nationale et patriotique dont nous parlons et que nous visons, pour nous opposer aux tentations obscures et sectaires, pour nous opposer aux réflexes de rejet de l'autre, chaque personne se fonde sur une culture, et c'est la sienne, mais pas sur elle seule. D'où, donc, l'importance de ces projets de loi.

M. le président, ce qui se présente comme des facteurs de lien, comme des ponts, comme des articulations, ces différents *Speaking Unions* peuvent aussi devenir des facteurs de cloisonnement intercommunautaire. Il nous faut à tout prix éviter l'amalgame entre langue/ethnie, langue/religion. J'ai très souvent l'habitude de dire à certains amis avec qui je discute à propos de la langue Créole, que si le Créole est un facteur identitaire, il est clair que je ne suis pas Créole. Mais la langue Créole m'appartient comme elle appartient à tous les autres mauriciens. Donc, j'utilise cet exemple, M. le président, *to make my point*, comme on dit, que la langue ne doit pas devenir dans une Ile Maurice plurielle, multiple et diversifiée, un facteur identitaire, ce serait même dangereux que les langues que ces projets de loi visent à promouvoir deviennent ainsi des facteurs identitaires.

Il est hautement souhaitable dans ce cadre - je ne sais pas comment le ministre des Arts et de la Culture va le faire - d'éviter le cloisonnement ethno-religieux à l'intérieur des *Speaking Unions*. Il nous fait veiller à ce que les *Speaking Unions* deviennent des pôles de culture et non des centres religieux. Car une culture n'est pas simplement un ensemble de connaissances, mais aussi un héritage particulier de la noblesse du monde - et nous nous devons d'intégrer en notre sein, en tant que nation, en tant qu'individu, en tant que groupe, l'ensemble de cette noblesse du

monde, M. le président, parce que la culture ne connaît pas de communauté mineure, elle ne connaît que des communautés fraternelles et c'est avant tout une volonté, c'est avant tout un effort délibéré, un effort volontariste de créer véritablement ces ponts.

La culture, M. le président, comme la fraternité, ne s'hérite pas. Nous ne pouvons pas laisser faire les choses en nous disant cela viendra avec le temps. La culture comme la fraternité, M. le président, se conquiert dans l'effort et dans la persévérance, comme se forge la fraternité.

Merci, M. le président.

(5.33 p.m.)

**The Minister of Business, Enterprise, Cooperatives and Consumer Protection (Mr M. Yeung Sik Yuen):** Mr Speaker, Sir, allow me, at the very outset, to congratulate my colleague, the hon. Minister of Arts and Culture, for the introduction of five new Speaking Union Bills, namely the Arabic, Bhojpuri, Chinese, Sanskrit and Creole-Speaking Union Bills.

The five new Speaking Union Bills have been unanimously welcomed by both sides of the House following those of other languages, namely: Hindi, Tamil, Telugu, Marathi and Urdu.

Mr Speaker, Sir, we are living in a small island which is unique in the world because of our rainbow population in the world with a diversity of cultures coming from all continents of the world. We should never forget our roots where our ancestors come from. The work of these ancestors bears testimony of what Mauritius is today.

Therefore, how can we ignore and forget the languages spoken by these men and women who worked so hard to let us have such beautiful heritages! The Government has succeeded in promoting and preserving the cultures of all segments of the population, which makes our country unique and an example for many countries of the world. Language has always been an asset, a treasure and any leader in the world would be proud to possess such a treasure for his or her country.

M. le président, que peut-on trouver à dire sur cette belle langue qu'est le Sanskrit? S'il nous faut commencer à parler sur l'histoire de cette langue, c'est que nous voulons commencer à parler sur la civilisation moderne car c'est une langue qui s'est associée aux persans et aussi aux langues européennes. De ce fait, je lancerai un appel aux futurs membres du Conseil d'administration du *Sanskrit-Speaking Union* pour voir comment vulgariser et démocratiser cette langue, afin que les jeunes puissent s'abreuver de sa richesse et de son vocabulaire, tout aussi son côté sacré, car je suis persuadé que les mauriciens ne savent pas assez de cette langue. Donnons-nous les moyens d'être le reflet et faire jaillir encore plus notre côté culturel en étant des ambassadeurs des langues millénaires, car le Sanskrit l'est, tout comme le Latin et le Grec.

M. le président, j'ai eu plusieurs représentations de la part des fédérations chinoises de Maurice qui s'inquiétaient du fait que la Chambre venait de l'avant avec le *Mandarin-Speaking Union Bill*. Aujourd'hui, ils sont tous très contents, car le ministre des arts et de la culture a été à leur écoute et le *Mandarin-Speaking Union* a été remplacé par le *Chinese-Speaking Union Bill*

qui inclut aussi bien le Mandarin, le Hakka et le Cantonais. Je félicite le ministre pour cette décision, car c'est quelque chose qui pousse encore dans le resserrement de la population. Nous savons tous que cette Chine millénaire a beaucoup donné au monde dans le domaine culturel, et ignorer une ou deux langues aurait été un faux pas, car les trois langues dont j'ai fait mention plus haut sont autant parlées. Nous savons tous l'importance que prend la Chine dans le monde des affaires et combien le pays profitera de la vulgarisation de ces langues.

Je n'irai pas, M. le président, essayer d'analyser et juger chaque langue qui est parlée par les sino-mauriciens, car chaque langue a son importance, et c'est sûr que chacun trouvera dans laquelle des langues il se reconnaît mieux épanoui, tout comme ceux qui verront leur épanouissement dans la langue arabe, cette langue qui est aussi millénaire et qui est associée à une grande partie du monde. L'Arabe, qui est la langue liturgique de l'Islam, a toute sa place à Maurice, ce qui fait que nous ne pouvons que bien accueillir le *Arabic-Speaking Union*, car on ne peut oublier que l'Arabe est une langue de recherche et de découverte. Pas mal de découvertes ont été popularisées à travers la langue Arabe, car ces découvertes ont été l'œuvre des Arabes. Nous savons aussi la popularité de cette langue auprès de nos étudiants mauriciens, car c'est une langue très prisée dans nos écoles.

M. le président, après avoir parlé de toutes ces belles langues millénaires, je me fais un immense plaisir de parler sur notre belle langue, le Créole, langue maternelle des mauriciens, langue dont on se sert à la maison, dans la rue, maintenant de plus en plus au travail, dont des travaux de recherches ont été faits pour avoir une grammaire, devient de plus en plus une langue à part entière.

Nous savons tous que des pièces de théâtre ont été traduites de l'Anglais au Créole, du Français au Créole. On a toujours pu trouver les mots justes pour les traductions.

Cette langue, M. le président, est l'élément unificateur par excellence de la nation mauricienne, et son introduction comme langue optionnelle dans les écoles primaires est une avancée considérable dans la consolidation de cette grande nation mauricienne.

M. le président, le Bhojpuri mauricien, sœur jumelle du Créole mauricien, a aussi eu sa contribution dans la construction de cette nation mauricienne arc-en-ciel. Il a été comme un pont entre les différents groupes de mauriciens qui parlaient des langues distinctes. Ces deux langues ont permis de développer la communication dans un pays qui commençait à se construire. Et là, je fais référence à ceux qui ne parlaient que le Français ou la langue Chinoise, par exemple.

M. le président, rien que pour ces raisons, on doit féliciter mon collègue, le ministre des arts et de la culture, qui a eu le courage de venir avec la proposition de la mise sur pied de ces cinq nouveaux *Speaking Union Bills*.

Merci, M. le président.

(5.40 p.m.)

**Mrs F. Labelle (Third Member for Vacoas & Floreal):** Mr Speaker, Sir, any initiative taken to promote a language is most welcome. We have finally in front of us five Bills to promote five languages: Chinese, Arabic, Bhojpuri, Creole and Sanskrit. I said finally, Mr Speaker, Sir, because it's years now that the setting up of different speaking unions have been announced and we all remember the reply of the hon. Minister of Education, for example, in 2009 when he stated that –

“We are in the process of setting up a Creole-Speaking Union (...).”

On 23 March 2010, four Bills: Arabic, Bhojpuri, Creole and Mandarin were read a first time by the hon. Minister of Education; in July 2010 the same four Bills, with change from Mandarin to Chinese, together with a fifth one, the Sanskrit-Speaking Union Bill were brought before the House by the hon. Minister of Arts and Culture and nearly one year after the First Reading, the House is called upon to debate on these Bills. So, let's debate!

Mr Speaker, Sir, in his message on the celebration of the international year of languages in 2008, the then Director-General of UNESCO, Mr Koishiro Matsuura stated, I quote -

“Languages matter. Languages are indeed essential to the identity of groups and individuals. They constitute a strategic factor of progress towards sustainable development and a harmonious relationship between the global and local context.”

And here, Mr Speaker, Sir, we can draw a parallel with what was said as far back as 1949, that is, some 62 years before this statement of Mr Matsuura. In fact, Mr Speaker, Sir, the then colonial Government of our country, in an article published in the British survey, describing the Creole language stated, among others, I quote -

“But it - the Creole language - is unwritten and it is not a medium of education. This has placed a tremendous obstacle in the path of the African community, and will ever stand in the way of its self-development. It is probably at the bottom of their continued frustration and inability to better themselves.”

This was stated in 1949 and 62 years later, we talk about languages as a factor for sustainable development. Mr Matsuura also said -

“Languages are indeed essential to the identity of groups and individuals.”

Thus, Mr Speaker, Sir, promoting a language is promoting the identity of the individual, and promoting the identity of the individual is promoting the individual himself. Mr Speaker, Sir, all the five languages that we are talking about today are well present in our society, true it is, at different degree. If the Chinese language happens to be the ancestral language of some of our citizens, we all know the growing importance of Mandarin with the growing economy of China. We also, all know how better relationship can be established when you address someone in his or her own language, the language of an individual being such an integral part of that individual.

We then have, Mr Speaker, Sir, the Arabic-Speaking Union. Here too, we all know the importance of Arabic for our citizens of the Muslim community and over these years, much has been done to promote this language. In the past, when I was at primary school, there was only the Urdu which was being taught in schools, but over the years we now have access to the Arabic language.

Mr Speaker, Sir, regarding the Sanskrit, as rightly pointed out by Mrs Sarita Boodhoo in an article dated 26 March 2010, she said, I quote -

“Sanskrit, the mother of the Indo-European languages and the most ancient cultural, philosophical, literary, linguistic and scriptural vehicle with an exact scientific syntax and a phonetically superb alphabetic system (...)”

This is the Sanskrit; this is very rich and it is good that we have this structure to promote this language which we must say is not accessible to so many persons. I sincerely hope that this speaking union will help to get the Sanskrit more accessible to so many persons in our country. Also, Mr Speaker, Sir, I must say that I commend the Government for having corrected this *manquement* because at a particular point in time the Sanskrit-Speaking Union was not being presented, but after that the Government brought it and I commend the hon. Minister of Arts and Culture for having done so.

Mr Speaker, Sir, apart from being a tool to express ourselves, a language is also - I think hon. Sayed-Hossen just mentioned it - *l'outil par excellence pour véhiculer la culture*. Those who have prepared these Bills have rightly included in the objects and functions, promote inter-cultural and inter-linguistic understanding.

Mr Speaker, Sir, after having briefly mentioned these four languages, let me come to two other languages: Bhojpuri and Creole. Mr Speaker, Sir, having grown up in a village with a grandfather - he was my nana - he was a Creole, but he was a Bhojpuri speaking. Bhojpuri forms part of my cultural heritage. I am aware of the time when together with the Creole language, Bhojpuri was looked down upon. And I think everyone of us in this House knows this time when these two languages were looked down upon. Here, Mr Speaker, Sir, I salute all those who have strived over years so that Bhojpuri has the place it deserves in our society. When I talk about those persons who have strived, we have so many names of those persons who have strived for Bhojpuri to have its place. Allow me to mention one! Once again, I mention Mrs Sarita Boodhoo whom we know has done so much for the promotion of Bhojpuri in Mauritius.

Finally, Mr Speaker, Sir, last but not least, some words on the Creole-Speaking Union Bill. Mr Speaker, Sir, as I said at the very beginning, any initiative aiming to promote a language is most welcome and this applies to the Creole language. Mr Speaker, Sir, the Creole language has been subject of passionate debates both inside and outside this House during more than half a century. We have, several times, mentioned the place of the Creole language in our schools; we referred to the Ward's report of 1941 and, very often, we talk about the Creole language as to the place it deserves in our schools. There have also been debates as far back as

1981 in this very House when the late hon. Asgarally came with a formal motion to have the Creole language being accepted in Parliament. Unfortunately, I have not been able to have access to these speeches in the Library, I am sure it has been a very hot one and this has been mentioned in a study carried out by Dr. Carpooran talking about the Creole language and its place, and he has mentioned part of the speech of the then Prime Minister, Dr. Ramgoolam, which I am not going to quote, but I can only say that this speech reflects the most current opinion people had regarding the Creole language at that time. I will avoid quoting that.

Mr Speaker, Sir, we have seen that, over the years, we have had so many movements regarding the recognition of the languages. In the House, we had debates, but also outside, out there!

M. le président, durant ces 40 dernières années, le mouvement pour la reconnaissance de la langue Créole, nous savons tous, a vraiment débuté fin 60 et début 70 avec l'avènement du Mouvement Militant Mauricien. C'est l'histoire! Ce mouvement pour cette reconnaissance n'a cessé de s'amplifier et la langue Créole n'a cessé d'être valorisée à travers certaines actions prises. Cette Chambre va se rappeler, M. le président, qu'en 1982, alors que M. Rama Poonosamy était ministre de la culture, nous avons eu droit à une version créole de notre hymne national. Donc, cette langue était valorisée mais a été bafouée pendant des décennies. C'est dans cette même mouvance de la reconnaissance de la langue Créole que l'administration MMM aux conseils municipaux a permis l'entrée de cette langue dans les conseils municipaux. Les conseillers municipaux ont eu droit à utiliser cette langue et ce n'était pas le cas avant l'arrivée du MMM.

M. le président, durant toutes ces années, le MMM a toujours milité pour que cette langue ne soit pas considérée comme un *barbarous jargon*. Là, M. le président, j'ai trouvé cela très aberrant parce que cette langue était traitée comme *barbarous jargon*. C'était aux temps bénis des colonies, bien sûr! Permettez-moi de citer un certain Patrick Beaton, parlant de son voyage dans notre île, la colonie, il disait -

*“Is it possible that the English language is unknown to all save Englishmen, in a colony which has been in the possession of England since 1810?”*

Il écrivait en 1859. Ecoutez ce qu'il dit –

*“Is it credible that the Coolies even are taught in the barbarous jargon known as Creole, and that an Englishman, standing in an English colony, should discern no traces of the English language or English manners?”*»

Voilà comment cette langue était traitée! Il y a eu toute cette lutte pour que cette langue ne reçoive pas de tel traitement: *barbarous jargon*! Pour dire, M. le président, qu'il y a encore des gens qui pensent que cette langue, si elle n'est pas *barbarous*, mais grossière, vulgaire, etc.!

Heureusement que nous avons eu des personnes qui ont compris l'importance de cette langue, qui ont compris l'importance de la reconnaissance de cette langue qui est une langue

maternelle pour tant de mauriciens. M. le président, permettez-moi de citer ce qui a été dit. Il y avait en octobre dernier l'*International Hearing on the Harm done in Schools by the suppression of the Mother tongue* qui était organisé par '*Ledikasyon pu Travayayers*', and in the *Executive Summary of Findings and Recommendations*, it is stated -

*"Mauritian Creole appears now to have established itself as the national language of Mauritius and the language statistics published in the Draft Educational Reform Plan 2008- 2020 show that Mauritian Creole: 70%, Bhojpuri: 12 and combination of Creole and Bhojpuri with other languages are the mother tongues of more than 90% of the population."*

Donc, M. le président, on ne peut parler d'une langue barbare, etc. Ce rapport dit -

*"The Creole language appears to have established as the national language,"*

C'est un fait! Cela a été cité encore une fois dans l'étude publiée par le Dr. Carpooran. La langue Créole est *de facto* - c'est sûr que la langue Créole est *de facto* - la langue nationale de ce pays mais, jusqu'à l'heure, il y a des réticences de lui accorder *de jure* ce statut, statut de la langue nationale. Bien sûr, à ne pas confondre les langues nationales et les langues officielles. Ceci fait dire au Dr. Carpooran dans son étude -

« À l'exception de l'éphémère gouvernement MMM/PSM de 82-83 aucun régime gouvernemental post indépendance ne s'est montré réceptif à l'idée de conférer au Créole une reconnaissance officielle et, encore moins, de lui accorder *de jure* le statut qu'on lui reconnaît *de facto*, c'est-à-dire, de cette langue nationale. »

Ce qui fait que la langue Créole se retrouve tout le temps à se battre, M. le président.

M. le président, après tant d'années de lutte, je dirai que le Créole est le véhicule de la culture mauricienne. Oui, il y a le côté identitaire, l'honorable Sayed-Hossen en a fait référence, parce qu'il y a une communauté qui retrouve dans cette langue ce côté identitaire et cela n'empêche pas qu'il y a aussi la reconnaissance de la langue Créole comme langue nationale.

L'honorable Sayed-Hossen l'a bien dit, cette langue m'appartient aussi, appartient à tout les mauriciens et je pense que c'est cela qui la donne le statut *de facto* de la langue nationale, mais il y a aussi le côté identitaire dont une partie de notre population, la communauté Créole, s'identifie à cela comme leur langue ancestrale.

M. le président, la langue Créole est le véhicule de la culture mauricienne et les tentatives de placer cette langue uniquement sous une perspective ethno-identitaire n'aide pas à donner à cette langue la reconnaissance qui lui est dû. Nous parlons de la reconnaissance en tant que langue nationale. Voilà pourquoi, M. le président, le lancement de la grammaire *kréol morisien* le jour de la Journée de l'Afrique est, à mon humble avis, inopportun. C'est inopportun parce que là on le met sous cette perspective ethno-identitaire et cela n'aide pas cette langue à s'épanouir.

Bien sûr, M. le président, je ne vais pas parler de certains discours prononcés ce jour-là, des propos qui frisent la partisanerie, d'autres qui font rire pour ne pas pleurer. Quelqu'un a

même parlé de l'acte de naissance de la langue Créole en ce jour, oubliant que l'Etat avait déjà reconnu une *grafi-larmoni* presque 8 ans de cela et on a déjà eu des circulaires demandant l'utilisation de cette graphie. Il y a eu un projet pilote au niveau de certaines écoles primaires qui était fin prêt dont le gouvernement d'alors, comme on le dit si bien dans notre langue nationale « *ti fini déclarer ça.* » Donc, ce n'est pas maintenant qu'on a l'acte de naissance. Peut-être qu'aujourd'hui nous assistons à une adoption forcée; les parents dans *pince* et qu'on adopte cet enfant. Mais l'enfant a déjà été déclaré cette graphie.

La *grafi-larmoni*, M. le président, a été utilisée ces dernières années pour la traduction du Nouveau Testament. Nous avons aujourd'hui une version du Nouveau Testament en Créole utilisant la *grafi-larmoni*. Nous avons eu droit à la publication des matériels pédagogiques, du Prevoc BEC dont j'ai eu moi-même le plaisir de déposer des copies sur la Table de l'assemblée. Donc, cette graphie a été utilisée.

La chose la plus importante, M. le président, c'est que la reconnaissance et la promotion d'une langue ont été faites au cours des dernières années. Chacun apporte sa contribution pour le bien-être de notre pays. C'est seulement à Maurice que vous retrouvez cette langue telle quelle. Il y a d'autres variantes, oui ! Mais nous avons une langue nationale, et il est du devoir de tout un chacun de promouvoir cette langue. Ce n'est pas simplement introduire la langue créole à l'école. Il nous faut aller au-delà de cela, et je souhaite de tout cœur, M. le président, que le *Creole-Speaking Union* viendra contribuer à la promotion de cette langue qui nous est chère à nous tous, aussi bien que la promotion des autres langues. Nous sommes gratifiés d'en avoir autant dans notre pays, mais il faut pouvoir vraiment propager cette langue au-delà des clivages ethniques.

Je vous remercie, M. le président.

(6.00 p.m.)

**Mr S. Dayal (Third Member for Quartier Militaire & Moka) :** Mr Speaker, Sir, much has been said with regard to the five Speaking Union Bills, which were introduced in this House some three weeks ago. All my colleagues who have intervened before me have praised the hon. Minister and the Government for coming forward with these Speaking Union Bills, with a view to further consolidating our unity and national solidarity.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the Bills we are debating upon today, are also recognition of the values, traditions, customs that we have inherited from our forefathers for many years now. We should not be oblivious to the fact that, through their toil and labour, our ancestors have immensely contributed to the emancipation and development of our languages. I fully agree with these Bills, Mr Speaker, Sir. I would like to add that the perception left behind by some hon. Members is as if the building of the national unity of the Mauritian nation has begun only recently, by the setting up of the Speaking Union Bills and the cultural centres. I concur, Mr Speaker, Sir, that the setting up of these Speaking Union Bills and the cultural centres is carrying further a process, which started some six decades ago by the founding Father of our nation, Sir Seewoosagur

Ramgoolam. As the debate unfolded, Mr Speaker, Sir, and after the speech of the hon. Leader of the Opposition, I felt the urge and even duty-bound to speak and place some facts of our history in their proper perspective and, at the same time, correct some of the inaccuracies that have been said in this House. For the record, the facts have to be corrected.

Mr Speaker, Sir, should I remind the House that, over the last seven decades, the Labour party marked the history of this country with indelible prints, not only in bringing the political emancipation of the people and establishing social justice, but also in its relentless effort in building the unity of the nation brick by brick, layer by layer! If today, many countries in the world envy Mauritius for our unity in diversity, let me be bold to say, Mr Speaker, Sir, in this august Assembly, that it has been a long and relentless battle since many, many years. This is why, Mr Speaker, Sir, it is incumbent upon me to reply to the hon. Leader of the Opposition. Otherwise, justice will not be done to my party, that is, the Labour party, and the founding father of the nation who, as we all know in this House, in this country, has left no stone unturned to achieve the unity of this nation, in spite of the adversities and obstacles he was confronted with.

Mr Speaker, Sir, another reason for me to set the record right is for posterity to know who did what in the act of building the Mauritian nation and upholding *la nation Ile Maurice arc-en-ciel*.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I listened very carefully to the intervention of the Leader of the Opposition, and I must say that I subscribe to most of his statements, except when he said, and I quote -

“It took some time for the present Government, for the Labour party to accept the idea of *unité dans la diversité*.”

Mr Speaker, Sir, with due respect to him, I should ask myself the question, as to whether the Leader of the Opposition's understanding of *unité dans la diversité*, this concept of *unité dans la diversité* starts with the introduction of the Speaking Union Bills and the cultural centres. Does it also end there, or does *unité dans la diversité* has a much broader definition and demands a more concerted action, decision, sincerity of purpose and honesty in building the edifice of the national unity? As far as I am concerned, Mr Speaker, Sir, *l'unité dans la diversité* does not start and stop with the passing of the five Speaking Union Bills.

I do agree with him that it is another step in that direction, that is, to further consolidate the process of nation-building, which started decades ago with our struggle for independence and the establishment of economic and social justice for every cross-section of the population of this country, of the population of Mauritius. But we should also ask the question, Mr Speaker, Sir: can we speak of *unité dans la diversité* when there is no economic and social justice? No, Mr Speaker, Sir, we cannot! We still remember the dark days of our history, the 1940s, where abject poverty, social and economic injustice had created two categories of people. Yes! Two categories of people, giving rise to permanent social conflicts, while jeopardising the efforts that were being made to build national unity.

Who does not recall the attempt of dividing our people in race, caste and community, to stop the march of the people towards political and economic changes leading to the independence of the country? Can we have unity in diversity if there is no respect for our various religions, cultures and languages, which rights have been enshrined in our Constitution? Would there have been unity if all the religions and languages that exist here were not given the same treatment? No! In fact, I will say, I am not aware of any country that has achieved unity in diversity when the political, economic and cultural rights of the people have been suppressed. There are so many countries in the world today, where the minorities are still battling for their legitimate rights; their languages, cultures, values to be recognised, and the notion of unity is a dream, a far cry.

Not very far from us, in the recent past, it required the stature of a Nelson Mandela to create unity in the South African people after the rights of the majority of the black people had been suppressed for decades. Had it not been for President Nelson Mandela, the country would have ended on a civil war, torn apart. This is a fact that is recognised by one and all. So, Mr Speaker, Sir, unity in diversity consists of many compartments and not only of Speaking Union Bills and of Cultural Centres.

In this 21<sup>st</sup> Century, we are still witnessing the divide that exists in the Middle East for communal, ethnic and religious reasons, leading to serious conflicts between some people. The Arab world, Mr Speaker, Sir, is a glaring example of this, in spite of the fact that they all speak Arabic.

Mr Speaker, Sir, unity in diversity is much more than the simple recognition of the various languages existing in a country. Let me recall in this House that the battle of the unity of our diverse communities started in our country many, many years ago with the creation of the Mauritius Labour party in 1936. As the hon. Leader of the Opposition has mentioned, the Labour party's late recognition of the concept of unity in diversity - Mr Speaker, Sir, I will crave for your indulgence and that of my colleagues to go a bit down memory lane, if not, I will fail in my duty towards the founding Father of the nation, Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam, who devoted all his life in building and cementing the unity of this nation.

Mr Speaker, Sir, it is often said that the longest journey starts with one small step and the construction of the edifice of our nation started way back when the Labour party waged war against the oppressors of the downtrodden and the voiceless people, in order to establish their political, economic and human rights. It all started, Mr Speaker, Sir, when Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam, in 1943, deponed before a Select Committee on the Ward Report on Education for the Official Recognition of the Languages of the thousands of our ancestors who had come from different shores to this country. He said and I quote -

“I shall impress upon the Government to see that these languages are taught and, indeed, taught in a manner that is more scientific.”

That was 68 years ago, Mr Speaker, Sir. The battle for *unité dans la diversité* had started then, and not now. His plea for the official recognition of the oriental languages was accepted by the then colonial Government and all oriental languages started to be taught in the primary schools. Had he not fought for the recognition of these languages at that time, the passing of the several Speaking Union Bills could have remained an empty shell because, by this time, all these languages would have been dead and buried like the Dodo.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the struggle of SSR did not stop there. It continued all throughout his political career to see to it that the teaching of all these languages were not only recognised, but also consolidated. He fought for these languages to be taught as examinable subjects not only at primary, but also at secondary level. Today, degrees are being awarded in these languages.

Mr Speaker, Sir, all these languages are alike and we all know that languages are the vehicles of culture and they have to be protected. Thanks to SSR, we are today able to have Speaking Unions for the various languages that are spoken and taught in our country, though it takes a lot more time, Mr Speaker, Sir, to achieve this very laudable objective of building unity of the nation. We must also focus on the preservation, promotion and propagation of the different cultures in order to achieve national identity which cuts across the barriers of race, caste and religion and present a unique example of peaceful coexistence. That was the broader vision of SSR and this is what he did by the creation and establishment of the Mahatma Gandhi Institute in Moka and, later on, the establishment of the School of Mauritian, African and Asian studies.

In creating the Mahatma Gandhi Institute, Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam had a broad vision for the preservation and propagation of our rich cultural and linguistic languages. In spite of being the Prime Minister of this country, Mr Speaker, Sir, he assumed the chairmanship of its Board of Directors to map out the destiny of the Institute and nurse it through its teething years. That was the combination of shrewdness, honesty of purpose and flair of Dr. Ramgoolam in the continuous effort in building our unity. Dr. Navin Ramgoolam has created the Rabindranath Tagore Institute known as RTI. Mr Speaker, Sir, SSR saw the MGI as playing a creative role; a creative role as the intellectual and spiritual lighthouse radiating its beam on all the cultures and languages in our country. He expected the Institute to span out as a cultural bridge linking the east, the west and the Afro-Asian world through its nascent School of Asian, African and Mauritian Studies. At the laying of the foundation stone of the School of Mauritian, African and Asian Studies, this is what SSR said, and I quote -

“Mauritius has still to be discovered; for many of us, our history, our folk tales, our poetry of our own country.”

To meet the core objectives of the Institute, various departments were set up, among which the Department of Bhojpuri, Folklore and Oral Traditions. Here, I wish to pay tribute to Dr. Suchita Ramdin who headed this Department, that is, she was the first Head of the Department. For the first time in the history of Mauritius, Mr Speaker, Sir, a long playing record of traditional Bhojpuri songs was produced. Sir Kher Jagatsingh, the then Minister of Education,

named it '*Swarna Chakra*', the golden disc; and golden disc, certainly it was, for it captured for posterity all the charms, all the sweetness and all the nostalgia of our Bhojpuri musical heritage. It marked the beginning of a new brand; projects were conceived by the Department within the Department of Bhojpuri and Oral history to produce a series of records and publications not only in Bhojpuri, but in all the languages of Mauritius.

Today, among the many records and cassettes produced by the department, we have a rich collection of traditional songs related to Bhojpuri, Marathi and Telugu wedding songs of Mauritius as well as other aspects of our rich folklore. In 1993, Mr Speaker, Sir, the department produced, in collaboration with the Ministry of Education, a rare audio visual learning kit of traditional singing games in all languages spoken in Mauritius for the then pre-primary and early primary schools. The department continued to collect, at grass root level, the oral history and folk traditions of Mauritius through intensive field work and scientifically prepared questionnaires.

The department houses a very rare and unique collection of 300 CDs containing live histories, folk songs, folk tales, folk narratives of Mauritius collected directly from the mouth of aging Bhojpuri speaking citizens, our living libraries. It also houses a rare collection of artefacts and rare documents related to the Indian immigration in Mauritius. Mr Speaker, Sir, in 1989, for the completion of a project for the safeguard of our Bhojpuri heritage, a unique publication, *Samskara Manjari* which portrays the multifaceted significance of the Hindu wedding ceremony as it is reflected through the 400 Bhojpuri wedding songs of Mauritius, is compiled in the book. It is befitting to mention in this House and for the purpose of the debate of the Speaking Union Bills that since 1995, the Mahatma Gandhi Institute is producing a monthly TV documentary in collaboration with MBC, related to the folk traditions of Mauritius. That documentary is titled '*Palette*'.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I take pride in saying that I have been closely associated with the projects in the department including a Bhojpuri dictionary. The present Prime Minister has given a big boost with regard to the promotion and propagation of the Asian languages in the extension schools. The allowances, when he assumed Prime Ministership in 1995, was Rs300, now, it is to the tune of Rs2000 for those who are degree holders; Rs1,500 for HSC holders and Rs1,000 for SC holders. He did this in his first mandate in 1997-1998. These ideals are realised by different compromises such as the promotion of oriental languages declaring...

**Mr Speaker:** Hon. Dayal, I know you have made your point about the creation of that Institute, but I think you have to skip on it now.

**Mr Dayal:** A small point to end, Mr Speaker, Sir...

**Mr Speaker:** The hon. Member is going in too many details.

**Mr Dayal:** ... and also by declaring major religious festivals, public holidays, ensuring fair play in the broadcasting policy, State subsidies to religious associations in order to satisfy the different ethnic categories and respect their rights to be different. We shall also be setting out on

the voyage of discovery in the lands close to us. Here, people of the African and Asian descendants live and work side by side. We have to make a success of this co-partnership.

Mr Speaker, Sir, these are empirical evidences that go a long way to demonstrate, beyond reasonable doubt, that the Mauritius Labour Party and its historical Leader, Sir Seewoosagar Ramgoolam, had, throughout the history of this country, started upon the tremendous task of building the unity of this nation with all its diversities and the work continues.

“The Labour party has been a river to the people of Mauritius, particularly to the underprivileged, the downtrodden, the exploited and the hewers of wood and drawers of water of our island community”.

Said Sir Seewoosagar Ramgoolam on 12 March 1978.

Mr Speaker, Sir, let me, once again, with your permission, quote Sir Seewoosagar Ramgoolam on what he said on ‘Unity in Diversity’ on 12 March 1974, I quote -

“Our country enriched by many cultures and blessed with the splendour of unity in diversity has been able to breathe and live like a close-knit nation. I can say with much confidence that we have achieved a national identity which cuts across the barriers of race, caste and religion and present a unique example of peaceful co-existence. It is our belief that the promotion of all languages of Mauritius will preserve the essential cultural values of different communities”.

Mr Speaker, Sir, let us, through these Speaking Union Bills, seize the opportunity of perpetuating the memory of the founding Father of the nation and continue to tread along his footsteps so that we, Mauritians, can guarantee our future by working together irrespective of our race, caste and religion.

However, Mr Speaker, Sir, may I take this opportunity to make a humble request to my colleague, the hon. Minister of Arts and Culture. It would seem that one component of our multicultural and multilingual society has been left out. I know that it is not deliberate, but there is urgency in equally considering the possibility of coming forward with a Bill for the Gujrati-speaking brothers and sisters of this country, and I know my good friend, hon. Bhagwan will support this move.

I thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. Long live Mauritius! Long live the unity of the rainbow nation!

(6.27 p.m.)

**Mr S. Obeegadoo (Third Member for Curepipe & Midlands):** M. le président, nous sommes appelés ce soir à débattre les cinq projets de loi; cinq projets de loi quasi identiques à voir les objectifs attribués, donc, à ces cinq *Speaking Unions* devant nous ce soir.

Nous avons à Maurice une grande variété de langues. Il y a la langue officielle, l’anglais. Il y a une langue semi-officielle, le français. Nous avons toutes nos langues ancestrales. Il y a

des langues qui ne sont pas ancestrales mais, pour des raisons religieuses, comme l'Arabe, prennent de l'essor de plus en plus à Maurice. Il y a les langues que j'appelle les langues populaires. Le *Kreol Morisien* et le Bhojpuri sont utilisés couramment dans la vie de tous les jours. Toutes ces langues se retrouvent difficilement dans une seule catégorie. N'est-ce pas? Elles peuvent se retrouver dans plusieurs catégories à la fois.

Je crois que c'est la première fois, M. le président, que cette Chambre va débattre deux langues populaires. Y a-t-il jamais auparavant eu un débat à l'Assemblée nationale portant ou sur le *Kreol Morisien* ou sur le Bhojpuri? Je ne le pense pas. L'Arabe, le Sanskrit, les langues chinoises sont d'une importance capitale. Nul n'en doute. Et c'est pour cela que bon nombre de mes prédécesseurs, ici, à la Chambre, ont parlé de l'importance de ces langues, de la richesse de ces langues. Mais ce que je regrette, c'est que l'on ait fait l'amalgame. On aurait dû, selon moi, avoir débattu - on aurait pu débattre - ensemble du Sanskrit, de l'Arabe et des langues chinoises. Mais pour donner toute sa valeur à ces deux langues populaires débattues pour la première fois, il aurait fallu que les deux *Speaking Unions* se référant au *Kreol Morisien* et au Bhojpuri fassent l'objet d'un débat au sujet de ces deux langues.

Pourquoi ces deux langues, M. le président? Le dernier recensement concernant la question d'usage des langues à Maurice remonte à 2000. C'est un recensement qui se fait tous les dix ans, et nous n'avons pas les résultats du dernier exercice qui s'est fait. En écoutant l'excellent discours de mon collègue, l'honorable Joe Lesjongard il y a deux semaines de cela, j'ai eu l'envie d'aller revoir donc ces chiffres, et voilà ce que j'ai trouvé. Pour l'an 2000, sur un total de 1,179,000, 75% se réfèrent au Créole comme la langue parlée à la maison. Il y a toujours un bon nombre de gens qui n'osent pas, au cours d'un recensement, dire : « je parle le Créole chez moi ». Mais, même en faisant abstraction de cela - 75% - ceux qui disent créole plus hindi, créole plus français, etc., se montrent en tout à, donc, 75%. Bhojpuri : 13%. Ceux qui disent créole et bhojpuri : 5%. Donc, en tout et pour tout, 93% de notre population déclarent officiellement de l'an 2000 que la langue qu'ils pratiquent couramment chez eux à la maison c'est ou le créole ou le bhojpuri. C'est pour cela que je dis que ces deux langues sont nos deux langues populaires à Maurice et c'est pour cela qu'il faut leur accorder toute l'attention qu'il compte. J'aurais donc souhaité deux débats séparés et je regrette qu'aujourd'hui on fasse cet amalgame. Et je pose la question : pourquoi ? Pourquoi n'était-ce pas possible d'avoir un débat partant uniquement sur la langue créole et le Bhojpuri ? Est-ce les préjugés qui nous en empêchent ? Avons-nous peur de débattre de ce sujet?

**Mr Speaker:** No, it was accepted by this House that all the Bills will be taken together, and no objections were raised. So, the hon. Member must follow the path. He cannot now stand up and criticise. We are running out of time.

**Mr Obegadoo:** Merci, M. le président. J'exprimais mon opinion personnelle, propre à moi, pour dire combien j'aurais souhaité un débat sur ces deux là.

*(Interruptions)*

Tout à fait, mais le vice-Premier ministre ne m'empêchera pas d'être troublé que, sur un débat aussi important...

**Mr Speaker:** Hon. Obeegadoo, I am sorry. We have said this. It is the third meeting of the House that we are discussing these Union Bills. You are the 16<sup>th</sup> orator speaking and now you are taking the time unnecessarily. You can speak exclusively on these two. Nobody will prevent you from doing that, but please don't repeat the arguments of others!

**Mr Obeegadoo:** C'est ce que j'ai l'intention de faire, M. le président. Je vous remercie pour vos conseils, mais je disais que j'étais troublé. Vous me permettrez de dire que les principaux membres...

**Mr Speaker:** Et vous persistez !

**Mr Obeegadoo:** Non, je parle d'autre chose. Si vous avez la patience de m'entendre...

*(Interruptions)*

... pourquoi je disais que j'étais troublé, M. le président ...

*(Interruptions)*

Il faut faire preuve de patience. Je disais que les principaux dirigeants du gouvernement, *the front bench*, les huit membres, personne ne s'exprime sur ces deux projets de loi. C'est tout de même troublant.

*(Interruptions)*

Non, je parle des huit premiers dans la hiérarchie. Je suis sûr que mon ami, le ministre de l'éducation, s'exprimera tout juste après moi. Donc, c'était là le premier point que je voulais noter et j'en ai terminé.

Ensuite, en ce qui concerne ces *Speaking Unions*, nous sommes tous en faveur. Ce sont des projets de loi qui vont être votés, je pense, à l'unanimité. Seulement il faut bien se poser la question : à quoi serviront ces *Speaking Unions* ? L'autre jour, le *Leader* de l'opposition, au cours de sa réplique au ministre de la culture, soulignait le fait que nous avons des ONG qui se dévouent pour la promotion de ces langues. Nous avons désormais des centres culturels, et je regrette que l'honorable Dayal ne soit pas là. Quand le *Leader* de l'opposition parlait d'une conversion tardive, il se référait aux centres culturels. Nous avons maintenant les *Speaking Unions Bills*.

Les objectifs, par rapport aux langues, sont pratiquement les mêmes. Le ministre de la culture en conviendra et, donc, l'importance, comme le soulignait le *Leader* de l'Opposition, c'est d'éviter le double emploi. Ce qu'il nous faudrait, à mon humble avis, M. le président, c'est qu'à la suite de ces projets de lois qui vont être votés il n'y aura que le Gujrati qui n'aura pas un *Speaking Union* ; sinon, nous aurons traité de toutes les langues de Maurice. Ce qu'il faudrait, ce serait une stratégie cadre. N'est-ce pas ? Une stratégie cadre reposant sur la politique des langues du gouvernement, mais qui, dans le dialogue avec les acteurs principaux, les centres culturels, les

ONG, les artistes, énoncerait les rôles respectifs de ces différentes instances, de ces différents acteurs par rapport aux langues. Je voudrais donc demander au ministre de la culture d'y réfléchir, parce que sans cela nous risquons d'avoir une cacophonie - c'est le cas de le dire en parlant des langues, où - je ne dirais pas n'importe quoi - tout le monde essaierait de faire tout. Je ne pense pas que, même en terme de rapport coût et efficacité, ce serait logique d'investir ainsi l'argent public.

M. le président, nous abordons un pas historique avec les projets de lois sur le *Kreol Morisien* et le Bhojpuri. Je voudrais d'abord, par rapport au *Kreol Morisien*, puisque c'est la première fois de toute ma carrière parlementaire que j'ai l'occasion de débattre du *Kreol Morisien* dans cette Chambre, rappeler ce qu'est pour nous, mauriciens, cette langue. Cette langue qui fut d'abord et avant tout la première langue mauricienne, la langue de communication, un pidgin - c'est comme cela que l'appellent les linguistes pour la communication des esclaves principalement venus d'Afrique, mais aussi 10% des esclaves étaient non africains venant de l'Asie pour communiquer entre eux. Rappelons-nous que les colonisateurs qui emmenaient dans notre pays des esclaves faisaient bien attention à séparer les familles, les tribus afin qu'ils ne puissent pas communiquer dans leurs langues maternelles, et c'est ainsi qu'apparaît le *Kreol Morisien* à partir du vieux français dont ils puisaient, donc, son vocabulaire et qui, au fil de notre histoire, va s'enrichir : structure des langues africaines, des mots provenant des différentes langues asiatiques, de l'anglais et ainsi de suite.

Mais, donc, cette langue qui est d'abord la langue des esclaves, et aussi la langue de communication par excellence, puisque c'est la langue commune de tous ceux vivant dans cette terre, aura le statut d'une langue inférieure, n'est-ce pas ? Toujours la langue des opprimés ! Et avant 1968, il est exceptionnel de donner une reconnaissance à cette langue. Je me rappelle avoir lu il y a longtemps déjà, René Noyau qui écrivait '*tension kayma*' en *Kreol Morisien* datant de la première partie du 20<sup>ème</sup> siècle, si je ne me trompe pas, mais c'était exceptionnel.

A partir de 1968-1969, c'est une nouvelle étape dans l'histoire du *Kreol Morisien*. Dès lors que la gauche mauricienne, à l'époque représentée par le MMM, mais aussi ceux qui étaient à gauche du MMM, Dev Virahsawmy, ceux qui sont du MMM et qui ensuite vont quitter le MMM et fonder *ledikasyon pu travayer*, commence un combat politique en faveur de la reconnaissance de ces langues. Le *Kreol Morisien* est promu par la gauche mauricienne pour trois raisons. D'abord, comme dignité nationale face aux graves divisions qu'avait connues notre peuple à la veille de l'indépendance. Revoyez cette langue, la revendication de cette langue, sa reconnaissance, son officialisation comme le véritable ciment, le ciment par excellence de la nation mauricienne, notre langue à tous ! C'était là le sens premier de ce combat.

Deuxièmement, c'était un outil de démocratisation, parce que dès lors que l'on pourrait utiliser le *Kreol Morisien* à la banque, aux bureaux de poste, dans l'administration, il n'y a plus de distinction entre ceux qui possèderaient le savoir acquis à l'école et ceux qui n'ont pas. Donc, un outil de démocratisation d'égalité sociale, et, troisièmement, un outil pédagogique, parce que comme le disait si bien madame la ministre, l'honorable Leela Devi Dookun-Luchoomun,

aujourd'hui il est reconnu de tous que pour que l'éducation soit efficace dans le sens de réussir la transmission des savoirs, des compétences à tout le monde, il faut prendre appui sur les langues maternelles comme medium d'enseignement, et j'y reviendrai.

Il m'a un peu étonné au cours de ce débat de n'entendre personne faire mention d'un nom, celui de Dev Virahsawmy. Je pense que lorsqu'on débat de l'histoire des langues, il faut faire abstraction de la politique. Ne portons pas de jugement sur les appartenances politiques, le positionnement politique actuel. Mais le nom qui, depuis 1968, est avant tout associé au combat pour la langue créole, le *Kreol Morisien*, c'est celui de Dev Virahsawmy, écrivain, dramaturge, poète; celui qui, comme Julius Nyerere l'a fait jadis pour le Swahili, a traduit les œuvres de Shakespeare en *Kreol Morisien*. Donc, il convient aujourd'hui de rendre hommage à Dev Virahsawmy ; son combat qu'il a mené pour le *Kreol Morisien*.

Il y a entre 1969 et 1982, parallèlement à cette lutte politique qui se mène, tout un travail qui se fait sur le plan littéraire ; des personnes qui osent s'exprimer en *Kreol Morisien*. Il y en a beaucoup. Quelques noms me reviennent en tête quand, jeune adolescent, je lisais le *Kreol Morisien* ; celui d'un jeune qui est parti trop tôt, Laurent Sophie, le premier qui tenta un dictionnaire anglais-créole; celui de Renée Asgarally, l'épouse de l'ancien député, Aziz Asgarally, qui écrivait un roman d'amour extraordinaire, qui s'appelait '*Quand montagne prend dife*'. En parlant d'Asgarally, il faudrait aussi rendre hommage à Aziz Asgarally qui, tout au long de sa carrière parlementaire, a constamment défendu le droit d'avoir recours au *Kreol Morisien* dans cette Chambre.

Sur le plan de la chanson mauricienne, jusqu'à 1968, le *Kreol Morisien* c'était le Segga ; point final. Ensuite, à partir de 1969, c'est tout ce qu'on appelle la musique engagée associée à ce combat de la gauche. Tant de noms me reviennent en tête ; Bam Cuttayan, Siven Chinien, le groupe culturel mauricien, le rôle très important que joue alors Rama Poonoosamy dans tout ce travail ; Odile Chevreau, Micheline, Rosemay Nelson, et ceux autour de moi qui ont vécu cette période tels que Alan Ganoo et Veda Baloomoody. Tant d'autres ici qui ont mené ce combat savent combien cette lutte était dure ; combien l'on nous tournait en ridicule, M. le président, dès lors que nous revendiquions un statut officiel pour la langue *Kreol Morisien*. Je suis l'homme le plus heureux qu'aujourd'hui le parti travailliste, le PMSD se soient ralliés à ce combat, mais n'oublions pas que, jusqu'à dix ans, quinze ans de cela, ce ne fut pas le cas.

**Mr Speaker:** Oui, c'est vrai.

**Mr Obeegadoo:** Tout à fait vrai, M. le président.

**Mr Speaker:** Il y avait eu un débat ici dans les années 77-78.

**Mr Obeegadoo:** Voilà, M. le président, je n'étais pas encore membre du parlement. Quelle lutte alors ! Quelle lutte exaltante mais difficile que nous avons menée en faveur de la reconnaissance du *Kreol Morisien*, mais aussi du Bhojpuri comme deuxième langue populaire. En 1982, c'est la libération de ces deux langues. Dès les premiers manifestes gouvernementaux du MMM, on utilisait cette expression 'libérer le rôle du créole et du bhojpuri au sein de la

société mauricienne'. C'était cela l'intention : libérer, enlever les entraves, enlever les tabous, laisser les gens s'exprimer, créer librement dans ces deux langues dans lesquelles ils vivaient, ils rêvaient, ils jouaient, ils se parlaient, ils faisaient des blagues, ils conversaient entre eux - le *Kreol Morisien* et le bhojpuri - et cela est valable je pense pour nous tous ici, M. le président.

Donc, en 1982, pour la première fois, les réunions du Conseil des ministres, sous Sir Anerood Jugnauth, Premier ministre, vont se faire en *Kreol Morisien*. Il ne faut pas l'oublier !

(Interruptions)

Ah non ! Non, non, Monsieur Aimée! Même après les neuf mois, le MSM au gouvernement poursuit cette pratique - langue *Kreol Morisien* comme langue de travail du Conseil des ministres. L'entrée du *Kreol Morisien* à la télévision nationale, c'était du jamais vu, inimaginable avant 1982 ! Ne voilà-t-il pas que l'on vote une loi, le *MBC Act*, qui, pour la première fois, inscrit dans la loi le créole et le bhojpuri dans les langues à être utilisées par la MBC.

Dès 1977, le MMM part à la conquête des mairies. Les élections municipales avaient été renvoyées - les commissions administratives - et ensuite, en 1977, il y a eu élections, et le MMM assume le contrôle de trois des mairies, notamment Port Louis, Vacoas et Rose Hill bien sûr. Et c'est le créole qui fait son entrée dans toutes les mairies, avec Kader Bhayat à Port Louis, Jean-Claude de l'Estrac et d'autres à Rose Hill, le Dr. Jhuboolall, je pense, à Vacoas, comme premier maire.

Hier, je participais à une émission où un représentant du PMSD parlait du MMM comme étant limité à des vœux pieux par rapport au *Kreol Morisien*. Pardon, M. le président ! Nous avons des réalisations concrètes, tangibles, indiscutables. On ne peut pas faire mentir l'histoire. L'histoire est ce qu'elle est. Assumons notre héritage. Donc, en 1982, nous brisons les tabous, nous libérons ces deux langues populaires, et après 1982 tout devient possible. Aujourd'hui, vous circulez dans le pays, et les publicités sur les grands panneaux sont en *Kreol Morisien*. Cela aurait été inimaginable avant 1982.

Savez-vous qu'avant 1982, il n'y avait que le journal 'Le Militant' qui publiait quelques articles en créole, et 'Soleil Rouge', le journal du MMMS, qui était intégralement en *Kreol Morisien* et qui avait aussi des articles en Bhojpuri, utilisant le script romain ? Après 1982, les religions commencent à utiliser le *Kreol Morisien* pour mieux faire passer le message. Tout cela c'est après 1982, après cette formidable libération de ces deux langues. De 1983 à 2000, notre société évolue. Le créole restera la langue du Conseil des ministres jusqu'en 1995, où la langue redevient l'anglais. La société continue à évoluer. Le bulletin en langue créole est enlevé de la MBC dans les années 80, et il va y avoir tout un combat du MMM pour réclamer que soit réinstauré ce bulletin en *Kreol Morisien*, qui reviendra je ne sais plus quand exactement, mais beaucoup plus tard. 1983 à 2000 ; il y a aussi le travail - l'honorable Suren Dayal s'y référait tout à l'heure - extraordinaire du MGI, sous la direction d'Uttam Bissoondoyal, auquel il faudrait rendre hommage, qui permet les travaux de recherche par rapport à toutes les langues, y compris le *Kreol Morisien* - un travail extraordinaire qui se fait.

Puis, dans les années 1990, n'est-ce pas, il y a un autre mouvement à partir de cette interrogation autour du malaise créole ; un mouvement ethno-identitaire, où la communauté créole du pays cherche à affirmer son identité culturelle, et il se passe un mouvement très important. Tout comme ce fut le cas pour la communauté hindoue dans la première partie du vingtième siècle, lutte très dure sous la colonisation pour affirmer l'héritage culturel indien, il y a, donc, ce mouvement qui se fait dans les années 90 autour de cette - pourrait-on dire - renaissance culturelle de la communauté créole. Dès lors, le *Kreol Morisien* assume une double vocation, si je puis dire. Elle devient la langue ancestrale, parce que n'oublions pas que notre population originaire d'Afrique, à cause du Code Noir des français qui imposait la conversion, avait perdu tout son héritage culturel. Il n'y a plus de langue ancestrale.

Le Wolof n'est même pas connu à Maurice. Les multiples langues parlées à Madagascar et au Mozambique ne sont pas connues à Maurice. Donc, c'est le *Kreol Morisien* qui est reconnu comme langue ancestrale. Et puis, il y a la deuxième vocation de cette langue, c'est celle d'être une langue nationale qui appartient, non pas à une communauté mais à nous tous. Il y a là une histoire extraordinaire que celle de la langue mauricienne.

En 2000, le progrès reprend. En 2004, est publié le rapport de *Grafi Larmoni*. Vous savez qu'avant cela, ceux qui, comme moi, écrivaient le *Kreol Morisien*, étaient confrontés à différentes façons d'écrire. Il y avait la graphie de Philip Baker, datant des années 70, où la nasalisation se faisait par le 'ah'. Ensuite, la méthode de Dev Virahsawmy, 'an' s'écrivait 'â', le son 'an'. Et puis, la méthode développée par *ledikasyon pu travayer* - et je voudrais aussi rendre hommage à toute cette équipe autour de Lindsey Collen, de Alain Ah-Vee, qui, à partir des années 80, permet la publication, la circulation d'écrits en *Kreol Morisien*. Combien d'auteurs, issus de la classe ouvrière, voulant s'exprimer en poésie peuvent le faire grâce à *ledikasyon pu travayer*, parce que cela coûte extrêmement cher, comme nous le savons tous, de publier à co-d'auteur. Donc, *ledikasyon pu travayer* aurait écrit 'en' 'ann', c'est la méthode 'ndn' comme l'on dit le son 'en' c'est 'an', le son 'ann' c'est 'a', 'nn' deux fois.

Donc, face à tout cela, en 2004, ce comité d'universitaire produit *Grafi Larmoni*. Pour la première fois, en 2004, nous avons une façon standardisée d'écrire le *Kreol Morisien*. Parallèlement, avec l'UNESCO, sont lancés trois projets pilotes en trois écoles primaires : une école à Rodrigues, deux écoles à Maurice pour essayer le *kreol* comme medium d'enseignement. Beaucoup de résistance à l'époque ! C'était les fameuses réformes de l'éducation menées par le MMM/MSM en 2000 et 2005. Il y avait énormément de résistance ; difficile d'avancer. On a quand même avancé un peu. En puis aussi des radios privées ; je parlais de libérer les langues. Quand apparaissent les radios privées, Radio Plus, Mamie Cloune, Radio One, Top FM, pour la première fois, je dirai les radios utilisent le *Kreol Morisien* sans complexe ; on n'est plus complexé. Les émissions se construisent allègrement en *Kreol Morisien* à partir, donc, de cette période 2000-2005.

Ensuite, 2005-2011, le progrès s'arrête pourtant, parce que l'Etat ne veut plus avancer. Mais, dans le privé, les choses se font. Arnaud Carpooran publie son dictionnaire anglais-

mauricien. Le BEC, avec la collaboration de Dev Virahsawmy, lance le projet créole dans le préprofessionnel, le fameux Prevoc BEC. Des études par différents chercheurs sont produites durant cette période. Je pense aux travaux de Rada Tirvassen au MIE, et d'autres. Et puis, voilà qu'en 2011, le progrès redémarre.

Cette année-ci et l'année prochaine nous allons vivre des moments historiques pour le *Kreol Morisien*. Il y a eu 1982, il y a eu 2004, il y a eu 2005, mais surtout 2004 ; et l'histoire retiendra maintenant cette période de 2011/2012, une nouvelle volonté d'avancer. C'est pour cela que le MMM parle d'une seule voix avec le gouvernement sur cette question. Il faut avancer ; avançons ensemble ! Nous allons voter le *Creole-Speaking Union Bill*. A été lancé, n'est-ce pas, il y a une semaine, le document sur l'orthographe et la grammaire en langue *Kreol Morisien*. En début d'année 2012, nous promet le ministre de l'éducation, sera introduit le *Kreol Morisien* dans les écoles primaires. Donc, c'est un moment réellement historique.

Mais avant de poursuivre, par rapport au *Kreol Morisien*, permettez que je dise quelques mots à propos de l'autre langue populaire, le Bhojpuri. A part le *Kreol Morisien*, la seule langue qui est identifiée comme étant celle que l'on parle couramment à la maison, c'est le Bhojpuri. Il fut un temps, M. le président, où, à la campagne, le lingua franca, la langue commune à tous, que tout le monde parlait, indistinctement des communautés, c'était le Bhojpuri ; c'est notre histoire.

*(Interruptions)*

Absolument, M. le président ! Le Bhojpuri est ancré, M. le président, dans notre expérience historique. Peut-on séparer l'engagiste du Bhojpuri ? Il y a là tout un pan de notre histoire, il y a là tout un héritage culturel intangible. Le Bhojpuri c'est la littérature ; le Bhojpuri, ce sont les chants ; le Bhojpuri c'est même la médecine ; il y a une tradition, la cuisine. Je me suis laissé dire que le '*dholl puri*', qui est maintenant national, est d'origine du Bhojpuri *belt* en Inde. Le combat pour l'indépendance dans les Baitkas, c'est le Bhojpuri ; c'est l'histoire, mais c'est notre héritage culturel intangible, comme le *Kreol Morisien* considéré comme une langue inférieure. Et aujourd'hui, vous avez raison, M. le président, le Bhojpuri est sur la défensive. Pourquoi ?

*(Interruptions)*

M. le ministre me permettra de poursuivre, j'espère !

*(Interruptions)*

Je disais que le Bhojpuri est sur la défensive, d'abord à cause de cette transformation de la société mauricienne, la mobilité, l'urbanisation, l'industrialisation, quand les gens vont travailler en usine, se déplacent et doivent communiquer en Créole. C'est aussi la scolarisation universelle, avec l'introduction de l'Hindi à l'école, n'est-ce pas, à partir des années 50, 60 ! C'est aussi le phénomène Bollywood, n'est-ce pas !

Tout cela fait que le Bhojpuri est aujourd'hui sur la défensive, mais il importe et c'est là le rôle très important du *Bhojpuri-Speaking Union* de préserver, de valoriser et de promouvoir cette langue et tout cet héritage culturel intangible qu'il porte. Là aussi, M. le président, 1982 a

été d'une importance capitale. Je me référais tantôt au discours de mon collègue, l'honorable Georges Lesjongard, qui nous rappelait comment, avant 1982, l'on ne parlait pas du Bhojpuri, comment quand, dans le recensement, l'on faisait le décompte des langues indiennes parlées, il n'y avait nulle référence au Bhojpuri. Et puis, avec 1982, avec la libéralisation de nos langues populaires, le *MBC Act* consacre la reconnaissance du Bhojpuri, et c'est toute une dynamique qui est enclenchée : la création d'un *Bhojpuri Department* au *MGI*. Et le député Dayal, avec raison, rendait hommage à Suchita Ramdin qui avait la responsabilité de ce département. Et l'autre nom - je parlais tout à l'heure de Dev Virahsawmy - qui a été le grand absent de tous nos débats est celui de Sarita Boodhoo; Sarita Boodhoo qui sera reconnue. Encore une fois, faisons abstraction des questions de politique partisane, d'appartenance politique.

Mais, comme Dev Virahsawmy, c'est le nom, avant tout, associé au combat pour la reconnaissance du *Kreol Morisien*, ce sera Madame Boodhoo pour le bhojpuri évidemment. Donc, Madame Boodhoo, en 1982, parallèlement lance le *Mauritius Bhojpuri Institute* et crée un ballet qui va faire le tour de l'île. Ensuite, il y a - et je pense que l'honorable Madame Juggoo faisait référence à cela - tous les grands noms qui ont été associés à l'expression artistique, si je puis dire, les Bhagats, les Chintamanies, les Mohits qui ont été associés à cette lutte, aux écrits et aux œuvres en Bhojpuri et Madame Sarita Boodhoo elle-même, qui, fort de ses travaux de recherches, publie tour à tour '*Bhojpuri Traditions*', '*Speak Bhojpuri*', '*An Easy Approach to Bhojpuri Grammar*'. Donc, un travail extraordinaire que réalise cette grande dame qui a d'ailleurs tout récemment été primée encore une fois à la Nouvelle Delhi en Inde pour tous ses travaux de recherches portant sur le Bhojpuri.

Donc, la création de ce *Speaking Union* est d'une importance capitale parce que, malheureusement, il n'y a pas beaucoup d'organisations aujourd'hui qui sont là pour travailler en faveur du Bhojpuri. Je voudrais, par rapport à tous ces débats, m'adresser à travers vous, M. le président, au ministre de l'éducation. Il y a, en ce moment, la question d'introduire le Bhojpuri à l'école dès l'an prochain. Il y a eu des choses intéressantes qui se sont faites. Par exemple, je me suis laissé dire qu'au collège Basdeo Bissoondoyal, depuis cinq ou six ans, l'on enseigne le Bhojpuri.

**Dr. Bunwaree:** Au secondaire.

**Mr Obeegadoo:** Au secondaire, tout à fait. Avec la collaboration de Monsieur Mohit, les manuels ont été développés pour l'enseignement du Bhojpuri. Mais le Bhojpuri est lié à l'Hindi. C'est un moyen de faciliter l'accès à l'Hindi partant de la langue qui est parlée couramment par les enfants et par les jeunes chez eux. L'an prochain, le Bhojpuri va être apparemment introduit au primaire. Il y a un débat qui est lancé et je crois que c'est un débat très pertinent. La question qui se pose est: faut-il opposer le Bhojpuri à l'Hindi? Faut-il demander aux parents de faire le choix entre le Bhojpuri et l'Hindi? Si c'est le cas, on connaît d'avance la réponse et d'ailleurs le ministère de l'éducation n'a pas rendu public - autant que je sache, je me trompe peut-être - les chiffres, combien de parents ont opté pour le Bhojpuri. Le ministre de l'éducation ne m'écoute pas mais peut-être que les collègues députés lui en parleront après. Il y a donc ce débat. Et

Madame Boodhoo elle-même, dans un *memorandum* l'année dernière, a parlé du Bhojpuri non pas comme alternative à l'Hindi mais comme un moyen de faciliter l'accès à l'Hindi. Ces jours-ci dans le '*Mauritius Times*', il y a un débat intéressant qui est lancé, une proposition qui est faite pour regrouper Bhojpuri, Hindi et Sanskrit. La logique du Bhojpuri devient donc dès lors une logique pédagogique de faciliter les apprentissages à travers la langue maternelle, la langue parlée pour faciliter l'accès à l'Hindi et au Sanskrit. Donc, je voudrais tout simplement, à l'occasion de ce débat, soulever cette question très importante et demander au ministère de l'éducation et peut-être aussi au ministre de la culture, d'y réfléchir. Faut-il, oui ou non, opposer le Bhojpuri à l'Hindi ou y a-t-il un autre moyen de faire progresser ces deux langues? Voilà donc, M. le président, quelques réflexions à propos du Bhojpuri.

J'ai parlé tout à l'heure du combat historique en faveur de la langue *Kreol Morisien* et je voudrais, à ce titre, parler de l'usage qui sera fait à l'école puisque nous allons aborder un pas historique l'année prochaine.

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Speaker:** I won't prevent the hon. Member from saying, but he is taking too much time. This is the third sitting since we are debating the Union Bills. If the hon. Member goes into a debate about the introduction of the Creole and Bhojpuri languages in the schools, it will be very long. I know his passion for this, but he will have another opportunity, perhaps during the Budget Speech to come on this. For the time being, he must restrict himself to the Speaking Union Bills.

**Mr Obeegadoo:** Je ne suis pas si sûr que nous ayons un autre débat, M. le président. Je voudrais simplement réagir à ce qui a déjà été dit par d'autres parlementaires avant moi. Une invitation que je voudrais réitérer au ministre de l'éducation, c'est que ce pas que nous allons faire l'année prochaine est un pas très délicat.

**Mr Speaker:** The hon. Member can go into it briefly.

**Mr Obeegadoo :** Absolument, il faut s'y préparer. Les enjeux sont énormes. Si nous ratons cette occasion, le *Kreol Morisien* va reculer. Le ministre connaît nos inquiétudes par rapport à la préparation. Il y a un travail formidable qui a été fait pour l'orthographe et la grammaire, mais il y a les programmes d'études, il y a les manuels et nous nous inquiétons donc quant à la formation des enseignants. Il y a un manque de planification et c'est pour cela que nous avons suggéré un comité de mise en oeuvre.

Madame la ministre, l'honorable Dookun-Luchoomun, a soulevé l'autre jour, M. le président, une question très importante. Elle a cité l'UNESCO et la banque mondiale pour dire que cette décision - la décision que nous allons prendre, la décision du *Speaking Union* de l'introduction du créole - va permettre à des milliers de mauriciens de mieux maîtriser les fondamentaux de l'enseignement au primaire et de mieux progresser dans le cursus scolaire. Elle rejoint à cela les propos du ministre des finances qui, dans son discours du budget, disait que le mal éducatif ne va pas se résoudre au niveau de l'enseignement supérieur mais dès le primaire.

**Mr Speaker:** Pré-primaire.

**Mr Obeegadoo:** Pré-primaire, tant mieux! Mais j'inviterai Madame la ministre à soulever la question au conseil des ministres, à en parler à son collègue, le ministre de l'éducation, parce que nulle part n'est envisagé le recours au *Kreol Morisien* comme médium d'enseignement. Nulle part, Madame la ministre! Nulle part! Et c'est là tout l'argument que nous ne cessons de faire. Tout comme le Bhojpuri aiderait grandement, le *Kreol Morisien* de même dans les apprentissages premiers, à condition que les parents le veuillent; à condition que les enseignants soient partants. Il n'est nulle intention d'imposer quoi que ce soit à qui que ce soit, mais toutes les autorités scientifiques en matière d'éducation, de l'UNESCO à la Banque Mondiale, comme le dit si bien l'honorable Madame Dookun-Luchoomun. On ne peut pas tourner le dos pour une éducation efficace aux langues maternelles. Donc, je vais implorer tous ceux qui pensent de la même façon de l'autre côté de la Chambre d'en parler au ministre de l'éducation, et peut-être, qui sait, que Monsieur le ministre de la culture est sur la même longueur d'ondes, étant issu du même parti ! Je ne sais pas.

M. le président, je voudrais, donc, brièvement, avec votre permission, faire un plaidoyer pour la considération à être donnée aux langues maternelles, aux langues populaires comme médium d'enseignement. Je ne vais pas tarder à terminer, M. le président. Je voudrais inviter, à l'égard de tous ces débats, que l'on évite une politisation partisane.

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Speaker:** Some order, please!

**Mr Obeegadoo:** Je regrette profondément si aujourd'hui, au cours de cette séance, mes propos aient pu être mal interprétés. Je ne fais jamais une question de personne de mes opinions. Quand je critique, je critique le gouvernement et la politique.

**Mr Speaker:** C'était une confusion.

**Mr Obeegadoo:** Tout à fait! Je maintiens la critique, pas à l'encontre d'un individu, mais de la politique gouvernementale. Il ne faudrait pas qu'il y ait de politisation. J'estime, M. le président, fort regrettable qu'alors que nous parlons d'une même voix en faveur de ces *Speaking Unions*, que quand fut constituée l'académie créole, l'on y retrouve des candidats battus du parti travailliste, des porte-paroles du PMSD, et donc donnant une couleur partisane à cela. Je trouve bouleversant, M. le président...

**Mr Speaker:** Qui sont des experts.

**Mr Obeegadoo:** Les experts ne se retrouvent pas uniquement d'un seul côté, M. le président.

*(Interruptions)*

Toute notre lutte historique est là pour témoigner qu'il y a des experts chez nous aussi.

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Speaker:** En votre personne!

**Mr Obeegadoo:** Non, certainement pas! Je ne suis pas expert en matière de langues ; je suis un militant en faveur des langues populaires.

M. le président, je disais donc que j'ai trouvé tout à fait bouleversant le fait que lorsque l'orthographe et la grammaire du *Kreol Morisien* ont été lancées...

(Interruptions)

...nous n'étions pas invités, personne de ce côté de la Chambre...

(Interruptions)

...à part le ministre. Selon les journaux, la seule députée était l'honorable Mme Mireille Martin, et tant mieux pour elle ! Mais les autres? Quel mal y aurait-il eu à nous inviter de ce côté de la Chambre pour venir soutenir la démarche de l'Etat, pour venir dire que sur un sujet aussi important il faut avancer uni en tant que nation? Pourquoi, M. le président ? Je voudrais donc lancer un appel solennel que lorsqu'on fait enfin des efforts, des pas pour promouvoir les deux langues importantes ...

(Interruptions)

M. le président, devrais-je répondre qu'à toutes les fonctions tous les anciens ministres de l'éducation étaient invités? Qu'en l'absence de comité parlementaire nous avons fait des réunions à l'heure du déjeuner pour inviter tous les députés à venir? C'est vrai que deux députés du Parti Travailleiste y participaient à l'époque. Peu importe, M. le président, l'histoire retiendra les faits. Je disais donc que nos motivations peuvent être différentes, le Parti Travailleiste a ses motivations ainsi que le MSM, le PMSD et le MMM. Notre histoire est différente. Mais, aujourd'hui, lorsque nous abordons une période d'importance historique pour ce qui est des deux langues populaires, que nous puissions avancer unis en tant que nation mauricienne. Il y a encore des préjugés.

L'autre jour, M. le président, en débattant de ces débats, j'entendais une collègue députée disant que – elle n'est pas là aujourd'hui – le Créole n'est peut être pas prêt pour l'Internet alors que moi depuis des lustres j'écris des *mails* en *Kreol Morisien*. Les préjugés sont là mais, aujourd'hui, à travers ces *Speaking Unions* il y a une dynamique qui va se dégager. Déjà, mon collègue Rajesh Bhagwan n'a cessé de reposer la question de l'utilisation du *Kreol Morisien* au sein de la Chambre. Certains demandent pourquoi les mairies au sein des conseils municipaux, l'on ne recommencerait pas à utiliser de *Kreol Morisien*. Au conseil des ministres, qui sait, peut-être que le Premier ministre sera convaincu. Donc, il faut avancer ensemble dans l'unité.

Je voudrais terminer, M. le président, en disant que le combat se s'arrête pas avec les *Speaking Unions*. C'est une dynamique, une deuxième libération des langues populaires et il y aura énormément de travail à faire, de défis à relever. Je suis très heureux qu'aujourd'hui que le Parti Travailleiste et le PMSD sont en faveur de la reconnaissance officielle du *Kreol Morisien* et du Bhojpuri et j'espère que, mettant de côté la politique partisane, nous puissions avancer,

comme je le disais, en tant que nation mauricienne pour redonner toute la valeur qui se doit à nos langues populaires.

J'en ai terminé, M. le président.

(7.13 p.m.)

**The Minister of Education and Human Resources (Dr. V. Bunwaree):** Mr Speaker, Sir, I wish at the outset to congratulate my colleague, the hon. Minister of Arts and Culture, for the introduction of the five different Speaking Union Bills in Parliament presently. As part of our cultural, ancestral and national heritage, it is only proper that these languages be given their *lettres de noblesse* by our august Assembly.

M. le président, c'est un peu regrettable quand j'ai constaté la façon dont ont été présentés les discours, essentiellement de l'honorable membre qui vient de parler avant moi. Je ne veux pas polémiquer mais je voudrais rappeler une ou deux petites choses et *in the course of my speech I will touch on other points that have been mentioned.*

L'invitation qui a été faite pour la grammaire *Kreol Morisien* qui a eu lieu il y a quelques jours de cela, c'est l'aboutissement d'un processus qui a démarré depuis un an. Tout avait commencé par une information au public, à tous ceux qui avaient de près où de loin un intérêt, de se faire connaître. C'est de là qu'on a fait le forum pour débattre de la langue Créole, qui a ouvert la voie sur tout ce qui a suivi. Maintenant, je dois aller vérifier s'il y a eu des honorables membres de l'autre côté de la Chambre qui avaient montré un intérêt quelconque. Mais à partir du moment où cela avait démarré, cela s'est fait.

En entendant l'honorable Obeegadoo, c'est comme-ci le MMM qui a tout fait. On n'a jamais dit qu'ils n'ont rien fait, mais il ne faut pas occulter la vérité. Je vais donner un exemple. Feu Basant Rai avait déjà traduit bien avant 1982, le Bhagavad Gita en créole. Mais venir dire ici que tout a démarré en 1982, je pense que cela explique ce cas. Je ne vais pas aller plus loin dans la polémique.

Mr Speaker, Sir, let me say that Speaking Unions serve a multiplicity of purposes, especially in a society like ours that has carved, as we all know, an international reputation for itself for being multilingual and also for establishing bridges with countries that are Anglophone, Francophone, Sinophone as well as those having a variety of Indian languages. I would like to be a bit more specific by saying that such Speaking Unions serve as a means of celebrating the sharing of languages among the different linguistic groups so as to foster general understanding and goodwill. Interculturalism which is now the word on the lips of this Government and to which we are going to give a big boost in the days and months to come, becomes through the Speaking Unions, the byword by which the Mauritian society can project itself as the haven for multiculturalism and multilingualism. By providing, Mr Speaker, Sir, education and cultural opportunities for students, teachers and also for other interested members of the society, we are ensuring that research and documented evidence are a prerequisite if languages are to fulfill their ultimate destiny of acting as a daily vehicle for the transmission of ideas, concepts, abstract

modes of thinking as well as the cultural richness of the different linguistic groups especially those that exist in our country.

These Speaking Unions, Mr Speaker, Sir, will facilitate the promotion of an exchange of ideas among the world speakers, not only in the context of the country, but also in the whole world, among world speakers of languages and thereby develop common bonds of friendship through a shared interest. The Speaking Unions also have a sacrosanct duty of involving themselves in outreach programmes, thus helping to enrich the communities whose interests they serve. Equally those who follow the languages will benefit greatly from the international connections gained from the Speaking Union activities. We have already some Speaking Unions that are functioning. My colleague has come forward with five Bills and, therefore, it is most appropriate that they be debated in Parliament and the new Speaking Unions become a reality.

There are two main evident reasons, of course, for me to participate in this debate. Firstly, as Minister of Education, responsible for the emancipation, the progress and the promotion of languages in the country and secondly, as one of the members on the other side of the House reminded us, I was Minister of Culture and we did start the work and came forward before the elections with the First Reading of four of the Bills here. I am grateful to my friend, the Minister of Culture, who has taken *la balle au bond* and has added the Sanskrit Speaking Union Bill to it, which is another block in the wealth of these unions.

But, as was mentioned by the hon. Member before me, I wish to speak essentially on the Creole-Speaking Union and the Bhojpuri-Speaking Union for evident reasons, Mr Speaker, Sir. I am convinced that the Creole-Speaking Union will play a significant role to place the *Kreol Morisien* in the forefront and give it the prestige of our national language. I view this as yet another historical step in our nation-building process, for let us remind ourselves that the *Kreol Morisien* is basically a symbol of national unity. This has been mentioned by many Members, of course, but it is so important that it is my duty to stress on it.

I must, Mr Speaker, Sir, take us back to 1965, to remind us of a very important fact of history. It is reported that in that year - you must certainly be aware of it, for having actively participated, Mr Speaker, Sir - after the successful outcome of the final round of the constitutional conferences that paved the way to independence, Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam, father of the nation, from London, addressed the following message, through the BBC, to the nation in the making, and I quote -

*“Mo bann frer hindou, misilman, kreol, sinoi, franko-morisien, zot tou travay ensam. Fer Moris pesib ek prosper dan lintere public”.*

These words were pronounced by the Father of the nation, and I am quoting this from the book of Moonindranath Varma - *The Struggle of Dr. Ramgoolam, Mauritius, 1975, page 210.*

Ever since, Mr Speaker, Sir, *Kreol Morisien* became, *de facto*, the medium of national unity. I congratulate my colleague, the Chief Whip, hon. Dayal, for having elaborated on this

question of national unity; unity in diversity. It started well long ago and, in fact, what Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam had mentioned is a symbol of unity in diversity.

Mr Speaker, Sir, allow me, for the edification of the House, to briefly delve into the historicity - very quickly, because I am the responsible Minister - or again the historical development that led to our present day, stage of introducing *Kreol Morisien* in schools. I am not going to talk about what is going to happen in schools, but how we have progressed so far.

We should be deeply indebted - and I take this opportunity to pay homage - to the pioneering linguists and organisations, both from Mauritius and from abroad, that have studied the language, made numerous proposals for orthography and developed an abundant literature. The use of some type of *Kreol* in literature may be traced back to 1749 and, between the 1970s and 1980s, different writing systems emerged, developed and interacted. A first official attempt towards a harmonised writing system was made, in fact, in 2004 - *je n'ai jamais dit le contraire, mais il faut accepter ce que les autres aussi on fait* - in a document entitled "*Grafi-Larmoni*". *M. le président, cela n'avait pas abouti totalement à l'orthographe. Il y avait encore un peu de travail à faire. Donc, les honorables membres de l'autre côté de la Chambre auraient dû être contents qu'on ait complété le travail.*

On Tuesday 08 June 2010, in the Government-Programme 2010-2015, section 145, the President of the Republic formally announced that Government will work towards the introduction of *Kreol Morisien* together with Bhojpuri as optional languages in the primary schools. I won't quote, because it is in the Government-Programme already. *Mais il ne faut pas avoir de la nostalgie; il faut être content. Le problème est qu'on a essayé, surtout les honorables membres de l'autre côté de la chambre et d'autres, mais peut-être qu'ils n'ont pas trouvé la façon d'y réussir. This is our chance. Le gouvernement de Navin Ramgoolam est venu avec l'introduction ; c'était le breakthrough qu'il fallait trouver.*

L'orthographe "*Grafi-Larmoni*" n'était pas complet. Il fallait terminer avec l'orthographe seulement. Sans syntaxe, sans grammaire, on ne peut pas avoir une langue à part entière. Il y a eu beaucoup de littérature. Chacun a écrit un peu à sa façon jusqu'à maintenant, alors que la semaine dernière le *Kreol Morisien* a été standardisé. Il y a maintenant un seul *Kreol Morisien*. Mais il fallait le faire. On a mis seulement un an pour réussir cela. Depuis les élections, cela a été annoncé dans le programme; on a fait le forum, comme je l'ai expliqué, puis on a continué et on est arrivé à cela.

Let me now briefly indicate the comprehensive Implementation Plan that has been rolled out, as I have mentioned, and I will go quickly on that -

- We first organised that National Forum for the introduction of *Kreol Morisien* in schools on 30 August 2010, which resulted in enthusiastic discussion and a broad consensus among the participants - *j'ai expliqué tout à l'heure comment on les a accueillis.*

- Following a Government decision in September 2010, we set up - *deuxième étape* - the *Akademi Kreol Morisien* - *il fallait prendre tous ceux qui avaient quelque chose à faire ou à dire pour réussir cela, et on a mis tout le monde ensemble. C'était le secret qu'ils n'avaient pas trouvé malheureusement* - to standardise the language, with particular attention to its writing system, which had to be completed, syntax and grammar, which had to be done. This assignment has been undertaken in close collaboration with the University of Mauritius and the Mauritius Institute of Education, and due consultations with all stakeholders represented in *Akademi Kreol Morisien*.
- Government took note of the *Akademi's* first document, *Lorthograf Kreol Morisien*, that is, *lorthograf Grafi-Larmoni*, revu et complété, called *lorthograf Kreol Morisien*. So, Government took note of the first document on 25 February 2011.
- Another milestone document, the first *Gramer Kreol Morisien*, is now ready. Government has taken note last Friday and, in fact, it was presented to the whole of Mauritius.
- The second enlarged edition of the *Diksioner Morisien*, by Dr. Arnaud Carpooran and his core team of collaborators from the University of Mauritius and the Mauritius Institute of Education is, I am told, already under press.

So, with these three, that is, *lorthograf Kreol Morisien*, *Gramer Kreol Morisien* and *Diksioner Kreol Morisien*, *la boucle est bouclée; la langue est là*.

(Interruptions)

J'ai fait un appel d'ailleurs à tous ceux qui veulent écrire, car les gens ne connaissent pas encore cela. Cela se fera en *Standard I* et va prendre du temps pour avancer, mais les gens continuent à écrire en créole. On a mis une cellule au sein du ministère de l'éducation, et on invite tous ceux qui veulent s'exprimer publiquement dans ce langage de nous envoyer leurs textes ; on va les corriger gratuitement et les leur remettre. De ce fait, ce sera standardisé et on ne verra pas divers *Kreol Morisien*, même sur les panneaux publicitaires ou dans les pamphlets. C'est un appel qu'on a fait et on espère que tout le monde va écrire de façon standardisée.

L'honorable Madame Labelle disait tout à l'heure qu'elle n'était pas d'accord avec le fait que le Dr. Arnaud Carpooran, la semaine dernière, ait parlé d'un acte de naissance qui est donné à ce langage. C'est une façon imagée à expliquer ce qui se passe parce que cette langue existe déjà depuis les années 1700 et quelques. Quelqu'un m'a déjà dit qu'il fallait une langue de communication entre les colonisateurs de l'époque et les esclaves qui étaient des travailleurs de l'époque. Donc, cette langue de communication, c'est cela qui a donné naissance au *Kreol Morisien*; déjà depuis 1710, 1715, 1720.

La langue, donc, existait depuis des siècles. Mais ce qui n'existait pas, c'est que cette langue n'était pas une langue qu'on pouvait utiliser de façon standard. C'est ça qui est arrivé la

semaine dernière. Donc, c'est pour cela que Dr. Arnaud Carpooran a dit : maintenant l'enfant est né, on lui donne son acte de naissance. Il était en gestation tout ce temps. Mais l'honorable Mme Labelle n'a pas très bien compris, parce que quand la sage femme voit le fœtus sortir et voit une épaule et dit – « tient, voilà, l'enfant est né ! » Non ! On a vu l'épaule, mais il y a peut-être des difficultés. Attention ! Attendons l'arrivée de l'enfant! Donc, quand la "Grafi-Larmoni" était là, c'était l'épaule qu'on voyait. Il a fallu attendre. Donc, c'est ce que je voulais lui faire comprendre que l'enfant n'était pas encore né à cette époque là. L'enfant est bien né cette semaine.

*(Interruptions)*

Mr Speaker, Sir, what is now the way forward? The Mauritius Institute of Education has been entrusted with the responsibility of setting up a team of trained educators to develop the appropriate curriculum and training programme.

M. le président, le travail a déjà commencé. Ils ont déjà avancé et là-aussi j'ai dit, parce qu'il y a beaucoup de groupes, d'institutions à Maurice qui pensent qu'ils auraient pu faire cela eux-mêmes. Mais ils ont les compétences, je ne dis pas non. Mais il nous faut amener toutes ces compétences là où cela existe déjà, le *MIE* et l'Université de Maurice, surtout le *MIE* qui va prendre contact avec ces gens et travailler le curriculum de telle façon qu'il y ait un consensus là-dessus aussi.

Obviously, my Ministry, Mr Speaker, Sir, will provide adequate resources to the MIE for it to set up the right conditions and spearhead this historic endeavour in our schools, in the best interest of our children and also of the nation. We are thus moving forward and getting ready to introduce the *Kreol Morisien* in schools early next year, as from January or February, and give it its due recognition.

This will ultimately become an examinable subject at CPE level as it grows, that is, when the cohort of next year reaches Standard VI; examinable at CPE level with its own weighting. *On a dit que cette langue va avoir le même niveau, le même statut que les autres langues optionnelles.*

*(Interruptions)*

*Après, on verra. Laissez l'enfant naître ! Vous voulez le faire accoucher avant neuf mois, ce n'est pas facile.*

Mr Speaker, Sir, side by side, with the introduction of *Kreol Morisien* into our schools, it is also vital that the population at large gets to be exposed, as I was telling a few minutes ago, more comprehensively to the wider spectrum of uses to which the language can be put. In fact, the process has already started.

- *Kreol Morisien* is today being used more intensively for mass communication - I think the hon. Member before me talked about that - both by Ministries and the media.
- There is a prevalence of a variety of publications for effective communications through publicity and posters, but also in literature. Today, classics and religious texts are available in *Kreol Morisien*.
- Major private companies have realised the potential of *Kreol Morisien* in communication and are slowly using more of *Kreol Morisien* in their marketing and other strategies.
- *Kreol Morisien* is used in some preschools, in class for the Prevoc initiative in some catholic colleges and for adult literacy courses. The University of Mauritius has been running courses on creole language studies for a few years now and is conducting research work on the language. Many students of the University of Mauritius have contributed to this document "*Lortograf Kreol Morisien*". This work is ongoing.
- Many participants at "The National Forum for the introduction of *Kreol Morisien* in schools" held on 30 August 2010 by my Ministry expressed admiration at the amount and vastness of literary and scientific work that has been conducted on *Kreol Morisien*. We are hopeful that this will happen more smoothly now that a proper structure is being dedicated to this task. Also as more people use standardised *Kreol Morisien*, inevitably creativity will be encouraged and more literature in *Kreol Morisien* will become available.
- *Kreol Morisien*, Mr Speaker, Sir, as a mother language has already achieved wide recognition in the country and, I must say, mother languages in general have achieved wide recognition worldwide, and its use in education consistently being recommended by UN institutions and regional bodies.

We are all, therefore, Mr Speaker, Sir, set to embark on the journey of our destiny.

More fundamentally, the fact that this language has its roots in this land of ours and is part of our culture and heritage gives it a special status in the multicultural set up of the Republic of Mauritius.

Je suis parmi ceux qui croient, M. le président, qu'une culture ne peut pas exister comme cela se doit sans sa langue. Presque toutes les cultures qui existent à Maurice, à part le *Kreol Morisien*, ont leurs langues. La culture est brodée autour de cette langue. La langue est le fil conducteur. La culture se développe. Il y avait le Créole oral, heureusement, qui a permis à cette langue de tenir. Mais maintenant que la langue est bel et bien là, le Kreol oral, parlé et écrit, je pense que cette culture va avoir beaucoup plus de possibilité de s'épanouir.

More fundamentally, Mr Speaker, Sir, our people are aware and they know now that this language exists. They will have to know how to use it and how to work with it, making our nation a prosperous nation that values our languages and cultures and that promotes the dignity and integrity, the culture and heritage, intellectual and creative development of our citizens of tomorrow.

The vision of this Government, Mr Speaker, Sir, is that of a strong nation that has the stamina to tackle the challenges of life and the empathy to express solidarity towards the weaker.

The Creole Speaking Union will definitely contribute, Mr Speaker, Sir, towards the achievement of this goal.

*Mr Speaker, Sir, I wish to say a few words on the Bhojpuri-Speaking Union, but before that, I just want to add one thing, because it has been mentioned that le Créole est le médium de l'instruction. Je pense qu'il faut donner son temps au Kreol Morisien, puisqu'on commence en Standard I. Allons laisser le temps à cette langue de s'épanouir. Mais déjà, le Créole, même dans les règlements de l'éducation et les instructeurs, les éducateurs sont permis d'utiliser le Kreol Morisien pour faire avancer les autres matières. Donc, d'une façon c'est déjà un médium d'instruction et moi j'ai donné les directives, déjà depuis deux ans, qu'il ne faut pas, parce que dans la législation, dans les règlements, c'est limité jusqu'à la classe de troisième en primaire. Alors, nous avons donné les instructions que si les profs décident et voient qu'il est important pour eux de faire avancer une partie d'une matière - d'un sujet - quelconque dans la langue Kreol, ils sont libres de l'utiliser. Il n'y a pas de restriction à cela. Donc, déjà d'une certaine façon, c'est un médium qui permet aux profs de mieux faire comprendre et avancer l'éducation des enfants.*

Mr Speaker, Sir, insofar as Bhojpuri is concerned, it is my pleasure also to welcome this Speaking Union Bill. This initiative comes at a time, in fact, when we observe a keen and renewed interest among the population in villages as well as in towns regarding the promotion of Bhojpuri in Mauritius. *Depuis quelque temps, on sent un peu ce regain d'intérêt parce qu'il y a eu pendant quelque temps une perte d'intérêt.*

Bhojpuri, Mr Speaker, Sir, originates from Bhojpur District, Shahabaad in Bihar. Over 30 million people use it in daily life and it is also called 'calcuttea baat or boli'. Bhojpuri is the language of most of the immigrants who left India for South Africa, Fidji, Trinidad and Mauritius. Now, it is a full-fledged language in Bihar and lower U.P. in India. It is taught in universities and research work is being carried out by scholars.

Mr Speaker Sir, historically, Bhojpuri has its roots in the very development of the Mauritian society. This also has been canvassed. I won't go into details, but I must say it is a vivid example of the traditions which have been transmitted by the Indian indentured labourers to us.

Bhojpuri, Mr Speaker, Sir, forms part of the very rich cultural landscape of Mauritius. One has to bow in admiration before the resilience, whom we call the "Jahaji Bhai" who even in dire situations, have kept alive their Bhojpuri traditions and culture. Late Dr. Munishwarlal Chintamunee, one of our well-known Mauritian writers, in an article entitled "Mauritius Mein Bhojpuri", mentions that the history of the arrival of Bhojpuri in Mauritius dates back to 1810 when the British brought Indian sepoys in Mauritius.

Mr Speaker, Sir, it is worth mentioning that Bhojpuri was the mother tongue of most of the Indian immigrants. Those who could not speak or understand Bhojpuri, gradually understood the language as it became the '*lingua franca*' of the people who settled down in Mauritius. Even the Chinese people - it is well-known - also had to do so to run their business in Mauritius. It is hence clear, Mr Speaker, Sir, that the Bhojpuri language has proved valuable not only as part and parcel of a vast culture but above all as an indispensable medium of communication. History bears witness that Bhojpuri has always been a key vehicle in the struggle of democracy and independence. Bhojpuri forms part of the very rich intangible cultural heritage of Mauritius. Today, the importance of this heritage is just vital for it forms part of the multicultural set up of the country.

Traditions and cultures are directly related to human life. Bhojpuri culture, Mr Speaker, Sir, has maintained its identity. The very famous Mauritian writer, late Dr. Brajendra Bhagat 'Madhukar' wrote a very beautiful poem which speaks volumes of the importance of Bhojpuri in Mauritius. To him, it is the language of the inner soul, the "*andar aatma*", as we say in Bhojpuri and brings about some kind of '*apnapan*' a sense of belonging, vibration between those who converse in it.

This, Mr Speaker, Sir, certainly explains why Bhojpuri englobes a rich repertoire of folk literature, that is, tales, proverbs, idioms, etc. I must say that a very important source of traditional Bhojpuri in Mauritius has undergone considerable changes over the years. The percentage of people speaking Bhojpuri has been on the decrease for quite some time even in rural areas. Preservation, promotion and dissemination initiatives should be taken to preserve the language.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I think hon. Obeegadoo, while making his point, mentioned of the importance to give to Bhojpuri, but we must put ourselves the question: which Bhojpuri? Parce que quand je les entends parler, on est en train de parler de Bhojpuri populaire. Mais ce Bhojpuri est une variante du Créole, peut-être. Donc, il faut faire attention. C'est ce que je ne cesse de répéter à ce comité qu'on a mis sur pied pour la promotion de la langue Bhojpuri à Maurice. On connaît la fameuse phrase, M. le président: "*Montagnewa ké bordwa par l'herbe plantalba*". Il y a beaucoup de mots créoles dedans. 'Montagne', on ajoute le suffixe '*wa*' cela devient Bhojpuri.

'*Ké bordwa*', 'bord' est un mot français. On ajoute 'wa', '*ke bordwa*'. 'Par', c'est une préposition. '*L'herbe plantalba*', 'l'herbe', c'est un mot créole. '*Plantalba*', c'est le verbe 'planter', qu'on a conjugué en Bhojpuri pour dire '*plantal*'. C'est incroyable! Donc, il faut faire attention. Ce n'est pas cela qu'on veut et on va commencer le Bhojpuri l'année prochaine effectivement dans les écoles. Donc, on va faire attention que se soit le Bhojpuri qu'il faut. Même en l'Inde, il y a plusieurs types de Bhojpuri. Comme on a mis l'académie pour le créole, on a mis un comité pour le Bhojpuri et on a demandé à ce comité de faire attention et de faire le travail pour qu'on puisse introduire cela à l'école. Je dois annoncer ici à l'assemblée aujourd'hui que je pense que c'est jeudi prochain à une heure de l'après-midi que le comité va se réunir parce qu'ils ont eux aussi finalisé le travail. Alors que le travail se faisait pour le *Kreol Morisien*, en même temps, en parallèle le travail se faisait aussi pour le Bhojpuri. Jeudi on va avoir le produit fini, on va définir la stratégie pour l'introduction du Bhojpuri dans les écoles mauriciennes l'année prochaine à partir de *Standard I* comme c'est le cas pour le Créole.

On n'avait pas eu des difficultés avec le Bhojpuri comme on a eu pour le Créole parce que le Bhojpuri est déjà une langue établie. Il ne fallait pas mettre sur pied la langue comme on a dû faire pour le Créole. C'est ce que j'ai expliqué tout à l'heure. La grafi-larmoni est finalisée, syntaxe, grammaire, etc. et dictionnaire. Pour le Bhojpuri tout existait mais il fallait trouver le système pour permettre son introduction dans les écoles mauriciennes qui va être une réalité en même temps que le Créole l'année prochaine.

Mr Speaker, Sir, one of our early actions in line with the national policy is to preserve, promote research and disseminate the diverse cultures which have been integrated into our Mauritian society. Government has encouraged the setting up of the Department of Bhojpuri Folklore. I won't go into that because this has been canvassed. This department has, I must say, lived up to our expectations. It has collected from the very sources; it continues to collect and presently maintains a rich and perhaps the only archive of the country relating to life histories of old people, folk tales, folk songs, proverbs and other forms of folk sayings existing in Mauritius mainly in Bhojpuri.

Mr Speaker, Sir, there is one step that still needed to be taken. That is what I have just said to ensure that the Bhojpuri language has its well-deserved place in the formal school curriculum. As we are all aware, this - I have mentioned just now - is going to take shape early next year.

Mr Speaker, Sir, before ending, I must tell you that in Mauritius, currently, we see a keen interest from all quarters for the promotion of this language. We have more and more programmes on radio and TV. There is an increase in participation at Bhojpuri Drama Festival organised by the Ministry of Arts and Culture. Recording of songs in Bhojpuri has become a regular feature. More so, two international conferences in Bhojpuri have been held in Mauritius in the recent past. The Mauritius Bhojpuri Institute is active in research work and textbook writing, whereas Bhojpuri is taught as a language as has been mentioned at Professor Basdeo Bissoondoyal College in Flacq in secondary schools from Forms I to IV.

The Bhojpuri Speaking Union, Mr Speaker, Sir, thus comes at an opportune moment and will undoubtedly contribute to the consolidation of the cultural values emanating from the language of our ancestors.

To end, Mr Speaker, Sir, I will say that a language needs protection. It needs to be nurtured before it is legated to the other generations. I am sure all these Speaking Unions that exist already, that are going to be set up, that will be set up in the past like the Gujrati that will come later on will go in line with this.

Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir.

**The vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development (Mr P. Jugnauth):** Mr Speaker, Sir, I move that the debate be now adjourned.

**The Deputy Prime Minister rose and seconded.**

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Debate adjourned accordingly.*

**Mr Varma:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I do not propose to move for the Second Reading of the following Bills today -

- (a) The Preliminary Inquiry (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill (No. XII of 2011)
- (b) The International Criminal Court Bill (No. XXIII of 2010)
- (c) The Institute for Judicial and Legal Studies Bill (No. IX of 2011)
- (d) The Law Practitioners (Amendment) Bill (No. X of 2011)

**Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I do not propose to move for the Second Reading of the Senior Citizens Council (Amendment) Bill (No. XI of 2011) standing in my name today.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

**The Deputy Prime Minister:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that this Assembly do now adjourn to Tuesday 14 June 2011, at 11.30 a.m.

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

*Question put and agreed to.*

**Mr Speaker:** The House stands adjourned.

*At this stage the Deputy Speaker took the Chair.*

## **MATTERS RAISED**

### **LAPEYROUSSE GOVT SCHOOL - ROOF LEAKAGE & ELECTRICITY**

**Ms S. Anquetil (Fourth Member for Vacoas & Floreal):** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister of Education and Human Resources is aware that the Lapeyrouse Government School is presently facing serious problems causing inconvenience to the pupils and the staff with serious roof leakage and no electricity in a few classrooms and presence of pigeons in the ceilings. The hon. Minister has taken prompt actions and works have just started. We would like to make an appeal to the hon. Minister to ensure that the works be completed in due time knowing that the students will be sitting for examination in a few months.

Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

**The Minister of Education and Human Resources (Mr V. Bunwaree):** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am well aware of the difficulties that this school is having and, as the hon. Member mentioned herself, the work has started already. We are working in close collaboration with the Ministry of Public Infrastructure and I will see to it that works go along the line and follow the target.

#### **EX-CHA EMPLOYEES – PENSION - COMPENSATION**

**Mrs A. Navarre-Marie (First Member for GRNW & Port Louis West):** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I wish to raise an issue which concerns the hon. Minister of Housing and Lands. It has to do with the ex-CHA employees who have not been paid their compensation this year. According to me, there are about 100 people. Usually, they are paid compensation on their pension each January, but this year they have not been paid in spite of a letter being sent to the Ministry by SICOM on 04 November. This situation is causing much prejudice against these Ex-CHA workers. I would appeal to the hon. Minister to investigate into the matter on the reasons why until now they have not been paid their compensation and see to it that the needful be done urgently to relieve the plight of these people.

**The Minister of Housing and Lands (Dr. A. Kasenally):** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I will deal with it urgently tomorrow morning itself.

#### **MOTORWAY - MAYFLOWER - BUS STOP**

**Mr V. Baloomoody (Third Member for GRNW & Port Louis West):** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, my request is to the hon. Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping. Since we have built the third lane on the motorway, we have built a bus stop which is vis-à-vis the Mayflower on the way to Curepipe. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, you have to be outside the bus stop to catch the bus because in front of the shelter there is that massive *béton* that has been put on both sides of the road and at about 30 metres you have the lay-by for the bus. If one is in the shelter, the bus driver does not see him. It is a shelter where you have to stay outside to catch the bus and this is causing great inconvenience, especially to the old people who use that shelter to wait for the bus, of course.

**Mr Bachoo:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have already requested officers of the TMRSU, I remember a few weeks ago, to see to it and I will have a look at it over again.

## CAMP LEVIEUX - NHDC ESTATE – WATER SUPPLY

**Mr D. Nagalingum (Second Member for Stanley & Rose Hill):** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I wish to raise an issue that concerns the Ministry of Housing and Lands. On 17 August and 09 November last year, we raised a question relating to the interruption of water supply at the NHDC estate at Camp Levieux. The cause of the problem is the insufficient pressure in the pipe line system and the solution is the installation of a pump. On both occasions, the hon. Minister confirmed to the House that both the CWA and the NHDC were undertaking appropriate steps and that the NHDC has voted a certain amount of money for Camp Levieux Malaysian Phase I and II at an estimated cost of Rs30 m. for both water reticulation and water pumps. Since then the situation has deteriorated with the result that there has been interruption in two, three successive days, preventing children from going to school and adults to attend their works. In addition, the estate has been facing considerable problems concerning sanitation and cooking for people there.

May I, therefore, once again appeal to the hon. Minister to use his good officers to look into the problem urgently?

**The Minister of Housing and Lands (Dr. A. Kasenally):** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, there is a particular problem at NHDC, Camp Levieux where officers of the NHDC and contractors have had considerable problems in getting access to the housing estates. Some have even been threatened and violence has been used. However, this is no reason, as the hon. Member said, for children not to have water. If need be, we have to use the Riot Unit and the SMF to go and sort out this problem of putting water pumps and going up the roof and clean the water tanks. It is an extremely difficult situation with people there. In fact, not so long ago, I had a word with the hon. Leader of the Opposition who recognised that there is a problem there, but we will have to sort out this problem because water is essential for life.

## RADIO – NAPPY - PUBLICITY

**Mrs L. Ribot (Third Member for Stanley & Rose Hill):** M. le président, en l'absence de l'honorable Premier ministre et ministre de l'information, j'adresserai ma question au *Deputy Prime Minister*. En ce moment, à la radio, il y a une publicité qui vante la flexibilité des couches pour bébé. Très bien! Mais cette même publicité met en parallèle la flexibilité des parents et là où cela choque, c'est qu'on entend un enfant annoncer à ses parents entre autres –

«Maman, maman, je ne vais pas aller à l'école aujourd'hui, je vais jouer au Nintendo.

Très bien mon enfant !»

Le lendemain matin on entend –

« Maman, maman, je vais quitter l'école et je vais épouser ma maîtresse d'école.

Très bien mon enfant ! »

Le troisième jour –

« Maman, maman, j'ai vendu la voiture et j'ai acheté une moto.

Très bien mon enfant !»

Je me pose la question en tant qu'éducatrice : quelles sont les valeurs que nous voulons inculquer à nos enfants et à nos jeunes? Au moment où - l'honorable ministre de l'éducation sera d'accord avec moi - on essaie de combattre l'absentéisme dans les écoles, l'enfant annonce fièrement à ses parents qui sont d'accord qu'il ne va pas aller à l'école pour jouer au Nintendo. Sur ce, je voudrais faire la requête au *Deputy Prime Minister to see to it that this advert be removed from the media.*

Merci.

**The Deputy Prime Minister:** I have taken note and I will pass it on.

### **CITÉ LA CURE & MONTAGNE LONGUE – WATER SUPPLY**

**Mr G. Lesjongard (Second Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue):** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the matter that I am raising is addressed to the hon. Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Public Utilities and pertains to the quality of water into specific regions and Constituency No. 4, namely, Cité La Cure and Montagne Longue.

The inhabitants of these two localities have been regularly complaining for the past one month about the quality of water being supplied to these two regions. They feared that the water being supplied to them do not meet the standard of potable water. They also complained of severe itching whenever they used the water for bathing.

In the case of Cité La Cure, officers of the CWA were informed about the situation, that is, the presence of foreign particles in the water. They had reported it there and taken samples for testing and till now they have not reverted back to the inhabitants, whereas in the case of Montagne Longue, those inhabitants are still waiting for officers to attend to their problems.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would appeal to the hon. Deputy Prime Minister, if it is possible to personally look into the matter in order to reassure those inhabitants of Cité La Cure and Montagne Longue.

Thank you.

**The Deputy Prime Minister:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the hon. Member was kind enough to inform me during the day of his intention to raise this problem. I have asked the CWA to look into this matter urgently.

### **RODRIGUES - STC - RICE CONSIGNMENTS**

**Mr J. F. François (Third Member for Rodrigues):** M. le président, mon propos ce soir concerne la mauvaise qualité du riz ration, géré par la STC à Rodrigues. Cela s'adresse au

ministre du commerce qui n'est pas là. J'apprends qu'il est souffrant, et je lui souhaite un bon rétablissement.

M. le président, la majorité de la population de Rodrigues utilise le riz ration qui actuellement contient beaucoup de brisures, de la terre et de la saleté.

May I inform the hon. Minister that, two months ago, some 400 bags of 50 kg of putrid rice were dumped in Rodrigues in a sealed container? The rice, without any marine environmental concern, was disposed of at sea on Thursday 24 March 2011. I have been made aware that there remains a consignment of about 3,000 bags or more of dirty Pakistan ration rice at the STC granary in Rodrigues. Retailers are having difficulties to sell those delivered and have to return them to STC, as consumers are refusing to buy them. At STC, I have been informed that they are simply changing the type of bags, and instructions have been given to clear the unclean rice before any delivery to retailers of a new consignment of 500,000 bags of Thailand rice, which is of better quality.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, may I make a humble appeal to the hon. Minister to urgently see to it with the State Trading Corporation Limited and look into the matter to avoid such recurrence and to remedy the situation.

I thank you, Sir.

**The Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping (Mr A. Bachoo):** I'll convey the hon. Member's apprehension to the hon. Minister and we will see to it that the needful is done.

#### **CITE ST. LUC, CUREPIPE - CENTRE SOCIAL/CENTRE COMMUNAUTAIRE**

**Mr S. Obeegadoo (Third Member for Curepipe & Midlands):** M. le président, brièvement, je voudrais soulever la question du centre social/centre communautaire de la Cité St. Luc à Curepipe. Je m'adresserai au ministre Aimée, bien que je ne sache pas si ce centre est sous la responsabilité de la mairie ou de Madame Dookun-Luchoomun ou du ministre du tourisme, parce qu'on m'a dit que cela pourrait aussi avoir été construit par le ministère du tourisme à l'époque.

Donc, à la cité St. Luc, il n'y a aucune infrastructure sociale pour les activités récréatives ou autres. Il y existe un centre construit vers 2004, qui est à l'abandon. Selon les habitants de la cité, ce lieu ne sert que pour des drogués ou des ivrognes ou pour la débauche au milieu de la nuit. Je lancerai donc un appel pressant que, dans l'intérêt du développement communautaire, le ministre Aimée peut-être pourrait nous dire de qui relève cette structure et quelles sont les mesures qui pourraient être prises pour la remettre en état et la rendre opérationnelle dans l'intérêt des habitants au plus vite.

Merci, M. le président.

**COGEFAR, CHEMIN SANS SOUCI, MONTAGNE BLANCHE**

## - JOGGING TRACK

**Mr J. Seetaram (Second Member for Montagne Blanche & GRSE):** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this issue would be addressed to the Ministry of Public Infrastructure. It is in relation to a jogging track found at Cogefar, Chemin Sans Souci, Montagne Blanche. Could the Minister consider the reopening of this jogging track, inasmuch as it has been closed before because of its bad state and also the setting up of a proper lighting? It is at Cogefar. It is a jogging track, where the inhabitants of the region can benefit from. I would ask the hon. Minister if he could please do the needful.

Thank you.

**The Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping (Mr A. Bachoo):** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have to find out whether this road falls under the responsibility of my Ministry. I am not aware of that; I'll have a look at it.

## TAMARIN FOOTBALL GROUND

**Mr A. Ganoo (First Member for Savanne & Black River):** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I will raise an issue concerning the Ministry of Public Infrastructure and NDU, with regard to a football ground at Tamarin.

Since long, there has been a request from the youth of the area to provide lighting facilities to this football ground. Tamarin is an important village, and I understand that the works have already started. The pillars have been fixed but, up to now, no lighting facilities have been provided. Can I, therefore, appeal to the hon. Minister to see to it that matters are expedited?

**Mr Bachoo:** I'll convey the message of the hon. Member to the NDU.

*At 8.06 p.m. the Assembly was, on its rising, adjourned to Tuesday 14 June at 11.30 a.m.*

## WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

### POLICE FORCE – PROMOTION EXERCISE

**(No. B/424) Dr. S. Boolell (Second Member for Curepipe and Midlands)** asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in regard to future promotion exercises in the Police Force, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to –

- (a) if the same mode of examination will be applicable and, if not, indicate the alternatives;
- (b) the policy concerning the holders of degrees in Police studies, and

(c) if the system of automatic promotion will be maintained and, if so, indicate the criteria therefor.

**Reply:** I wish to remind the House that promotion in the Police Force falls within the purview of the Disciplined Forces Service Commission. Currently promotion exercises are carried out within the Force as follows -

- (i) through competitive examination conducted by the Disciplined Forces Service Commission for promotion to the ranks of Police Sergeant and Police Inspector;
- (ii) on the basis of experience, merit and seniority for promotion to the ranks of Police Corporal, Sub-Inspector of Police, and Chief Inspector and above;
- (iii) upon completion of approved training courses of at least one year duration in Military Academies or other recognised institutions abroad, and
- (iv) on the basis of possession of specialist skills and length of service in a specialised unit of the Force.

In regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed that no change is envisaged, for the time being, in the mode of promotion in the Force. However, I wish to inform the House that a sub-committee on Human Resource Management Capability has been set up in the context of reforms initiated under the National Policing Strategic Framework launched in February 2010. The sub-committee is chaired by an Assistant Commissioner of Police and comprises other Police officers as well as the Manager, Human Resources of the Police Department. The objective of the sub-committee is to review the whole Human Resource Management structure of the Police Force, including appointment and promotion procedures, and come up with appropriate recommendations with a view to enhancing the current Human Resource systems and processes. The sub-committee is presently working on its assignment and upon completion thereof, the suitability of the recommendations will be discussed with all parties concerned.

In regard to part (b) of the question, the course in BSc Police Studies was introduced in 1999 on my initiative and an agreement between Government and the University of Portsmouth was signed to that effect. The course was designed to enhance the professional development of the Mauritius Police Force, with the overall aim of facilitating organisational change and reform, and improving the service delivered by the Police. There are currently 287 serving

Police officers who are holders of a degree in Police Studies. In line with the recommendations of the Pay Research Bureau Report 2008, all officers possessing a degree in Police Studies are granted two incremental credits for possession of additional qualifications. In addition, those officers in the grade of Police Inspector and above, and holding a BSc in Police Studies, are assigned, where deemed expedient, additional duties and responsibilities against payment of a monthly allowance equivalent to two increments.

With a view to providing new avenues for promotion to graduates within the Force, and creating more opportunities for advancement in the Police, a new scheme is being worked out to allow entry of degree holders at the level of Inspector of Police. The proposed scheme provides for the creation of the post of Police Cadet Inspector which will be open to officers in the grade of Police Constable, Police Corporal, Police Sergeant and Sub-Inspector of Police who are degree holders and reckon adequate length of service in the Force. The new Scheme of Service has been finalised and sent for approval of the Disciplined Forces Service Commission on 07 April 2011. Approval of the latter is currently awaited.

In regard to part (c) of the question, I wish to point out there is no automatic promotion as such within the Force. However, in certain specialised and technical units of the Force, promotion is carried out on the basis of specialist skills, knowledge and experience upon recommendation of the Commissioner of Police. This type of promotion will be maintained especially in view of the need to avoid erosion of skilled, qualified and experienced Police Officers in these specialised units.

### **ROAD ACCIDENTS – HIT AND RUN**

**(No. B/425) Dr. R. Sorefan (Fourth Member for La Caverne & Phoenix)** asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in regard to road accidents where there has been hit and run, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to the number of reported cases thereof, since 2005 to date, indicating the number of cases in which the perpetrator has been identified and prosecuted and the outcome thereof.

**Reply:** As I have already stated in the House on several previous occasions, road safety is one of the priorities of the Government. A special Road Safety Management Unit has been set

up under the aegis of my office since 2009 to coordinate all road safety activities, by adopting an integrated approach to the issue. Our priority is to have an effective road management team.

Government is investing massively in improvement of physical infrastructure. New and better roads are being constructed. Pavements, street lighting, traffic lights, underpasses, overpasses and crossings are being installed to protect pedestrians. Legislation has been beefed up to discourage irresponsible behaviours, such as over-speeding and reckless driving.

The Road Traffic Regulations 2010, which became effective in February last and provides for motor vehicles to display retro-reflective registration plates were, amongst others, motivated by the fact that such plates are better visible from far and also increases the chances of identification in such hit and run cases.

On the human front, sensitisation campaigns are being held on a continuous basis focusing on responsible driving and road safety education.

In this context, Mauritius has joined the UN Decade of Action for Road Safety 2011 – 2020 effort. Governments around the world have taken the decision to address the road safety issues over the next ten years. A campaign “Together we can save millions of lives” has been launched in Mauritius too, on 11 May 2011. Government wants to instill a new culture and a more responsible behaviour among all road users and we believe that every citizen can contribute towards making our roads a safer place for all users.

I am tabling the information requested by the hon. Member.

### **RODRIGUES – BAIL - GRANT**

**(No. B/426) Mr J. F. François (Third Member for Rodrigues)** asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in regard to persons against whom provisional charges have been lodged and granted bail, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to if there is any case thereof against whom an objection to leave Rodrigues for Mauritius has been obtained and, if so, indicate the number thereof and the reasons therefor.

**Reply:** Prohibition against departure is governed by the Bail Act 1999. Generally, whenever a person is arrested and bailed out upon a provisional charge being laid against him, a Prohibition Order to leave the country is raised against him. This Prohibition Order is applicable only to persons leaving Mauritius for countries other than Rodrigues or vice versa as Mauritius and Rodrigues form part of the same territory. This is line with a decision of the Director of Public Prosecutions since December 1992.

I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that there is no person residing in Rodrigues against whom a provisional charge has been lodged and who subsequently has been granted bail, who is subject to an objection to leave Rodrigues for Mauritius.

However, I am informed that on 29 April 2011, Mrs L.R. who was not yet provisionally charged nor an Objection to Departure raised against her, was not allowed to travel to Mauritius. She was involved in a Police case which was still under enquiry. As she was suffering, Police allowed her to travel, but by that time, the plane had already taken off. On the next day she travelled to mainland Mauritius.

### **RODRIGUES – ADSU - OPERATION**

(No. B/427) **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 during an operation carried out by the Anti Drug and Smuggling Unit (ADSU), in Rodrigues, on 17 May 2011, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to if an inquiry has been carried out into the circumstances thereof and, if so -

- (a) the number of Police Officers who have been injured;
- (b) if the appropriate security measures were taken, and
- (c) if consideration will be given for a review of the
  - (i) conditions in which operations are carried out, and
  - (ii) re-organisation of the ADSU

**Reply:** I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that on 17 May 2011, following information received concerning cannabis cultivation in the region of Rivière Coco, a team of ADSU Officers assisted by regular Police and the Police Dog Unit carried out an operation there. While the operation was in progress, Police found three persons with plants suspected to be cannabis. The three persons ran away when they saw the Police but they were subsequently arrested. A provisional complaint was lodged against them before the District Court of Rodrigues for assaulting an agent of civil authority causing effusion of blood and cultivating cannabis. They were remanded to Police cell up to 23 May 2011 and remanded to jail up to 10 June 2011. The inquiry is ongoing.

In regard to part (a) of the question, one Police Officer received a blow with a stone from one of the suspects and was injured.

In regard part (b) of the question, the Police had taken all appropriate security measures after having assessed the risk factors involved in such operations.

In regard to part (c) (i) and (ii) of the question, the ADSU is using the latest techniques, equipment and technology to conduct its operations. The strategy adopted by ADSU has been fruitful as evidenced by the amount of drug seizures and number of persons arrested. It is not proposed to review the conditions of the operations or the re-organisation of ADSU.

#### **NATIONAL ASSEMBLY – CREOLE LANGUAGE**

**(No. B/428) 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 Creole Language, he will state if Government proposes to amend the existing legislation with a view to introducing the use thereof in the National Assembly and, if so, when?

*(Withdrawn)*

#### **CONSTITUTION – “POPULATION GENERALE”**

**(No. B/429) Mr G. Lesjongard (Second Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue)** asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in regard to the term *Population Générale*, he will state if

Government proposes to bring amendments to the First Schedule of the Constitution for either the deleting and replacement thereof by a more appropriate appellation or to delete reference thereto.

**Reply:** I wish to refer the hon. Member to the replies I gave to PQ 1B/77 on 22 June 2010 and PQ 1B/376 on 03 August 2010. I have, on several occasions, indicated in this House that I am sympathetic to the proposal that the term “*Population Générale*” in our Constitution be replaced by a more appropriate appellation.

However, I also underlined the fact that the term “*Population Générale*”, being intricately linked to the Best Loser System, any change thereto will have constitutional implications for our electoral process and should not therefore be considered in isolation, but viewed in the wider context of electoral reform.

As it is clearly stated in the Government Programme 2010-2015, Government will engage in a process of constitutional review and will appoint a team of constitutional experts which will, *inter-alia*, consider appropriate constitutional reforms, including the reform of our electoral system.

The hon. Member will therefore appreciate that the question of changing the appellation “*Population Générale*”, or deleting the term from the First Schedule to the Constitution as the hon. Member seems to be suggesting, will depend on the nature of the reform that will be made to the Best Loser System. But I have already given the assurance that, whatever be the design of the new system, it will have to ensure adequate parliamentary representation of all the components of the Mauritian nation.

### **POLICE OFFICERS – CORPORAL RANK - DEMOTION**

**(No. B/430) 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 Police Officers in the rank of Corporal, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to if some of them have recently been demoted and, if so, the reasons therefor.

**Reply:** I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that in 1994, the then Commissioner of Police introduced administratively the rank of Police Corporal within the regular force in respect of Police Constables who were performing the duties of Station Orderly, Station Clerk and Enquiries. These officers were designated Police Corporal after they had followed a two-week course at the Police Training School. Between 1994 and 1996, some 1,920 Police Constables were given the designation of Police Corporal. They were paid a monthly allowance of Rs135.

It should be noted that the post of Police Corporal did not exist on the establishment of the Mauritius Police Force. It was only in 2002, that the post was established under the Civil Establishment Order and 1,000 posts of Police Corporal were created. In 2003, the number of established posts of Police Corporal was increased to 1,300. The scheme of service for the post was prescribed on 03 June 2003.

In December 2003, 1,198 posts were filled by promotion on the basis of experience, merit and seniority of Police Constables reckoning at least 15 years satisfactory service in a substantive capacity in the grade and having proven ability to assume higher responsibilities.

In the course of the promotion exercise carried out in December 2003, some 700 Police Constables who were performing the duties of Police Corporal, were not promoted as they did not meet the relevant requirements of the post. However, the High Powered Committee approved the continued payment of the corporal allowance of Rs160 monthly to these officers on a personal basis until their promotion or retirement.

With the implementation of the PRB Report 2008, all previous authority for the payment of allowances lapsed. Therefore, the monthly corporal allowance paid to these officers had stopped with effect from 30 June 2008.

However, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that he has already asked the Ministry of Civil Service and Administrative Reforms to consider the reinstatement of the allowance payable to the Police Constables.

I wish to inform the House that no Police Officer holding a substantive post of Police Corporal on the establishment of the Mauritius Police Force has been demoted recently.

### **CARGO HANDLING CORPORATION - PRIVATISATION**

**(No. B/431) Mr R. Uteem (Second Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central)** asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in regard to the privatisation of the Cargo Handling Corporation, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Corporation, information as to where matters stand.

**Reply:** The issue of privatisation of the Cargo Handling Corporation Ltd was raised by the hon. Member in July last year by way of Parliamentary Question No. 1B/268. The House was then informed that five bidders have been pre-selected and the documents for the launching of the second phase of strategic partnership agreement, i.e. the Request for Proposal, were being finalised by the International Finance Corporation.

I am informed that these documents have now been finalised and have been endorsed by the Steering Committee set up to monitor the implementation of the project.

The documents which are still in draft form at this stage, will be released to the five pre-qualified bidders in due course for the submission of their views and comments.

### **POLICE FORCE – PROMOTION EXERCISE – EFFECTIVE DATE**

**(No. B/432) Mr K. Ramano (Second Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes)** asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in regard to the recent promotion of Police Constables to Police Sergeants and that of Police Sergeants to Police Inspectors, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to if consideration will be given for the backdating of their promotion as from 2005, in line with what obtained in the previous promotion exercise for some of the Police Constables and Police Sergeants to the rank of Corporals and Sub-Inspectors of Police respectively.

**Reply:** I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that the recent promotions to the grade of Police Sergeant and Police Inspector cannot be backdated. According to the prevailing

policy for appointment and promotion in the Civil Service as laid down in the Human Resource Management Manual, when a mode of appointment or promotion is made by competitive selection, the effective date is the date of assumption of duty of the officer concerned.

I wish to point out that promotions to the ranks of Police Corporal and Sub-Inspector of Police, are based on experience, merit and seniority as prescribed in the Schemes of Service for these posts. In such cases according to the Human Resource Management Manual, promotion may take effect as from the date of occurrence of vacancies. For the exercise carried out in March this year, whereby 244 Police Constables were promoted to the rank of Police Corporal and 30 Police Sergeants to the rank of Sub Inspector of Police, the Disciplined Forces Service Commission, upon recommendation of the Commissioner of Police, decided that the promotion would take effect as from the date of occurrence of vacancies.

#### **PUBLIC BEACHES - PROCLAMATION**

**(No. B/462) 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 public beaches, he will state if Government proposes to proclaim new ones and, if not, why not.

**Reply:** I wish to inform the House that the powers to proclaim public beaches are conferred upon my colleague the Minister of Housing and Lands in virtue of section (2) of the Beach Authority Act 2002.

In this context, various requests for proclamation of public beaches have been made by the Beach Authority to the Ministry of Housing and Lands so that members of the public could avail themselves of leisure facilities on these beaches.

While proclaiming new public beaches I will ensure at the same time that powers are given to my Ministry and to the Beach Authority to manage the public beaches and which will include the provision of amenities on them for the enjoyment of the local communities. These amenities will include commercial areas such as tuckshops, restaurants, and booth for the hiring of umbrellas, mattresses, aquatic equipment. The Beach Authority Act and, if necessary, other legislations will be amended to consolidate the powers of my Ministry and of the Beach Authority in this respect. In other words, my Ministry and the Beach Authority should be given the powers to construct commercial areas for lease or rent to interested parties.

#### **CWA - GENERAL MANAGER/CHIEF EXECUTIVE - POST**

**(No. B/463) Mr S. Obeegadoo (Third Member for Curepipe & Midlands)** asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to the post of General Manager/Chief Executive of the Central Water Authority, he will, for the benefit of the

House, obtain from the Authority, information as to when same became vacant, indicating the reasons why same has not been filled.

*(Withdrawn)*

### **MARE AUX VACOAS RESERVOIR – WATER SUPPLY**

**(No. B/464) Mr A. Ganoo (First Member for Savanne & Black River)** asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to the water situation at the Mare aux Vacoas reservoir and the consequences thereof on the consumers supplied therefrom, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Central Water Authority, information as to if consideration will be given for the installation of a treatment plant in the region of the Midlands Dam to treat water from the dam and to inject same into the Mare aux Vacoas distribution network.

**Reply:** I thank the hon. Member for this question and his concern about the prevailing water situation.

The Midlands dam has presently a storage of around 22 million cubic metres, representing some 87% of its maximum storage capacity. My Ministry has considered the option of using water from Midlands dam to supplement the Mare aux Vacoas system.

However, the dam is located at 375 metres above mean sea level, whereas the nearest injection point into the Mare aux Vacoas supply system is at around 500 metres above mean sea level. Thus, this option would involve pumping at a pressure of at least 25 bars, using very powerful pumps, high pressure resistant pipes and fittings, besides difficult access and wayleaves issues and major civil engineering works, coupled with high energy cost. The implementation schedule may span over a long period.

Consideration is being given for a mobile treatment plant of 2000 m<sup>3</sup> capacity in the region of Midlands dam to supply Bemanique Service Reservoir in the South and likewise to supplement the distribution system at Melrose in the East.

Consideration is also being given to release more water from the Midlands dam to Nicolière for the Port Louis north region and use more water from Rivière Terre Rouge for the Mare aux Vacoas distribution network to offset any shortfall in the Port Louis water supply system.

The House may wish to note that in addition to previous works already announced to supplement the Mare aux Vacoas region, further works have been carried out during the weekend and this week as follows -

- (i) Works have been completed for the abstraction of some 2000 – 3000 m<sup>3</sup>/day from River Profonde at Verdun, and
- (ii) Works are underway and will be completed this week for the abstraction of 3000 to 5000 m<sup>3</sup>/day from River Terre Rouge at St Antoine, Camp Fouquereaux.

### **NOUVELLE DECOUVERTE – BUS PARK**

**(No. B/465) Mr S. Dayal (Third Member for Quartier Militaire & Moka)** asked the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the bus park at Nouvelle Découverte, he will consider the advisability of the -

(a) fencing and widening thereof to cater for increased flow of vehicles and passengers, and

(b) provision of toilet facilities thereat.

**Reply:** I am informed that a lay-by, bus shelter and a parking area for two buses had been constructed last year by the Moka-Flacq District Council at Eau Bouillie, Nouvelle Decouverte and which was meant for buses serving the area of Nouvelle Découverte to Rose Hill and Port Louis. It has been observed that lately the buses from Les Mariannes and Long Mountain were also using this lay-by and the parking area.

I am informed that in order to accommodate all the buses serving the area, the parking space has to be enlarged from 240 m<sup>2</sup> to at least 960 m<sup>2</sup> and the land which may be used for this purpose forms part of forest, Eau Bouillie.

I am informed that the cost for extension of the parking space, construction of boundary wall and a toilet has been estimated at Rs1.2 m. and the council may undertake the project upon availability of funds and subject to necessary clearances being obtained from the Ministry of Housing and Lands and the Forestry Department, respectively.

#### **NOUVELLE DECOUVERTE - RIPAILLES – FOOTBALL GROUND**

**(No. B/466) Mr S. Dayal (Third Member for Quartier Militaire & Moka)** asked the Minister of Housing and Lands whether, in regard to the grant of 2000 acres of land by the Mauritius Sugar Producers Association to Government for development purposes, he will consider allocating 2 acres thereof, at Ripailles, Nouvelle Découverte, for the construction of a football ground for the benefit of the inhabitants thereof.

**Reply:** No official request has so far been made to my Ministry for land to be used for the construction of a football ground at Ripailles, Nouvelle Découverte.

However, I am informed that there is a request from the National Development Unit (NDU) for vesting of the premises of the former Ripailles Government School, which will be converted into a Sports Complex comprising a football ground, a volleyball pitch and a petanque court. The request is being processed.

I wish to inform the House that requests for land under 2000 Arpents Government/MSPA Deal should be addressed to the Steering Committee on 2000 Arpents land, which is chaired by the Secretary to Cabinet and Head of the Civil Service.

#### **STC- PETROLEUM PRODUCTS - IMPORTATION**

**(No. B/467) Dr. R. Sorefan (Fourth Member for La Caverne & Phoenix)** asked the Minister of Industry and Commerce whether, in regard to the importation of petroleum products from Mangalore Refineries and Petrochemicals Ltd., he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the State Trading Corporation -

(a) and table copy of the insurance cover for the -

- (i) contaminated petroleum products, and
  - (ii) importation of petroleum products on the CIF basis, and
- (b) information as to who is responsible to dispose of the petroleum products, where and how, in case of contamination.

*(Withdrawn)*

#### **CUREPIPE MUNICIPAL COUNCIL - MAYOR'S FUND - BENEFICIARIES**

**(No. B/468) Mr E. Guimbeau (First Member for Curepipe & Midlands)** asked the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the Mayor's fund of the Municipal Council of Curepipe, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Council, information as to a breakdown thereof, since October 2005 to-date, indicating, in each case, the -

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

**Reply:** The information requested by the hon. Member is being placed in the Library.

#### **CUREPIPE MUNICIPAL COUNCIL - LEGAL ADVISERS**

**(No. B/469) Mr E. Guimbeau (First Member for Curepipe & Midlands)** asked the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the legal advisers of the Municipal Council of Curepipe, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Council, information as to the names of the incumbents, since 2005 to date, indicating the total amount of retainer or any other fees which have been paid to each of them.

**Reply:** I am informed that since 2005 to date there were various legal advisers at the Municipal Council of Curepipe, among whom were Me Veda Baloomoody who from 2005 to 2009 had received fees amounting to Rs330,900. There was also Me Radhakisson Ashok who was paid the amount of Rs75,000 for the same period.

The list is being exhaustive, I am placing a copy in the Library.

#### **EMERGENCY RESPONSE SERVICE - VEHICLES**

**(No. A/165) Mr D. Nagalingum (Second Member for Stanley and Rose Hill)** asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in regard to the vehicles attached to the Emergency Response Service, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to the number thereof of the make Toyota and model Prado, indicating –

- (a) in each case, when they were purchased, and
- (b) if they will be renewed and, if so, when and, if not, why not.

**Reply:** As regards part (a) of the question, the Emergency Response Service has a fleet of 41 vehicles to cover the whole island, out of which 30 are of make and model Toyota Land Cruiser Prado. These vehicles were purchased during the financial year 2004/2005 and were registered in December 2004.

As regards part (b), the lifetime of a vehicle depends on many factors and the mileage run. ERS vehicles are extensively used to meet operational needs.

During a survey carried out by the Police Vehicles Technical Unit, it has been observed that each of the Toyota Land Cruiser Prado of the ERS has covered an average of 500,000 km and is subject to frequent breakdowns.

Police is envisaging the replacement of that batch of vehicles by purchasing a new fleet in the course of this financial year.

### **POLICE - DETENTION CENTRES – CONSTRUCTION**

**(No. A/166) Mr D. Nagalingum (Second Member for Stanley and Rose Hill)** asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in regard to the project for the construction of Regional Detention Centres, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, a list thereof, indicating in each case –

- (a) the number of cells that will be available;
- (b) if they will be equipped with Closed Circuit Television (CCTV) cameras and
- (c) where matters stand.

**Reply:** Police has adopted the policy to construct detention centres for suspected offenders because such centres provide additional space and persons detained therein are treated in accordance with international norms.

There are currently three detention centres used by the Police, namely at Moka Police Station, Vacoas Police Compound and in the Line Barracks in Port Louis. The capacity of these detention centres is as follows –

- Moka detention centre has 14 male cells and 4 female cells;
- Vacoas detention centre comprises 15 male cells and 5 female cells, and
- Line Barracks detention centre has 15 male cells.

The cells in these detention centres are equipped with closed circuit cameras.

Police is in the process of constructing two additional regional detention centres, one at Piton to cater for the northern region, and one at Rose Belle to cater for the southern region.

Land is already available for the detention centre at Piton. It will have 24 cells and will be equipped with cameras. The Ministry of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping is finalising the design, and construction works are expected to start by November this year.

The preliminary plan for the project at Rose Belle is being carried out by the Ministry of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping. The procedure for land acquisition is in progress.

**WATER PARK LEISURE VILLAGE– HEAD OF OPERATIONS -  
APPOINTMENT**

(No. A/167) Mr K. Ramano (Second Member for Belle Rose and Quatre Bornes) asked Minister of Agro-Industry and Food Security whether, in regard to the Head of Operation of the Water Park Leisure Village, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Sugar Investment Trust, information as to-

- (a) his date of appointment;
- (b) his qualifications;
- (c) his past experience;
- (d) his salary and other benefits, since his appointment to date, and
- (e) if a new car has recently been put at his disposal, and if so, indicate the make and model, date of registration and cost thereof.

**Reply:** The information sought in respect of the Head of Operations of the Water Park Leisure Village is as follows-

- (a) Date of appointment: 01 November 2010
- (b) Qualifications
  - Master in Business Administration (MBA) Finance – UTM March 2010
  - Bachelor of Engineering (Mechanical) – Malviya Regional Engineering College (also Known as Malviya National Institute of Technology) Jaipur 1994.
  - Chartered Member of the Institute of Logistic and Transport (UK) – 2010
  - Diploma in Advance Networking – NASIT Toronto Canada – 2003
  - Microsoft Certified Professional – 2003
  - CCP (A+) Comp Tia Certified Professional (Hardware and Software) – 2003
  - Auto-Cad Design – Toronto
  - Pitman Intermediate Diploma (U.K)
  - Certificate in Public Procurement Management – UTM June 2010

National Transport Corporation	Operation and Inventory Manager	2007 to 2010
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- (c) Past experience

Name of employer	Position	Date in employment
Sinotex (Mauritius) Ltd	Industrial Engineer	1995 to 1996
Compagnie Mauricienne de Textile Ltée (CMT)	Manager in Production Line	1996 to 1997
Sea Blue Hotel and	Managing Director	1997 to 2001

Bungalows		
Petro-Canada	Worked in the following depts.: - Transaction support - Marketing, Operation and Dispatch	2001 to 2006

(d) Salary and other benefits

Monthly Salary: Rs 51,000  
Other benefits: Company car  
Mobile Phone  
Annual overseas travel ticket for a maximum of Rs 30,000

(e) A new car has been put at his disposal

Make of the car: Ford  
Model: Mondeo  
Date of registration: 09 March 2011  
Cost: Rs 1,098,000 (inclusive of VAT)

#### QUATRE BORNES MUNICIPAL COUNCIL - VEHICLES

(No. A/168) Mr K. Ramano (Second Member for Belle Rose and Quatre Bornes) asked Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the vehicles, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Municipal Council of Quatre Bornes, information as to the number thereof –

- (a) owned by the Council and presently in service, indicating the department to which each vehicle is attached;
- (b) hired by the Council, since 2005 to-date, on a yearly basis, indicating the type and cost thereof, and
- (c) purchased by way of tender but not yet delivered, indicating the reasons therefor.

**Reply:** The information requested by the hon. Member and submitted by the Municipal Council of Quatre Bornes is being placed in the library.

#### CONSTITUENCY NO. 20 – ROADS - UPGRADING

(No. A/169) Mr K. Li Kwong Wing (Second Member for Beau Bassin and Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to the classified roads in Constituency No. 20, Beau Bassin and Petite Rivière, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Road Development

Authority, information as to if they are in a bad state and, if so, the measures that will be taken, if any, for the upgrading thereof and of the pavements and drains thereat.

**Reply:** The classified roads in constituency No. 20 are in good condition except for Saint Martin Road (B101) at Mont Roches, which is in a bad state due to the ongoing sewerage works.

The RDA will undertake the necessary upgrading works upon completion of the sewerage project scheduled for end of August 2011.

However, the following works are ongoing in Constituency No. 20 -

- Cleaning and upgrading of drain along Port Louis – St. Jean Road A1 at Beau Bassin for an estimated sum of Rs 3m.
- Upgrading of footpath and construction of drain along Albion Road (B78) at Petite Rivière for an estimated sum of Rs2.2 m.

It is to be noted that Meldrum Street, a non classified road located in Beau Bassin, has been recently resurfaced by the Road Development Authority at the cost of Rs 2,7m.

#### **CAUDAN - GRADE-SEPARATED JUNCTION - TRAFFIC DIVERSION**

**(No. A/170) Mr K. Li Kwong Wing (Second Member for Beau Bassin and Petite Rivière)** asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to the road in front of the stele erected in commemoration of the arrival of the Chinese immigrants to Mauritius, he will state if he has taken cognizance of the deplorable state thereof and if so, indicate the measures that will be taken for the upgrading and tarring thereof.

**Reply:** The construction of the Grade-separated Junction at Caudan necessitates temporary traffic diversion. When works on the inner side of Port Louis will be implemented, traffic will be temporarily diverted on part of the hard shoulder of the road in front of the Pagoda where the Stele, commemorating the arrival of the Chinese Immigrants to Mauritius, is located.

The road will be rehabilitated by the Road Development Authority once the project is completed.

#### **CUREPIPE - RECREATIONAL CENTRES**

**(No. A/171) Mr S. Obeegadoo (Third Member for Curepipe & Midlands)** asked the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the Community/Social Welfare/Public Recreational Centres, he will state if consideration will be given for the buildings housing same, within the boundaries of the town of Curepipe to be vested in the Municipal Council of Curepipe and, if not, why not.

**Reply:** I am informed that the Municipal Council of Curepipe is responsible for the maintenance and management of all sports, leisure and welfare infrastructures owned by it.

I am informed that the Council will not be in a position to take over other recreational centres presently managed by other Government organisations due to budgetary constraints and limited human resources.

### **CUREPIPE MUNICIPAL COUNCIL - AMBULANCE SERVICES**

(No. A/172) **Mr S. Obeegadoo (Third Member for Curepipe & Midlands)** asked the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the ambulance services previously provided by the Municipal Council of Curepipe, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Council, information as to if consideration will be given for the reinstatement thereof and, if not, why not.

**Reply:** I am informed by the Municipal Council of Curepipe that the ambulance service, which started in the year 1980, was stopped in 1999.

I am informed that the Council does not intend to reinstate the service for the following reasons -

- Ambulance services are provided by the Central Government through the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life;
- The Ministry of Health & Quality of Life has equipped the SAMU Ambulance with appropriate apparatuses and qualified staff to respond on the spot to any serious casualty, and
- The ambulance service does not fall under the duties of Local Authorities as provided under section 51 of the Local Government Act 1989.

### **CEB - WOODEN POLES**

(No. A/173) **Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière)** asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to the wooden poles, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Central Electricity Board, information as to if there is a shortage thereof and, if so –

- (a) since when;
- (b) if orders have been placed and, if so, when, and
- (c) when the situation is expected to be back to normal.

**Reply:** I am informed by the Central Electricity Board (CEB) that wooden poles of 4 different sizes are used and a total stock of 247 poles is available presently. An order of 8,000 poles has been placed. 1978 poles will be delivered next week and the remaining will be delivered by end of June.

### **NELSON MANDELA CENTRE FOR AFRICAN CULTURE - ACTIVITIES**

(No. A/174) **Mr J. C. Barbier (Second Member for GRNW & Port Louis West)** asked the Minister of Arts and Culture whether, in regard to the Nelson Mandela Centre for

African Culture, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Centre, information as to if any activity is organised by the Centre, in collaboration with any social organisation in Constituency No.1, Grand River North West and Port Louis West, and, if so, give details thereof, including a breakdown of the expenditure incurred.

**Reply:** I am informed by the Nelson Mandela Centre for African Culture that in the context of the “International Year for People of African Descent”, proclaimed by the UNESCO, the Centre had organised a cultural activity on 14<sup>th</sup> May 2011 at its seat to which several socio-cultural organisations were invited.

Talks were delivered on “*Education traditionnelle en Afrique et ses valeurs fondamentales*” and “*Portée socioculturelle des noms propres dans la tradition africaine*” by Mr Théophile Sossoo and Mr Koudannou Kossigan, respectively, both from Togo.

A “*Swaré Sega Tipik*” was also organised jointly by the Centre and the Cercle de Bain des Dames.

The expenses incurred were -

- Rs5,000 to Mr Michel Legris and his group for sega performance;
- Rs3,000 to Mr Julien Lourdes for acting as animator;
- Rs10,000 for sound system and decoration, and
- Rs4,000 for posters.

Similar activities will be organised in other parts of the country in the context of the International Year for People of African Descent.

#### **FOREIGN STATES – MUTUAL ASSISTANCE - REQUEST**

(No. A/175) **Mr R. Uteem (Second Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central)** asked the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade whether, in regard to request for mutual assistance from foreign States, he will state the number of requests received as at to date, indicating in each case the form of assistance sought and the outcome thereof.

**Reply:** You will appreciate that section 20 of the Mutual Assistance in Criminal and Related Matters Act puts restrictions on the amount of information that can be provided in relation to requests made under the Act to the Central Authority, both as regards the content and purport of the information transmitted to the Mauritian Authorities. These information are considered privileged.

However, the House would appreciate that from 2007 to 2011, approximately 55 requests for mutual assistance have been addressed to the Central Authority of Mauritius under the Mutual Assistance in Criminal and Related Matters Act.

Applications have been received principally in respect of the following -

- (i) Evidence-gathering;
- (ii) Restraint orders, and

(iii) Examination of witnesses (*commission rogatoire*).

As at to date, around 23 requests have already been processed and executed. 5 applications are presently pending before the Judge in Chambers.

The remaining requests are either under consideration or pending at the Attorney-General's Office given that additional information and/or clarifications were sought from the Requesting States and a reply is being awaited.

### **COMPANIES - CATEGORY 2 GLOBAL BUSINESS LICENCE**

**(No. A/176) Mr R. Uteem (Second Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central)** asked the vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to the companies holding a Category 2 Global Business Licence, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Financial Services Commission, information as to the number thereof which have been wound up, since 2005 to date, indicating if any study has been carried to determine the causes thereof.

**Reply:** From January 2005 to 26 May 2011, 106 Global Business Companies Category 2 have been wound-up in accordance with the Companies Act, of which 80 have followed the simplified procedures for voluntary winding up as follows –

Simplified procedures for voluntary winding up under the Companies Act	80
Members' winding up under Insolvency Act 2009	11
Members' winding up	10
Winding up by Court	3
Winding up by Court under Insolvency Act 2009	1
Creditors' winding up	1

No study has been carried out to determine the causes of winding up as it concerns only 106 Global Business Companies Category 2 out of more than 15,000 GBC 2 on the register.

### **DEFORESTATION**

**(No. A/177) Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière)** asked the Minister of Agro-Industry and Food Security whether, in regard to the forests and natural reserves, he will state the –

(a) extent thereof -

(i) as at to date;

(ii) in 2005;

(iii) around the water reservoirs at Mare aux Vacoas, Midlands dam, La Nicolière, Piton du Milieu and Mare Longue, and

(b) actions taken by Government for the protection thereof against deforestation, since 2005 to date.

**Reply:** The total area under forests in the country including nature reserves has decreased insignificantly over the five years by some 26 ha in view of infrastructural works, from 47,185 ha to 47,159 ha.

As regards part (a) (iii), the extent of State forest lands around reservoirs has remained more or less the same and is as follows –

(i)	Mare aux Vacoas	-	2,891 ha
(ii)	Midlands Dam	-	155 ha
(iii)	La Nicolière	-	427 ha
(iv)	Piton du Milieu	-	1,848 ha
(v)	Mare Longue	-	665 ha

As far as part (b) is concerned, some 1000 ha of young forest plantation have been maintained, namely weeding and replacement of dead seedlings and some 500 ha have been reafforested near reservoirs. Patrol and sensitisation programmes are carried out regularly.

#### **MESNIL - SEWERAGE PROJECT**

**(No. A/178) Dr. R. Sorefan (Fourth Member for La Caverne & Phoenix)** asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to the sewerage project for Mesnil, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Wastewater Management Authority, information as to if consideration will be given for the inclusion of sewerage connection to be provided at the Ally Road, next to the Mesnil Mosque and in the vicinity thereof and, if so, indicate when works are expected to start.

**Reply:** I am informed by the Wastewater Management Authority that Royal Road, Mesnil is already sewered, and Riverside Road is being connected to the sewer network under an ongoing sewerage project.

As for Ally Road and its vicinity, I am informed that the region is low-lying and cannot be connected to the existing gravity sewer network.

The construction of a sewer reticulation in that region will be considered in the light of the recommendations of the Sewerage Master Plan Study scheduled to be completed by December 2011.

#### **SHANGHAI - WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP - MAURITIAN SWIMMERS**

**(No. A/179) Mr F. Quirin (Third Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière)** asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether, in regard to the Mauritian swimmers, he will -

(a) for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Mauritius Swimming Federation, information as to the –

(i) last ranking thereof on the International Pointing System (IPS), and  
(ii) recommendations made by the Technical Committee of the federation concerning their participation in the forthcoming World Championship, in Shanghai, giving a list of the selected ones and their respective IPS ranking, and

(b) state the actions taken by his Ministry and the *Comité National Olympique Mauricien* to ensure the participation of the best ranked swimmers in the said championship.

**Reply:** The International Pointing System (IPS) is a measure to convert time realised by swimmers in a competition into points for ranking purposes.

The Mauritius Swimming Federation so far has not kept a ranking of its licencees on IPS basis.

With regard to paragraph (a) (ii) of the question, I am also informed that the technical committee has recommended that –

- (i) being given the proximity in time of the World Championships in Shanghai and the I.O.I. Games in Seychelles, that is, end of July and beginning of August respectively, the Committee is not favourable for a participation in Shanghai so as not to jeopardise our chances in the I.O.I.G. which is the priority of the Federation, the Ministry and the whole nation, and
- (ii) in case we absolutely need to participate, we will have to be represented by our best swimmers.

With regard to part (b), I have been advised by the Chairperson that the Federation has not yet decided as to whether our swimmers will participate in the World Championship or not. Any action from my Ministry or the Mauritius National Olympic Committee (MNOC) in this regard is therefore premature.

#### **MAURITIUS SPORTS COUNCIL – HANDYMEN - APPOINTMENT**

(No. A/180) Mr F. Quirin (Third Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether, in regard to the handymen working at the Mauritius Sports Council, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Council, a list thereof, indicating -

- (a) their respective date of appointment;
- (b) the site to which they are attached, and
- (c) their working conditions, indicating if some of them are on a temporary basis and, if so, when they will be employed permanently.

**Reply:** For parts (a) and (b), the list of handymen working at the Mauritius Sports Council together with their respective date of appointment and the site to which they are attached is being placed in the Library.

For part (c), the handymen earn a monthly salary of Rs7,834 and are employed on a purely temporary basis. Their contract may be renewed after the period of 1 year after satisfactory completion or cancelled earlier by either side by giving one month notice or on paying one month salary. Moreover, employment may be terminated at any time in the event of incompetence, misconduct, insubordination.

The Mauritius Sports Council is not legally empowered to employ staff on a permanent basis. This issue will be given due consideration in the forthcoming amendment to the Sports Act.

### **ROCHE BOIS - IMPASSE COCOTERIE – SEWERAGE SYSTEM**

**(No. A/181) Mr A. Ameer Meea (First Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East)** asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to the Impasse Cocoterie at Roche Bois, opposite the Good Year office, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Wastewater Management Authority, information as to if consideration will be given for the provision of a sewerage system thereat.

**Reply:** I am informed by the Wastewater Management Authority that three impasses have been sewered already and one impasse opposite Good Year to Cocoterie Road, with 10 to 12 households have not been sewered yet.

Consideration will be given to the provision of a sewer reticulation and house connections on this street in future sewerage development programmes.

### **NHDC – HOUSING UNITS - CONSTRUCTION**

**(No. A/182) Mr A. Ameer Meea (First Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East)** asked the Minister of Housing and Lands whether, in regard to the housing units constructed by the National Housing Development Company Ltd., since 2005 to date, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Company, a list thereof, indicating, in each case the –

- (a) number and types thereof, region-wise, and
- (b) cost per unit.

**Reply:** From 2005 to date the NHDC has completed the construction of some 2,496 housing units on 34 sites across the island. The information requested for in respect of number and types of housing units region-wise and the cost per unit is at Annexes I to II respectively, which have been prepared based on materials submitted by the NHDC Ltd.