

No. 24 of 2011



FIFTH NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

PARLIAMENTARY

DEBATES

(HANSARD)

FIRST SESSION

SATURDAY 12 NOVEMBER 2011

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MAURITIUS

Fifth National Assembly

FIRST SESSION

Debate No. 24 of 2011

Sitting of Saturday 12 November 2011

The Assembly met in the Assembly House, Port Louis,

At 11.00 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 Annual Report 2010 of the Sugar Insurance Fund Board.

B. Ministry of Social Security, National Solidarity and Reforms Institutions –

The Residential Care Homes (Amendment) Regulations 2011 (Government Notice No. 185 of 2011).

C. Ministry of Industry and Commerce and Consumer Protection –

(a) The Consumer Protection (Scrap Metal) (Amendment) Regulations 2011 (Government Notice No. 186 of 2011).

(b) The Consumer Protection (Trade Fair and Exhibition) (Amendment) Regulations 2011 (Government Notice No. 187 of 2011).

ORAL ANSWER TO QUESTION**MBC – MRS REHANA AMEER - DISMISSAL**

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 industrial relations at the Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation, he will state if –

- (a) the report of the Fact-Finding Committee, chaired by Mr Denis Vellien and set up in June 2011 to inquire into the dismissal by the Corporation of Mrs Rehana Ameer, the then President of the Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation Staff Association, has been submitted to him and, if so, indicate –
 - (i) the date thereof, and
 - (ii) if consideration will be given for the rendering public thereof, and
- (b) he will consider rendering public the earlier report of Professor Torul thereon.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, on 25 August 2010 Mrs Ameer, who held the post of Traffic Officer at the Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation, was interdicted from duty, following an investigation by the Management of the Corporation into the circulation of an anonymous letter containing what was considered to be highly defamatory allegations against several members of the staff of the Corporation.

Following a departmental enquiry instituted in accordance with the MBC rules and regulations made under the MBC Act, a Disciplinary Committee was set up. Mrs Ameer had the opportunity to be assisted at the hearings of this Committee by a lawyer and the President of the Federation of Parastatal Bodies and other unions.

In the light of the findings of the Disciplinary Committee, the Board of the Corporation decided to dismiss Mrs Ameer from the service of the Corporation on 02 December 2010.

After her dismissal, though Mrs Ameer could have had recourse to the Industrial Court for redress, she opted to report a dispute to the Commission for Conciliation and Mediation requesting her reinstatement. However, acting on the legal advice tendered by the Legal Advisers, the Corporation did not attend the conciliation and mediation meetings convened by the Commission.

In the light of the several comments and observations that have been made in public, I decided, in June 2011 to set up a Fact-Finding Committee under the chairmanship of Mr Denis Vellien, former Magistrate of the Intermediate Court to establish all the facts and circumstances leading to the dismissal of Mrs Ameer from the Corporation and to submit a report thereon.

The Fact-Finding Committee held 12 sittings from 22 June of this year to 28 July of this year and heard the Chairman on the MBC Board, Mr Claude Narain and other Board Members. The Committee also heard Mr Dan Callikhan, Director General of the MBC and its Legal Advisers namely Mr d'Unienville, QC and Mr Mardemoootoo. They also heard Mrs Soborun, Deputy Director General, Mr Luckraz, Team Leader of the Human Resources and Corporate Services, Mr Gopee, Director of the Office of Public Sector Governance and Mrs Ameer and her Legal Advisers, Mr Stephen and Mr Ramano. Additionally, the Management of the MBC, Mrs Ameer as well as the Ministry of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment submitted several documents to the Committee, in relation to the case.

The Fact-Finding Committee submitted its report to me on 03 October 2011.

In this report the Fact-Finding Committee has found, *inter-alia* that -

- (i) Industrial relations were tense between the Management of the MBC and the Trade Unions;
- (ii) the Board and Management of the Corporation were being constantly subjected to anonymous letters and the MBC considered that it had to take actions to contain that practice;
- (c) the MBC instituted disciplinary proceedings in conformity with the MBC Act and MBC Regulations and, acting on legal advice, the Corporation carried on with disciplinary proceedings and considered that it was under no legal obligation to attend the meeting convened by the Commission for Conciliation and Mediation;
- (d) after the Disciplinary Committee has completed its proceedings, the MBC Board did not take into account, over and above the Report of the Disciplinary Committee, certain mitigating factors;
- (e) the Fact-Finding Committee has also commented on certain aspects of what it terms as unfairness in the investigation that led to the dismissal of Mrs Ameer;

- (f) before the Disciplinary Committee, the stand that was taken by Mrs Ameer in respect of a charge of defamation against the Director-General of the MBC was grossly misconceived and untenable in law;
- (g) Mrs Ameer gave several versions in respect of the charges preferred against her, and was of the view that her credibility had been impaired by the absence of detained explanations.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the Fact- Finding Committee made proposals for amending section 11 of the MBC Act, because its application, coupled with existing MBC Regulations, result in significant unfairness, that is, the law, as it stands, makes the MBC judge and party.

The Fact- Finding Committee has also recommended that the Employment Rights Act be amended, so that an employer may not proceed with disciplinary proceedings and dismiss an employee if that employee has chosen in the meantime to report a dispute to the Commission for Conciliation and Mediation.

In the light of those findings, I have called the Director-General of the MBC to consider whether it would not be in the in the interest of the smooth functioning of the organisation for Mrs Ameer to be convened by the MBC, to see what are the possible solutions on humanitarian grounds. I am not intending to depone the two reports. The Torul report, I had said in the past, Mr Speaker, Sir, will not be deponed, because - perhaps I had not said it - certain witnesses had deponed on the strict condition that their anonymity and evidence would be preserved. I think I had indicated this.

As for the Fact-Finding Committee, the reason I set up the Fact-Finding Committee was that it could assist me, the person who had asked for the report, to be better informed to come to a conclusion, because we were hearing different versions. That is what I have done so far.

I am hopeful that the MBC will be calling Mrs Ameer soon, and discuss what possibilities there are.

Mr Bérenger: It seems that the Fact- Finding Committee has taken the management of MBC to task on several points, and yet the hon. Prime Minister suggests, as a way forward, that the same MBC should convene Mrs Ameer and discuss with her. I don't think it is the right way forward. We hear that the Fact- Finding Committee made recommendations for amending the

MBC Act, the Employment Relations Act. Can I ask the hon. Prime Minister whether it made a recommendation for the reinstatement for Mrs Ameer?

The Prime Minister: No, it did not make a recommendation for her reinstatement. In fact, the Fact-Finding Committee is critical of both of them, and it didn't make any such recommendation.

Mr Bérenger: Hearing between the lines, it seems that the MBC was taken to task on several points, without precise recommendation being made. Can the hon. Prime Minister tell me whether the Fact-Finding Committee had access to the verbatim tape-recording of the proceedings of the Disciplinary Committee? The trade unionists, the lawyer and Mrs Ameer could not get access to that.

The Prime Minister: My belief is that they did, Mr Speaker. In fact, they criticised the MBC, and one of the issues is that they did not give the full verbatim report. It was a summary of the report, and they were critical of the MBC on that. They wanted to see the whole verbatim report. I don't know whether they heard tape.

Mr Bérenger: Did the Fact-Finding Committee come to the conclusion that Mrs Ameer was targeted in her capacity as a trade unionist?

The Prime Minister: They did not actually say that, although they say that there were different versions. If they had looked at it properly, they should have seen that she was acting as a trade unionist instead of acting on her own, because she did say to somebody that she wanted to have a meeting organised by the trade union. That seems to have escaped some of the people on the Board when they were looking at it, although, as I said, she also gave different versions, which did not help at the beginning.

Mr Bérenger: I think I heard the hon. Prime Minister say that the Fact-Finding Committee came to the conclusion that, as the MBC Act stands at present, the MBC management is called upon or the Board to act as judge and party. Did the Fact-Finding Committee in that respect comment on the fact that the new Chairperson of the Board also chaired the Disciplinary Committee; therefore, removing his hat as Chair of the Disciplinary Committee to put his hat as Chair of the Board, thus acting, as the Fact-Finding Committee says,

as judge and party? To me, that behaviour is totally unacceptable. Was it commented upon by the Fact-Finding Committee?

The Prime Minister: Yes, in fact, it was commented by the Fact-Finding Committee. That is why they said that, in the name of fairness, you cannot be judge and party at the same time. However, that's why they said we should look at the MBC Act, because section 11(3) of the MBC Act says -

“Subject to subsection 4, a Committee shall consist of -

- (i) the chairman, and
- (ii) members selected by the Board

and to be presided by the Chairman and, in the absence of the Chairman, any member elected from among the members.”

The MBC Act, obviously, has to be relooked at. This has been there for a long, long time, but we need to look at that in the light of what Mr Vellien has said.

Mr Bérenger: Did the Fact-Finding Committee make comments on the way the Disciplinary Committee carried out it works, blaming some, blaming the Chair, and commenting on the performance of the legal advisers of the MBC?

The Prime Minister: They made comments on both sides of legal advice. For example, they say that they do not agree on certain things that Mr d’Unienville said. At the same time, they did not agree also on the stand taken by the legal advisers of Mrs Ameer.

Mr Bérenger: Did the Fact-Finding Committee make comments on the MBC's Director-General’s refusal to appear before the Conciliation and Mediation Commission?

The Prime Minister: Yes, they did make comments. But it also says that they acted upon their legal advice that they did not have to go in front of that committee. That is why there are areas which need to be relooked at, I believe. That is why I think he has made some suggestions.

Mr Bérenger: I think I heard the hon. Prime Minister say that neither reports are going to be made public, unfortunately, but especially the one by Professor Torul on industrial relations at the MBC in general. We can delete the names of the employees who deponed on the condition that their names should not be mentioned. There is no problem deleting that. Does not the hon.

Prime Minister think that, to be fair to Mrs Ameer, and to know what really was going on before she was dismissed, there is a need to make public the report of Professor Torul and of the Fact-Finding Committee, but especially Professor Torul, deleting the names of witnesses?

The Prime Minister: My understanding is that, in the Torul report, some witnesses have said that they only want their names but the evidence not published. But I will take legal advice on both issues.

Mr Bérenger: I am saying that, because Professor Torul, a cool head, must have made lots of comments on industrial relations at the MBC, from what I understand. The dismissal of Mrs Ameer was not without *precedent*. There have been dismissals; there has been a very bad mood at the MBC. Therefore, is the hon. Prime Minister prepared to consider deleting the names of witnesses and making public Professor Torul's report?

The Prime Minister: In principle, this should have been maybe the way to go forward but, since they said they don't want the evidence also to be public, I will take legal advice and inform the House.

Mr Jugnauth: After having taken cognizance of the report, does not the hon. Prime Minister think that instead of asking the MBC to try to come to a possible solution, he should, in fact, direct the MBC for a possible solution, especially in the light of the case of the former Human Resource Manager at the MDFP, whereby there was a disciplinary committee, was found guilty, was dismissed, but then Cabinet took the decision ...

Mr Speaker: No! There is no need for the hon. Member to make reference to another case. He can just put his question whether the Prime Minister considers that or whatever it is.

Mr Jugnauth: There is a difference in the treatment that is being meted to the other party.

Mr Speaker: I am sorry. The hon. Member is making a speech.

Mr Jugnauth: So, in the case of one party, such a treatment was meted, why could there not be a decision taken by the hon. Prime Minister?

The Prime Minister: Maybe I was not clear enough. This is what I have told the MBC, they must find a solution one way or the other.

Mr Bhagwan: Sir, I have raised that issue myself on many occasions, also in a PQ. The Prime Minister has used two terms, the term 'unfairness' and also he has used the term: 'tense industrial situation'. Here, we have been talking about the MBC for months, about this case and other cases.

Is the Prime Minister aware that these days there is another case like that of Mrs Ameer? It's the same type, a repetition, where another Chairperson of a Trade Union has been sent in exile to Rodrigues for one year and, now again, as a punishment, he has been asked to go for another year, and that very competent person has had to resign from the MBC/TV. Doesn't the hon. Prime Minister think that it is now in the public interest, in his own interest, that Mr Callikhan be sacked at the MBC/TV?

The Prime Minister: I don't want to go into the sacking of Mr Callikhan, but we have to look where we can improve the situation ...

(Interruptions)

Sometimes, you need to have somebody who is ...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: No! The hon. Member has put the question; let's listen to the hon. Prime Minister.

The Prime Minister: I must tell the hon. Member that I always get anonymous letters which I shred. I am sure the hon. Leader of the Opposition when he was Prime Minister must have got also. It's not nice to have anonymous letters where you are actually working and this very often. We must look at that also. That is why the situation has deteriorated. I should also add that Mrs Ameer also wrote to the Permanent Secretary of my Office to ask for some help - I don't want to go into details - which we have looked into. We have written back to her.

Mr Baloomoody: It's clear from the reply of the hon. Prime Minister and the report on the Fact-Finding Committee that the basic principle of natural justice was not followed in this particular case. There has been unfairness with regard to the investigation. There has been mitigation not taken into account. Factors have not been taken into consideration and now we know that there is tension between the parties. Can I ask the hon. Prime Minister whether Government, itself, will intervene in this particular case, like they did in the case of Mauritius

Telecom and the Bank of Mauritius where trade unionists were suspended and Government intervened personally?

Can I ask, instead of having these parties to meet - more than a month has gone now ...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Carry on!

Mr Baloomoody: ...whether Government, itself, will intervene to ensure that justice is done to Mrs Ameer?

The Prime Minister: When the Committee refers to the unfairness, it is particularly on the fact that not all the evidence was given; it was a summary of the evidence. He thinks that was wrong; and also of the fact that they were acting as judge and party. That is as it is in section 11 of the MBC Act which we need to change obviously. He is critical of Mrs Ameer; I don't want to go into details. That is why I have asked them - since both have been criticised - if they do not come to some form of agreement, I will certainly have to step in.

Mr Bodha: Mr Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Prime Minister to enlighten us on the mitigating factors which have been brought forward in the report and whether the Prime Minister is not aware that the trade unions have asked for some financial assistance and contribution because of the dire state in which Mrs Ameer is? In the light of the unfairness, in the light of the mitigating factors and on humanitarian grounds, can he direct the MBC to reinstate the employee?

The Prime Minister: I have explained just now. I have added that she has written to my Permanent Secretary asking for help on two things: on mutual aid and on the Prime Minister's Relief Fund. We are looking at both of them. We have sent her forms to be filled. Hopefully, she will fill it. I will look at that sympathetically, because if somebody needs help, we will help. As for the mitigating factors, one of the things is that: for example, the MBC took the view that she was active; they did not take the view that she was as a trade unionist, but there were conflicting versions that could have led to that conclusion. It's later on that she said - and it was confirmed - that she did talk to somebody and asked for a trade union meeting. That completely escaped the MBC. These are the kind of mitigating factors that she didn't take into account, but the Committee also said that her credibility has also been impaired because of this.

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, we have heard hon. Bhagwan. Being given that the Fact-Finding Committee seems to be a vindication of a long list of complaints by the trade unions as to the totally unsatisfactory state of industrial relations at the MBC, being given that we have had public statements from the Minister of Labour, complaining as to the attitude of the Director-General of the MBC in regard to industrial relations and to this particular case, does the Prime Minister intend to take to task management of the MBC, its Director-General, concerning industrial relations at the MBC, and if not, please tell the nation why not?

The Prime Minister: I don't go into the running of the MBC, but I must say also that there must be discipline. In any place we must have discipline, so we have to look at the whole picture, not do as if, on one side, they are doing everything wrong and, on the other side, they are all angels. We have to look at both sides. That is what I am saying.

Mr Jhugroo: Can the hon. Prime Minister inform the House whether, in the past, any employee of the MBC has been sacked for any case and has been reinstated in his previous post?

The Prime Minister: If I have a substantial question, I will refer into whoever it is.

Mr Bérenger: I have a question if you would allow me. I don't agree at all with the way forward that the hon. Prime Minister is suggesting. But is he, in fact, suggesting that Mrs Ameer should appear before the guilty party himself, Mr Callikhan, the Director-General of MBC? Is she to appear before him? Is that the way forward?

The Prime Minister: No, that is not what I said. I asked the MBC to see, but I suppose the Chairperson would be the right person to look into the matter because he is outside this.

(Interruptions)

He is not directly involved in this, otherwise I could ask for some other people to look at it taking all into consideration.

Mr Speaker: The Prime Minister will ask somebody else to look at this, if necessary.

Mr Bérenger: Mr Speaker, Sir, my good friend, hon. Veda Baloomoody, just referred to cases where trade unionists were targeted, dismissed, especially at the Mauritius Telecom, but also the Bank of Mauritius, but especially the case at Mauritius Telecom. Then Government, Prime Minister stepped in; they were reinstated and freedom of trade unionism was reinstated there.

Can I appeal to the hon. Prime Minister that that lady be reinstated at the MBC? That lady has been suffering for a full year now. It's now an additional humiliation to go and appear before the same management or even Board. It is even worse in the case of the Chairperson. He chaired the Disciplinary Committee and he is blamed clearly. Both the Director-General and the Chairperson are clearly blamed by the Fact-Finding Committee. Can I appeal to the hon. Prime Minister in the name of Mauritius, our image, that that lady be reinstated at the MBC?

The Prime Minister: As I said, the report criticises both. We are forgetting on the other side. We are just saying - he does not use the word 'guilty' but he said that there have been mitigating factors, but were not taken into account; there have been judge and party; that Mrs Ameer's credibility has been impaired. It is on both sides. But I take positively what the hon. Leader of the Opposition is saying that perhaps we might have to relook at it instead of her going there. I will do that.

Mr Speaker: Next item!

PUBLIC BILL

Second Reading

THE APPROPRIATION (2012) BILL

(No. XXVI of 2011)

Order read for resuming adjourned debate on the Second Reading of the Appropriation (2012) Bill (No. XXVI of 2011).

Question again proposed.

(11.30 a.m.)

The Minister of Agro-Industry and Food Security (Mr S. Faugoo): Mr Speaker, Sir, let me start by congratulating my colleague, the vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Finance and Economic Development for his excellent Budget 2012 which he presented...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: May I, before the hon. Minister start, make a remark, that I have noticed in the House when a hon. Member is speaking, some people are having cross-talks, they are talking to their friends in a loud voice. This shows a sign of disrespect to the hon. Member who is speaking. I am appealing to hon. Members that this is a very important exercise of Parliament, the budget is being discussed and those who want to speak to their friends, please, leave the House and, at least, show sign of respect to the Member who is speaking. And keep quiet, because I am going to take action otherwise.

Mr Faugoo: Yes, Mr Speaker, Sir, I was congratulating the vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development for his excellent Budget 2012 which he presented to the House and to the nation last week.

It is, indeed, a budget which has been well received by all stakeholders and people of all walks of life. This has been amply echoed and demonstrated for the past nine days, Mr Speaker, Sir, be it from professional firms, the business community, the MEF, NGOs, Association of Professional Accountants, the Civil Society, except, I must say, the Opposition, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Let me also congratulate the hon. Prime Minister for his vision and guidance, not only for the Budget 2012, but also for all the successive budgets since 2005. Mr Speaker, Sir, these successive budgets enshrine the vision and philosophy of the hon. Prime Minister. To use his own words, he has, since 2005, endeavoured to build a strong and modern country through the empowerment of each citizen, thus allowing each woman and man in this country to achieve their full potential. His focus has always been on human centred development that will lead us to a modern inclusive nation.

Let me, Mr Speaker, Sir, give at least some statistics to illustrate this performance as from 2005.

- It is known now, between 2000 and 2005, 20,000 jobs were created. From 2005 to 2010, 40,000 jobs have been created, Mr Speaker, Sir. The vice-Prime Minister has clearly mentioned that since 2006, we have created some 9,400 jobs annually compared to just 4,500 annually in the preceding years.
- FDI, Mr Speaker, Sir, during the period 2000 and 2005, was only Rs1 billion per year. After 2005, it rose to Rs8.5 billion per year.

- It is clear that the Foreign Direct Investment which trickled down to worrying levels during 2000 to 2005 witnessed a substantial increase since 2006. In three years, the hon. Prime Minister reminded us back in 2008 that we have had more FDI than in the preceding 20 years, all put together.
- We have maintained the annual growth rate above 4% unlike what has happened in other countries, including industrialised countries, where growth has gone below a mere 1% and no less country than France and England, Mr Speaker, Sir.
- We are bringing down the budget deficit from 5.3% to 3.8 % this year.

History will record that under the leadership of the hon. Prime Minister, we have succeeded where others endowed with plentiful resources have failed, Mr Speaker, Sir. We have transformed challenges into opportunities! With this on record, with this performance and with this budget, I am sure we are here to stay, the Prime Minister is here to stay and when I say stay I am not talking of 2015, but beyond, Mr Speaker, Sir. Let me, in my own name and in the name of my colleagues, my friends, tell him that we are here behind him, we are going to be here to support the policy of the Government, we are going to be here to work together as a team, to make sure that whatever has been proposed in the budget will be implemented.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the first reaction of the Opposition - when I say Opposition, I, of course, mean the MMM.

(Interruptions)

Forget about the MSM; it is neither significant nor relevant, Mr Speaker, Sir. The Leader of the Opposition said that the budget is *décousu*. I can understand the Leader of the Opposition; he belongs to the old school, Mr Speaker, Sir. What was his complaint about? He was complaining at one stage that he did not hear words like rice or vita grain or regional cooperation in the Budget Speech of the hon. vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Finance.

Mr Speaker, Sir, this budget, indeed, marks a significant departure from the conventional and traditional budget speeches. I must, again, congratulate the hon. vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Finance for his new and innovative approach. This is one more step in the right direction, Mr Speaker, Sir. The budget which was presented last week was a shorter one, presented in little less than two hours, which was not usually the case before. It is focused, but, at the same time, it does not compromise on contents or quality. Details for the first time in a

budget are annexed in PBB document and also for the first time an implementation schedule has been worked out and annexed again, Mr Speaker, Sir. So, when we look at the budget itself, we see it is *bien cousu, trop cousu même*. Maybe what happened, the confusion arises from the fact that the Leader of the Opposition missed the last part, that is, the annexure because it is the first of its kind, Mr Speaker, Sir. No wonder the Leader of the Opposition is confused, as I said. But let me also remind the House, Mr Speaker, Sir, that his confusion is not only on this issue, his confusion started earlier; in fact, the week before last, when the extra supplementary expenditure 2010 was being debated in this House, Mr Speaker, Sir. Allow me to read an extract, Mr Speaker, Sir. I quote –

“Now let me look at the extra expenditure that we are asked to approve. I hope the hon. Minister replies to the question which I am going to put to him now - by ‘Minister’ he means the Minister of Finance - because we are talking of huge sums of money. I would seek clarification from the Ministry of Agro-Industry and Food Security. There is a huge item called “Native Terrestrial Biodiversity and Conservation”, Mr Speaker, Sir. We voted a huge sum of nearly Rs2 billion and we are asked now for an additional Rs1 billion. I think when we are talking of that kind of money, the House and the country are entitled to have full clarification on that item and on so many other items, Mr Speaker, Sir. For Native Terrestrial Biodiversity and Conservation: Rs2 billion asked for and Rs3 billion spent, Mr Speaker, Sir.”

Mr Speaker, Sir, this comes from the Leader of the Opposition, someone who was Minister of Finance on so many occasions, who was Prime Minister. If this had come from hon. Guimbeau, maybe it could have been understood.

(Interruptions)

He is not present today. Mr Speaker, Sir, how can he, himself, in the same session, refer to the forecast on GDP by the Governor of the Central Bank? He said: “how can one be so wrong?” But that was a forecast, Mr Speaker, Sir. But how can one be so wrong - somebody who has been a Minister of Finance, a Prime Minister - on something which is factual, Mr Speaker, Sir?

Mr Speaker, Sir, the total annual budget voted for my Ministry for 2010 was Rs1.8 billion for six programmes and the amount voted for native terrestrial, biodiversity and conservation was only Rs37 m. Mr Speaker, Sir. How can one ...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: I think some hon. Members have not understood what I said just now, but I am watching them.

Mr Faugoo: One of them is Mrs Hanoomanjee!

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order! Please, address the Chair!

Mr Faugoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, the question I asked myself: when, in the Republic of Mauritius, was there a budget of that magnitude, Rs2 billion, that is, for native terrestrial biodiversity or, even put together, for the whole forest sector of Mauritius, Mr Speaker, Sir? If we go by that rate and even if it is increased by 15% or 20% annually, it would take us maybe to the next millennium to get to that figure of Rs2 billion, and maybe, the millennium after the next, to get to Rs3 billion for native terrestrial biodiversity and conservation, Mr Speaker, Sir. Why I am saying this? This shows the frame of mind in which the Leader of the Opposition is operating, Mr Speaker, Sir. If he was so confused on one single item, in a small document like the ESE, where it was all explained, all the details were given as to why Rs1 billion extra was being voted for the sugar industry, Mr Speaker, Sir, how can we believe that he is credible when he talks about this budget? He was again confused, I must say, on two important issues, Mr Speaker, Sir.

First, when he questioned the Minister of Finance whether boosting growth means a change in GDP from 4.2% expected this year to 4% in 2012, Mr Speaker, Sir. It was so easy for the Minister of Finance to put it to 4.3%, 4.5%, but this reflects the reality, the international business climate, Mr Speaker, Sir. He has failed to look at this issue in the right context once again. He has himself agreed that 2012 is going to be a difficult year, not only for Mauritius, but for all countries, especially Mauritius, because our main trading partners are in the euro zone where they are themselves affected, Mr Speaker, Sir. Their GDP has gone down to less than 1%, Mr Speaker, Sir. Was he aware, when he stated that the Minister of Finance is mistaken, that the FDI registered this year for the first quarter went down by 69% and it went down again by 46% for the second quarter? Investment in general has slowed down, not only for us, around the world in so many countries.

With this trend, Mr Speaker, Sir, without bold and appropriate measures, the growth rate could come down to 1%, or even less, and this is from where the Minister of Finance says that

we are going to build up growth, we are going to maintain it, we are going to resist it, at least, to keep it to 4%, Mr Speaker, Sir. This is the real context. It is in this context, through this Budget that we are putting the economy back on a higher growth trajectory, Mr Speaker, Sir. Not from 4.2%., but from the actual tendency, as I said, as things were going, if there was no change, I must say in the portfolio to start, we would have gone in that direction and we were going directly to a crisis, Mr Speaker, Sir.

The second issue where the Leader of the Opposition was mistaken and confused again is when he says that we have given too much to the private sector. In fact, he said we have given more than what they asked for. I think, Mr Speaker, Sir, the Leader of the Opposition must go back to the basics. Who is going to create wealth? Who creates growth in a country with an economic model like ours, Mr Speaker, Sir? Has not the private sector been always the key driver to both? The problem is with the Leader of the Opposition. He can say one thing and the contrary of what he says at the same time. This is how he functions, Mr Speaker, Sir. We can't help it. We know that this Budget takes the country in the right direction, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Speaker, Sir, in May 2010, the country went to the polls with an alliance. It was called *Alliance de l'Avenir* which comprised, of course, of the Labour party, the MSM and the PMSD. We were elected on a common platform on the basis of a common programme, with a common electoral manifesto. We all campaigned on the basis of the same common programme. The programme was endorsed by the population at large or, at least, by our electorates. Today, the same programme was translated into, what we call, the Government Programme 2010-2015. This was presented to the nation on 08 June 2010 at the First Session of the Fifth Assembly. We were all present. The MSM was also present. They have their print on this document, Mr Speaker, Sir. They also have a print on this document on which we went and fought and won the election back in May 2010. The MMM chose to be absent because they had a different programme. They had gone to the electorates, to the country in the poll with a different programme. The Alliance, therefore, Mr Speaker, Sir, by all means, had an obligation towards the people of this country for the pursuit and successful implementation of this very Government Programme which I referred to. The MSM was entrusted with no less than six important portfolios with very important responsibilities despite being a small party. My friend, hon. Mohamed, is not there.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Hon. Jhugroo, where is your problem? Why are you provoking the hon. Minister who is speaking? Keep quiet!

Mr Faugoo: I am talking facts. It used to be small, very small, it is smaller now, and the largest poll suggests that they have less than 2%. They participated in Cabinet, in all decisions of Government; they participated in all other Government business until July of this year, Mr Speaker, Sir, and then suddenly, in July of this year, they chose to quit the Alliance for reasons which were better known to them at that time, but today the same reasons are unfolded to the public, to the nation at large. Everybody knows why they left the Government, why they quit and why they left the Alliance. MSM were with us here until we broke for vacation in July this year. They were on this side of this House, defending all Government policies, defending and working on the Government Programme 2010-2015, Mr Speaker, Sir. This is witnessed by Hansard; it is a public document and public knowledge. When we resumed on 18 October, they find themselves on the other side of the House, leaving this part of the House empty on my left, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Speaker, Sir, it is one of the ironies of parliamentary democracy that where you stand depends on where you sit. They are sitting there today. What has changed, Mr Speaker, Sir? The Government Programme is the same. They have chosen to cross the floor, leaving this side and going to the other side. They are the *transfuges*....

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: There is no need for hon. Members to help the Minister in delivering his speech!

Mr Faugoo: They have broken their pledge with the people, Mr Speaker, Sir. They have abandoned the Government Programme to which they were a party to. They resigned as Ministers. They resigned from the Government. They shied away with their responsibilities. Mr Speaker, Sir, in our democratic system of Government, we have the Parliament as an important organ. In this House we have a legitimate Government. We were here in 2005 and 2010, we are here today and we are going to be here again after 2015, Mr Speaker, Sir. But, by the very definition and principles of parliamentary democracy, there is a legitimate Government, there is a legitimate Opposition which is the MMM, in front of me on the right side though they are *plus ou moins permanent*, on permanent establishment, as we say, for public service but, on the left side there, Mr Speaker, Sir, there is an Opposition which is illegitimate to all intents and

purposes. They have lost their legitimacy. They are illegitimate as Members and as Opposition, Mr Speaker, Sir. They are the remnants, I must say, of a self induced side-effect of an Alliance and a legal and democratic exercise. They have chosen to break away and to go; they must go all the way, they must resign, Mr Speaker, Sir.

(Interruptions)

This is the only option which is left, Mr Speaker, Sir. I am sure and we are all sure, even the MMM knows, that none will come back for sure. What are they doing instead, Mr Speaker, Sir? They are making a mockery of parliamentary democracy. They are questioning their own programme. From the very first day, they are standing up and putting questions. They were in Cabinet and they are putting questions on policies which were discussed in Cabinet before, Mr Speaker, Sir. This is a bad precedent! They were loyal in Opposition and disloyal in Government.

(Interruptions)

If the MSM had any respect for the electorate, for political morality and above all, self-respect, Mr Speaker, Sir, they should have simply chosen to remain glued to their seats and shut their mouth rather than stand up criticising the budgetary measures that aim at implementing the same Government Programme to which the MSM was a party to. We have not changed the Programme. We are working on the Programme and we are going to continue to work on this Programme until our mandate is over and our mandate is going to be over in 2015, Mr Speaker, Sir.

(Interruptions)

I can understand that it can technically be correct to stand up because our backbenchers also can put questions, Mr Speaker, Sir. But, are they morally correct? They are not. But, we know that *moralité pas rempli ventre*. It comes from them. Mr Speaker, Sir, we have a sacrosanct duty, each Member of this House individually and also collectively, to uphold the dignity and sanctity of our Parliament. But, alas, this is not the case, Mr Speaker, Sir. This is happening not only here, Mr Speaker, Sir, this is also happening in another vital democratic institution where established principles of independence are being flouted, thereby offending the very letter

and spirit of our Constitution. I am afraid, this will become a very bad precedent and history will bear testimony that the MMM which claims to be respectful of democratic principles and independent institutions is also a party to this dangerous manoeuvre. They all know which institution I am referring to, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Speaker, Sir, another issue which is boggling and puzzling the public, the minds of the people, why is the MMM defending the MSM on the issue of MedPoint and the Rs144 m. cheque? They qualified this as *le scandal du siècle!* The answer is clear, Mr Speaker, Sir. Were they not together for the Rs44 m. cheque issued to SunTrust?

(Interruptions)

Were they not together again for the Rs144 billion for *cousins* and *cousines* in the Illovo deal? How can they be separate now? By the way, 44 seems to be a lucky number for MSM!

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Hon. Ms Deerpalsing, I will just remind you not to talk. Yes! If I allow you to do this, they will do it on the other side and it will become a pandemonium here!

Mr Faugoo: It looks like they are partners in crime. To confirm what I am saying, Mr Speaker, Sir, Members will recall that during the PNQ of 09 November 2011 on MedPoint, when the Vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Finance stated - addressing to the Leader of the Opposition - whether the Leader of the Opposition is dissociating himself from the MSM, he became furious and said: "What rubbish! Why are you dissociating me with the MSM and the Rs144 m.? We are connected with Rs144 m." This was his reaction, Mr Speaker, Sir. Is this not clear?

Mr Speaker, Sir, another mockery of parliamentary democracy is on the ICAC issue, on the issue of attachment order against MedPoint for the Rs144 m. issued by...

Mr Speaker: I have seen in the press, this matter is *sub judice*, I will not allow the Minister to comment on it.

Mr Faugoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, what did the Leader of the Opposition have to say on the agricultural sector? I listened very carefully and paid particular attention to what he had to say on

the agricultural sector, all that I retained is his concern regarding, as I said, the absence of words like rice, *vita rice* or regional cooperation in the Budget Speech.

The second thing which I retained in his intervention is that Food Security Fund is a fiasco *tout court*, no details, no arguments offered, no facts and no figures. Probably, maybe for sure, he was as usual motivated and misled by erroneous and biased articles in the press, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Let me now expose to the House what fiasco really was, the fiasco that is on record and that has been published in official reports, Mr Speaker, Sir. I will give the House some extracts of the official report to highlight the fiasco between 2000 and 2005. The facts speak for themselves, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Food production in general declined from 140,000 tonnes in 2000 to 97,000 in 2005, a decrease by 15%, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Potato production fell from 16,000 tonnes in 2001 to 11,000 tonnes in 2004, that is, a 31% decrease in production and more importantly a decrease in self-sufficiency. Onion production fell from 11,000 tonnes in 2000 to 4,000 tonnes in 2003, that is, a 62% decrease, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Milk production fell from 5 million litres in 2000 to 3 million litres in 2005, that is, 40% decrease, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Cattle population fell from 12,000 heads in 2000 to 6,900 in 2005, a 43% decline, Mr Speaker, Sir. Total food import amounted to Rs7.6 billion in 2001 and increased to Rs12.9 billion in 2005, that is, a 70% increase. They import bill from milk and milk products rose from Rs1.3 billion in 2001 to nearly Rs2 billion in 2005, representing a 38% increase. Import bill for live animals for slaughter in Mauritius, recorded an almost three fold increase to 280%, Mr Speaker, Sir. The level of self-sufficiency in food dropped from 33% in 2001 to 24% in 2005. In other words, the levels of imports increase from 67% to 76% in 2005. And yet, they had a strategic plan, formulated with measures that aimed at increasing food sufficiency by 20%. This is the mess. This is the fiasco, Mr Speaker, Sir. This is the legacy of the 2000, the original version. We are hearing of remake now. What would that produce, Mr Speaker, Sir? Hon. Boolell was speaking of swelling and shrinking the other day and then my friend hon. Ms

Deerpalsing explained to him what swelling was in economic terms, Mr Speaker, Sir. But, here what I have exposed is shrinking in the agricultural sector. In fact, I am tended to say that they were swelling where they should have been shrinking, and they were shrinking where they should have been swelling, in economic terms, Mr Speaker, Sir. We can agree on this score - at least in the agricultural sector - with the hon. Leader of the Opposition, when he said that there was more than *état d'urgence* in the sector, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Speaker, Sir, let me briefly elaborate on the new measures under this Budget, but before I do that, let me highlight the results achieved so far. In fact, let me go one by one. I will give some of the results, which we have achieved between 2005 and 2010, Mr Speaker, Sir. Last year, we produced 21,700 tonnes of potatoes and we have attained 90% of our self-sufficiency and we are expecting this year to attain 100% self-sufficiency in potatoes, Mr Speaker, Sir.

The cattle herd size has increased with some 1,650 additional heads of improved breed, representing an increase of 30% over this short span of time, Mr Speaker, Sir. The local fresh milk production has increased from 9.2 million litres, that is, a fourfold increase in terms of self-sufficiency. We have raised it from 2.5% in 2005 to some 10% this year.

The pig population has reached 24,000 heads, Mr Speaker, Sir, against 4,000 heads only, against the outbreak of the African Swine fever from an original population of 18,000 heads before outbreak. 18,000 heads were there before the outbreak, with the African swine fever it went down to 4,000 and today, if I may put it, they are as if victims of their own success because they are having some marketing problems, because they have produced more than what they used to produce, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Meat production including poultry, beef, goat, pig and sheep rose from 34,000 tonnes in 2005 to 47,000 tonnes last year representing an increase of 37%. How did they manage from 2000 and 2005 to go downwards? The trend was down. A decrease in all the parameters in the agricultural sector, when there was no problem, no crisis, no swine fever, no Chikungunya and no financial crisis. How did they manage, Mr Speaker, Sir? They must come and tell us. They talked so much about so many things. Come and explain to us how did you manage to go down so much? I am not talking of checks; I am not talking about deals. I am talking about figures in the agricultural sector, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Speaker, Sir, let me come to the measures which were announced in the Budget of next year, that is, 2012. I must here express my gratitude to my colleague, the hon. vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Finance and Economic Development, for increasing the budgetary provisions of my Ministry by some Rs700 m. It may seem not a lot, but it will help the sector, Mr Speaker, Sir. But, what is important here to note that this is in contrast to what was forecast by the former Minister of Finance. He, in fact, projected to cut down the Budget for the Ministry of Agro-Industry for 2012 by Rs600 m., Mr Speaker, Sir. This is official. We can have a look at the Budget of last year, all the forecast, all the figures. So, the forecast was to cut down, Rs600 m. Mr Speaker, Sir. How come that in three months our friend is managing to give us Rs700 m. more just in my sector, the agricultural sector. It speaks volumes, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Speaker, Sir, on reforming of institutions, this relates to the cess funded institutions, I earlier indicated that cess reform and re-structuring of the institution now constitute one of the KPI of the accompanying measures in the sugar sector. We have already reduced the annual cess contribution by all planters by Rs287 m. as from this crop year. This represents an average saving of Rs700 per tonne of sugar of Rs2,010 per *arpent* for each of the 23,000 small planters of this country, Mr Speaker, Sir. The cess will further be reduced thus enabling a higher savings for the planters. Mr Speaker, Sir, with respect to further consolidating our agriculture, Government is providing for a 70% discount in sugar insurance premium for the 2011 crop. This will enable every sugar cane planter to save about Rs1,025 per tonne of sugar and Rs3,000 per *arpent*.

SIFB will soon come up with new policies, to bring drastic cut in premium payable by sugar cane planters, that will allow further saving to the tune of Rs750 per tonne of sugar and Rs2,150 per *arpent* every year for the 23,000 small planters, Mr Speaker, Sir. 80% advance will again be given to sugar cane planters as soon as the crops are sent to the mills. Rs310 m. have been provided for to continue the FORIP project for regrouping of small planters, de-rocking their lands and providing irrigation over an area of 1,300 hectares. It will directly improve the productivity of 1,000 planters in 2012, Mr Speaker, Sir. So far, we have completed some 5,000 hectares belonging to some 4,200 planters. Government has responded to the long standing requests dating back to 2001 for VAT refund on agricultural machinery, equipment and tools. This will be applicable to sugarcane planters - again the same small planters, Mr Speaker, Sir - vegetable and fruit producers, around 6,000 of them, 5,000 livestock breeders, and also honey

producers. This will cost government some Rs50 m. in terms of revenue foregone, but will stay in the pockets of farmers as saving.

The non sugar agriculture at the service of consumers, Mr Speaker, Sir; food security remains a major consideration, and measures will be reinforced. The budget has increased for this purpose by some 50%, and a sum of Rs150 m. has been provided for in this budget. This will help to finance sheltered farming; there is a scheme which we have put in place in view of the dramatic climate conditions. We are encouraging farmers to do sheltered farming; there is a scheme which we are developing also in view of the climate change for rain harvesting, which will allow them to sustain their agriculture, and also various schemes to boost up the livestock sector.

AMB will continue to finance seed purchasers for potato, onion and garlic through the different schemes that have been put in place. The financing of this programme will cost Rs7 m. to government, and will benefit some 550 onion and garlic producers and some 400 potato growers. Resources have been made available to improve market intelligence to farmers to the strengthening of the agricultural production and marketing information system. A new and modified freight rebate scheme has been introduced with a 25% cost subsidy element to be shared equally between producers and exporters. Rs10 m. are being provided for this scheme, and Rs5 m. will directly go to planters who produce for export. This is being given to the planters to not only enhance their production but also to make quality products, to give value-added to the products. 5,000 livestock breeders will benefit from artificial insemination technology, which this year will be extended to goats and pigs. Together with medicine, drugs and vaccines, the scheme will cost some Rs6 m. this year, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Resources have been provided for capacity building to train and empower producers, so that they can export competitively. Fair trade certification facilities will be applicable not only to sugarcane planters grouped in cooperatives; it would be extended to horticultural producers, including honey and also flower growers. The government grant for accreditation of each association cooperative or federation will amount to Rs300,000. There are a series of specific measures, which include a scheme for food crop growers to undertake rainwater harvesting to mitigate the adverse effects of water deficit, the setting up of a post harvest unit at major food crop growing sites that will be managed by the planters' associations, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Let me also, Mr Speaker, Sir, elaborate on the existing schemes and projects which have given the positive results so far. For the first time ever, we are producing rice in Mauritius, Mr Speaker, Sir. Some 1,000 tons of hybrid rice seeds are being produced in Mauritius. Later on, I am going to dwell a bit more on this subject. This is a *première* for Mauritius. More lands have been made available for food crop and livestock production under the deal with the MSPA, which the Prime Minister personally engineered. We have been able to get about 250 *arpents*, which are already being occupied by planters, and they are already producing on these lands. Over and above MSPA lands, 100 *arpents* of land belonging to Rose Belle Sugar Estate have been put at the disposal of planters, and again another 100 *arpents* belonging to SIT have been put to the disposal of vegetables and fruit growers on a cluster basis. The Food Security Fund has financed land preparation on these sites, and the purchase of starter kits, including seeds and fertilisers, have been offered.

We have set up 12 onion curing units to improve the post harvest quality of onions, financed by the Food Security Fund. One costs around Rs200,000 Mr Speaker, Sir. These were used to demonstrate the benefits of curing and used as nursery in the off season. Research and development programme at AREU and MSIRI were strengthened. For the first time ever, two new 100% Mauritian varieties of onions, namely 'Bella Rose' and 'Franchia', both of high yielding, have been put on the market, Mr Speaker, Sir, and also two new varieties of potato, again 100% Mauritian, have been bred, released and cultivated at commercial scale. We are now promoting local entrepreneurs to undertake seed production under the quality declared seeds, because we know that one of the inputs which prohibit planters to go ahead with their activities is the high cost of seeds. So, we have set up this Quality Declared Seeds Scheme, whereby AREU is asking farmers to produce seeds. For the first time, some 600 kg of quality declared seeds of onions, cucumber and squash have been produced.

We have introduced a Seed Potato Purchase Scheme, which we have extended to onions and garlic, where government gives 10% grant; planters don't have to reimburse that. We give an advance of 80%, and they deposit 10% initially. 10% is grant, and they pay back the 80% after they successfully manage to carry out their activities, that is, after they harvest what they have produced. A Food Crop Insurance Scheme was set up to encourage planters to ensure their food crop plantations against adverse climatic conditions such as drought, cyclones, floods and

excessive rainfalls. This scheme is now modified, and an Agricultural Calamity Scheme is already in place, Mr Speaker, Sir. This is also something new.

For the first time, a pension scheme for the welfare of planters has been put in place in collaboration with SICOM and the NPF. Government, through the Food Security Fund is making a contribution of Rs13 m., which goes towards paying the premium of the planters, Mr Speaker, Sir. We have introduced a scheme with 40% grant by the Food Security Fund to promote the construction of onion curing units, which can be used in the off season as nursery for quality seedling production.

We have set up a Farmer Training School at Wootun to provide formal training to school dropouts leading to the NT3 certificate. This is again first of its kind, Mr Speaker, Sir. We have again set up an Agro Processing Resource Centre at Wootun to provide training and mentoring to entrepreneurs in agro processing. We have had about 350 trainees, including women entrepreneurs, who participated in the training programme.

We have set up a research experiment station at Pamplemousses for conducting research, development and training on fruit production and processing. This is a first station of its kind, which will be replicated in other parts of the island eventually. We have also introduced a scheme to encourage the purchase and use of nets by fruits growers and small orchard owners, whereby a grant of 75% of the cost of the nets for a maximum of five trees is being provided, and a sum of Rs15 m. have been disbursed so far, Mr Speaker, Sir.

We are in the process of extending this scheme for the current year. We have launched a national campaign on Household Food Security through the distribution, free of charge, of one fruit tree or one food producing tree (like breadfruit or jackfruit), Mr Speaker, Sir, to each household to encourage backyard gardening. Some 125,000 trees have so far been distributed.

In the livestock sector, we have introduced a package of schemes to give a new boost to this sector.

The Fodder and Pasture Development Scheme, Mr Speaker, Sir, this has a grant component of Rs17,000 per *arpent*. Fourteen livestock co-operative societies have taken advantage of this scheme and have planted some 246 *arpents* under fodder of high quality.

Breeders are encouraged to improve the genetic quality of the local stock of goats and cattle, Mr Speaker, Sir. This scheme provides for a grant for each animal imported. Under this scheme, five cattle breeding societies have imported some 264 cattle and 60 goats from South Africa. Some Rs7.2 m. have been disbursed under this scheme. Some 500 cattle and 200 goats and sheep are expected to reach Mauritius by early next year. We give a grant of Rs30,000 on each animal, on cattle, Mr Speaker, Sir, and Rs10,000 as grant which is not refundable on goats and sheep.

A loan scheme has been put in place so that breeders can have access to finance to upgrade their infrastructure. Some 32 companies and breeders have submitted their proposals and disbursement has been completed for 14 breeders to the tune of Rs19 m., Mr Speaker, Sir.

There is also a Loan scheme for purchase of equipment. This scheme allows breeders to purchase equipment to modernise their livestock production activities and meet the standards. 34 cooperatives have applied to the Food Security Fund under this scheme and so far disbursement has been effected to eight societies to the tune of Rs7 m.

Two cooperatives have benefited under this project, that is, to set up a Modern Dairy Farm and Goat Multiplier Farms, Mr Speaker, Sir. The works are already in progress at Petit Merlot and Mare d'Albert.

Coming to the Vita Rice Project, Mr Speaker, Sir. The Leader of Opposition raised the issue of rice and Vita Rice. This is one project where the Leader of Opposition should have stood up and congratulated the Government for the initiative and support that was provided to Vita Rice to make it happen, Mr Speaker, Sir!

Government provided all facilities for the early implementation of the project which aimed at production of hybrid rice seeds, not only for production of seeds afterwards but also, for the production of rice in the region - in the neighbouring countries. Indeed, the project was implemented in a record time, Mr Speaker, Sir.

MoUs were signed with MSIRI and FARC so that the lands and resources of the Institute can be made available for introduction and testing of rice varieties. These institutions have become active partners in the newly established Food Security Development Centre for greater collaboration in research and development in rice and other commodities related to food security.

Vita Rice introduced several varieties and lines for assessing their adaptability and productivity under Mauritian conditions. My Ministry together with MSIRI and AREU collaborated fully in this assessment.

The results of the first experiments have been more than promising. In fact, the yields in Mauritius, Mr Speaker, Sir, can be compared to the yields in any other best rice-producing countries like Australia and China. They are getting 11 tonnes per hectare compared to 4 tonnes per hectare which is the record for Africa, Mr Speaker, Sir.

The rice varieties have a special trait as they have a low Glycemic Index (GI) which make them suitable for consumption by those suffering from diabetes, Mr Speaker, Sir. These varieties also have a strong - this is something again, new which they experienced in Mauritius and it happened - rationing ability and hence, compared to other countries where there is only one crop, they can harvest three crops in one sowing, Mr Speaker, Sir.

So, this is a project, as I said, where Government has given all its support and we are minded to give all the support that they need because, there it is really possible to produce, at least, part of the rice that Mauritius consumes, Mr Speaker, Sir.

We have also put on lease a store belonging to the Agricultural Marketing Board which is to be used as a cold store by Vita Rice.

I am also told that the Company has purchased a rice mill and will soon upgrade it for dehusking and production of commercial rice, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Over and above, my Ministry - together with other partners - is steering a programme, to which Vita Rice is agreeable to take on board those small planters - likely those who have already abandoned - or those who are likely to abandon - their lands to undertake rice production. These small planters, whatever support they need, will be given to them, because whatever we do, Mr Speaker, Sir, with all the actions and all the schemes we are putting in place, with all the support Government is giving, there are certain small planters who are bound to go out of sugar, Mr Speaker, Sir. Therefore we are providing them an acceptable alternative to earn their livelihood.

I will say a few words on the Regional Development Company, Mr Speaker, Sir. Once again, the Leader of Opposition did not hear anything in the Budget Speech; again, this is something on which the Government is working and it is a priority.

In order to manage the lands that have been released to the Government of Mauritius by neighbouring countries, a Regional Development Company has been set up under the aegis of the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development.

The Company which has a satellite in Mozambique provides technical back-up services to investors willing to undertake agricultural production in Mozambique and Madagascar.

To date, we have seven companies who have shown interest to invest with Mauritian, Indian and UK partners. After an evaluation conducted by a committee chaired by the Board of Investment, the seven investors were selected and were invited to make a field assessment in Mozambique, Mr Speaker, Sir.

The seven companies propose to grow rice, maize, potato and undertake integrated aquaculture activities over an area of 22,000 hectares around Maputo region.

The sugar sector, Mr Speaker, Sir, we have successfully implemented the measures contained in the Multi Annual Adaptation Strategy. This performance is recognised by the EU as evidenced by the disbursement under the Accompanying Measures Support Programme.

FORIP - I said earlier, we have already covered 4,500 hectares and we are targeting to cover overall 12,000 hectares, Mr Speaker, Sir, in the coming years.

Factory Closure - Again, six factories have already been closed down under the factory centralisation programme.

The export of refined white sugar which stood at 68,000 tonnes for the crop year 2009 increased to 256,000 tonnes for the crop year 2010, that is, from 18% to 54% of the total sugar export. This is well above the target of 50%.

Fair Trade - Mr Speaker, Sir, the tonnage of fair trade accredited sugar reached 7750 tonnes in 2010. This scheme enables small planters grouped in cooperatives to obtain a premium of 60 dollars per tonne of sugar. Government provided support to the tune of Rs15 m. in this year, Mr Speaker, Sir. The number of cooperatives that benefited from this scheme rose from 5 to 32 altogether.

Reduction of cess, as I said, we have already reduced cess, Mr Speaker, Sir, from above Rs519 m. to Rs287 m. for this crop year.

We have a plan for the restructuring. A reform plan was endorsed by Government and it has been submitted to EU. We have already set committees to work on the implementation and the deadline is 31 March 2012, Mr Speaker, Sir.

The good performance is well depicted by the comments made by the Head of the EU delegation, Mr Mariani, and others also, at the level of the EU.

As far as the sugar sector is concerned, Mr Speaker, Sir, we need to be vigilant. We still have some apprehensions regarding the Common Agricultural Policy proposed by the EU Commission.

In fact, the Commission proposes to end the sugar quotas to EU by 30 September 2015, despite the appeal made by the ACP Sugar Group to extend the quota system until 2020.

The end of quota system would result in greater competition and further decrease in the price of sugar. There is also the fear that with the Free Trade Agreements, access of our sugar to the EU will become more difficult. We have expressed our concern rather to the EU for the urgent necessity to address issues like income, stabilisation, price volatility, food security and climate change.

We have also emphasised on the multi-functional role of sugar for small vulnerable economies like ours. I am working closely with my colleague, hon. Dr. Boolell, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Trade to have a common platform to lobby in favour of ACP interest, Mr Speaker, Sir.

We have not solely focussed on agricultural production, but we have given due attention to preservation of our forest resources and the bio-diversity, more so as this year has been declared as the international year of forests by the United Nations.

We have taken several measures for the preservation of our biodiversity, our fauna and flora. In this connection, we have proclaimed a Second National Park namely the Bras d'Eau National Park covering a total of nearly 500 hectares of land, Mr Speaker, Sir. This park will be inaugurated by the hon. Prime Minister on 01 December.

Moreover, I have decided to release some Rs10 m. from the Conservation Fund in order to allow the Valley D'Osterlog to put in place basic facilities and amenities to allow it to start generating revenue and become self-financing, Mr Speaker Sir.

Let me finally conclude, Mr Speaker, Sir, by reiterating that this is a Budget for better growth and better social justice. It is all about creation of wealth, creation of jobs, creation of new opportunities, empowering of man and women, empowering the youth, protecting the poor; the most vulnerable of our society, Mr Speaker, Sir, creating equal opportunities for all and also a Budget to resist the adversities looming at the horizon. We have a pledge that we made with the people of this country, Mr Speaker, Sir. We will not shy away like others have done. We are not magicians, but we will strive hard to do all that we can to improve the daily living conditions and welfare of all our citizens, Mr Speaker, Sir.

I thank you.

(12.33 p.m.)

Mr A. Ameer Meea (First Member for Port Louis Maritime and Port Louis East):

M. le président, j'ai écouté non pas attentivement au précédent orateur, mais avec un intérêt relatif. De ce fait, je voudrai rétablir certains faits. Ce n'était pas prévu, mais je suis obligé de le faire, c'est dans notre culture d'ailleurs.

Le précédent orateur *stated and he imputed motives as to the effect that we are partners in crime. Mr Speaker, Sir, he said it 'crime'. He said it! We have no lesson to learn from the hon. Member. Let me remind him* les nombreux scandales qui sont en train de secouer le pays tel que le Betamax et le *hedging loss*. Le *hedging loss* de R 5 milliards et personne n'a été responsabilisé par rapport à cette faute que nous sommes en train de payer et je ne sais pas jusqu'à quand. Il est en train de dire que nous sommes *partners in crime*, en particulier, la saga de Rose Belle Rose Garden, le Neotown, Infinity ; enfin de nombreux scandales qui secouent la STC et le pays en général.

Et il a aussi dit que le MMM est en permanence dans l'opposition. M. le président, au moins nous avons eu le courage d'aller seul aux élections.

(Interruptions)

Est-ce qu'ils peuvent aller seul aux élections ? Nous avons eu le courage d'aller seul aux élections. Et aussi, laissez-moi rappeler la Chambre...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker : Order ! Order !

Mr Ameer Meea : M. le président, laissez-moi aussi lui rappeler - peut- être qu'il a un trou de mémoire - que le MMM n'a jamais été battu par 60-0. Le MMM n'a jamais eu des scores fleuves tels que 54-6, 57-3. Donc, laissez-moi rappeler cela à l'honorable membre.

Il a aussi dit des trucs en faveur du secteur privé. *Hon. Faugoo seems to agree that the private sector has benefitted more from the Budget because they are the one who invest more; those who create wealth.* On est d'accord. Mais, M. le président, qu'est ce qu'ils n'ont pas dit dans la dernière élection par rapport au secteur privé. *'Bef travail, souval manzé !* C'est de l'hypocrisie pure et simple, M. le président. Bon, passons, ce n'était pas prévu, maintenant je commence mon discours.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker : Can the hon. Member keep quiet and behave in the House ?

Mr Ameer Meea : Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. La préparation d'un budget au delà des chiffres et de la technicité requière tout un effort artistique. Ce budget n'est pas une exception. Il est d'un optimisme insolent. Les phraséologies et les mots ont été cliniquement choisis pour éviter toute référence à la dure réalité quotidienne que nous constatons sur le terrain. L'approche tout comme l'emballage laisse à désirer. Si c'est pour doper le moral, c'est tant mieux mais si c'est pour endormir l'opinion, c'est raté. D'ores et déjà dans les jours à venir et les mois, la population comprendra la supercherie et gare au retour de la manivelle. Les quelques gestes de compassion et de générosité ça et là sont des pratiques courantes dans l'éventualité des élections générales ou anticipées, question de protéger ses arrières.

Mais quand même j'ai pu déceler un brin d'honnêteté de la part du ministre. Le ministre a laissé échapper une petite phrase lourde de sens, I quote on page 5 –

«Mauritius has always been a nation of increasing prosperity. This should never change »

En effet, tous les budgets qui se succèdent ont des aspects positifs qui assurent dans des différentes mesures dépendant du contexte et des circonstances, la continuité de la prospérité de la nation. On ne devrait pas jeter l'anathème par démagogie politique surtout ceux qui ont succédé à ce poste de haute responsabilité. S'il faut formuler des critiques ou dresser des parallèles, il faut le faire de façon responsable à la lumière des analyses savantes et objectives.

De telles analyses démontreront que le gouvernement, issu des élections de 2000, avait jeté la base de la vraie relance économique avec de nouveaux créneaux et de nouvelles avenues en perspective tels que le *sea food hub*, le secteur ICT, le triangle d'Ebène, etc. Il n'a toutefois pas négligé le secteur du développement infrastructurel et du logement. Tout à l'heure, je vais revenir sur le logement. Des milliers de maisons et des dizaines de collèges sans compter des hôtels en portent témoignage. Donc, quand on parle de résilience, il faut saluer ce peuple admirable à qui on a su toujours s'adapter au prix de sacrifice personnel.

L'ancien ministre des finances, en introduisant le *Capital Gains Tax* et la taxe sur le dividende croyait bien faire. Il a été chaudement applaudi par ses pairs en qui il avait une grande confiance. Le Premier ministre l'avait soutenu bec et ongle, en s'associant ouvertement à lui comme pour faire taire ses détracteurs. Aujourd'hui, à entendre les orateurs de la majorité - enfin, majorité, si je peux servir de ce mot, plutôt majorité illégitime, on le saura très bientôt - je dirais les orateurs de l'autre côté de la Chambre présentent l'actuel ministre des finances comme quelqu'un qui détient un bâton magique, ou des remèdes miracles, propres à lui, qui pourrait rendre la vie de nos concitoyens plus agréable dans une île Maurice.

Il est parvenu à créer un *crisis of expectations*. Tout le monde, la population, les travailleurs, les syndicats attendaient avec impatience de voir ce qu'il a de son premier budget. Le ministre a annoncé l'abolition complète de la taxe sur dividendes et intérêts en omettant de dire quel gouvernement l'avait introduite, avec la bénédiction de qui et sous les applaudissements de qui ; idem pour la *Solidarity Tax*, la taxe sur les dividendes et sur les biens immobiliers qui étaient une taxe sur les riches. Qui perçoit des dividendes ? Qui sont taxés sur les bénéfices de la vente des biens immobiliers au delà de deux millions des roupies ? Est-ce que se sont les pauvres ? Non, M. le président ! Ce sont les riches ! La taxe sur les dividendes, sur les biens immobiliers, la *Solidarity Tax* était une taxe sur les riches. Mais, aujourd'hui, on a enlevé ces taxes-là et je ne sais pas qui est ce génie qui a eu l'idée et a réussi l'exploit de mettre une taxe sur les jeunes, sur la liberté d'expression de la jeunesse. Cette taxe sur le SMS représente une augmentation de plus ou moins vingt pourcent.

Donc, je réitère ici la proposition du Leader d'Opposition d'annuler cette taxe injuste envers les jeunes et de tourner la page sur cette malheureuse proposition budgétaire. Le ministre a décidé d'enlever complètement la *Tenant Tax* sur les propriétés commerciales. C'est bien, à première vue, mais le manque à gagner pour les collectivités locales sera récompensé par le

gouvernement central à la hauteur de 175 millions des roupies. Indirectement, c'est toute la population qui va contribuer à ce manque à gagner. C'est toute la population qui va contribuer la taxe en question pour les bâtiments et des emplacements commerciaux. C'est une ruse de mauvais goût. Ce sont, comme toujours, les contribuables, les éternels victimes, qui paieront les pots cassés.

Plus loin, les amendements seront apportés pour permettre aux *permanent resident holders* d'acquérir des appartements. Je suis personnellement très sceptique. Il faut au préalable faire une étude sur les retombées. Nous verrons les prix grimper avec la spéculation au détriment des mauriciens moyens en quête d'un terrain, un appartement ou d'une maison. Une réforme de nos institutions pour les rendre plus performantes et répondant aux attentes dépend d'une très large mesure des personnes à la tête de ces institutions. Eu égard au passé récent, devons-nous pas exprimer des réserves si des nominations vont continuer à être faites selon *guette figure des petits copains*. Il y a l'urgence d'appliquer l'*Equal Opportunity Act* dont on a entendu parler depuis des lustres. Dans toute sa rigueur, il faut l'appliquer. J'en doute si la volonté politique va prévaloir et là, je déplore ce qui s'est passé à la tête du CEB où on a nommé une personne d'une société socioculturelle pour ce poste.

M. le président, c'est un mauvais signal pour le pays. C'est un mauvais signal pour la jeunesse si on entre dans cette direction de nommer des personnes à la tête des sociétés socioculturelles, à la tête des importantes institutions de nos pays tels que le CEB, la CWA etc. C'est un mauvais signal pour le pays et il faut que tout cela cesse et change. En même temps, permettez-moi de rappeler des slogans qui ont été servis aux dernières élections générales tels que la modernité et l'égalité. Est-ce que cela représente la modernité ? Est-ce que nommer des gens des sociétés...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker : Hon. Bachoo I just said you cannot!

Mr Ameer Meea: ... sociétés socioculturelles, cela représente la modernité ? Non, M. le président ! Dans un autre ordre d'idées, le ministre parle de la création de nouvelles espaces industrielles à des prix concurrentiels. On ne va pas le faire sur des terres agricoles, comme c'est toujours le cas. Je demande simplement la question ou tout bonnement nous ne verrons pas d'autres scénarios tels que le Neotown et le Jin Fei.

Une petite parenthèse quand même parce que j'ai mentionné le nom de Neotown. Quand cette affaire a éclaté, je ne vais pas rentrer dans les détails de conditions du bail, évaluation des terres, appels d'offres etc. parce que tous les mauriciens ont pu constater toute cette opacité autour de ce projet. Mais quand même, laissez-moi dire qu'est-ce qu'on a entendu ? On a entendu parler de démocratisation de l'économie concernant l'affaire Neotown. La démocratisation de l'économie, M. le président, est par les mauriciens et pour les mauriciens. La démocratisation de l'économie n'est pas pour les étrangers. Les terres de Maurice, les terres d'Etat, doivent être dans les mains des mauriciens, pas dans les mains des étrangers. C'est cela la vraie démocratisation de l'économie. On aurait dû laisser les terres de Les Salines aux mains des mauriciens. On doit être très conservateurs en ce qui concerne nos terres. On est une île, nos terres sont limitées. Un gouvernement doit défendre et protéger notre territoire mais, aujourd'hui, ce gouvernement est prêt à faire n'importe quoi, n'importe quelle concession, juste pour avoir un *deal*.

M. le président, il est triste de constater que le seul secteur de l'économie qui a été vraiment démocratisé depuis 2005, ce sont les jeux du hasard. C'est visible. N'importe où on va à l'île Maurice, on voit qu'il y a vraiment une démocratisation de l'économie dans ce secteur et c'est vraiment déplorable. Et il y a aussi le *Harbour Bridge* et le métro léger qui, à force d'être répétés, sont devenus des slogans creux. On ne voit rien à l'horizon, faute d'envergure de nos décideurs politiques.

Maintenant, M. le président, laissez-moi parler du logement ou plutôt la crise du logement. Il y a approximativement 30,000 demandeurs de logement dont 75% gagnent moins de R 10,000 par mois. Il y a plus d'un millier de squatteurs à travers île. La situation est alarmante. Allons-voir ce qui s'est passé de 2005 à 2010. De 2005 à 2010 seulement, 533 maisonnettes de *Firinga-type* ont été livrées dont la construction a été débutée on octobre 2006 et livrées en juillet 2009. Il y a 2000 *arpents* des terres qui sont disponibles. Pour le *Trust Fund*, on a dépensé seulement R 160 millions. Le nombre d'emprunts de la *Mauritius Housing Corporation* est en baisse. Le nombre des squatteurs à travers l'île est en hausse et en 1999, 2007 et 2010, combien de maisons des squatteurs ont été rasées complètement ? Dans le programme gouvernemental de l'Alliance de l'Avenir, il y a presque rien sur les logements sociaux sur les cinq dernières années écoulées, un bilan désastreux en ce qui concerne les logements. Pour le *housing project*, il faut demander des comptes aux deux précédents ministres du logement. Leur bilan est éloquent.

Interrogé sur son absence totale, un des deux ministres avait laconiquement dit: « J'ai été victime des dommages collatéraux » sous entendant par là qu'il n'avait pas bénéficié du soutien de ses collègues.

Les budgets 2005 à ce jour contiennent tous des chapelets d'intentions concernant le logement mais, en réalité, toutes ces intentions sont restées lettre morte; toutes ces intentions n'ont jamais été traduites dans la réalité. M. le président, laissez moi rappeler à la Chambre le bilan du gouvernement de 2000 à 2005 en terme de logement et là, M. le président, tenez vous bien, plus de 4.4 milliards de roupies ont été dépensées de 2002 à 2005. Des logements sociaux ont été prévus pour 5000 familles. 2126 maisonnettes de type Firinga ont été construites, 1474 logements appelés EXIM *housing project* ; 1000 *shell housing unit*, 300 *lots and services* ont été alloués et en sus de cela 2190 squatteurs, c'est-à-dire, plus deux tiers des cas, ont été régularisés. Voilà le bilan du gouvernement de 2000 à 2005. Là encore dans l'exercice du dernier budget, c'est-à-dire du budget 2010, il était prévu de dépenser plus d'un milliard et la semaine dernière ou bien la semaine d'avant on a approuvé le *Supplementary Appropriation Bill*. Qu'est-ce qu'on a constaté ? Dans le 'un milliard prévu pour le logement' seulement 367 millions de roupies ont été dépensées. Voilà la triste réalité. Voilà ce qui se passe par rapport au problème de logement.

Cette année-ci encore dans le budget, une somme de 1.5 milliard de roupies est prévue pour le *social housing unit* – que de milliards, que de belles paroles. J'ose espérer que cette fois-ci la donne va changer mais, je suis très sceptique par rapport à tout ce qui passe depuis 2005. Il faut avoir une volonté politique pour résoudre ce problème de logement. L'argent est là, mais il n'y a pas de volonté pour résoudre ce problème.

Sur ce même chapitre, M. le président, je voudrais parler d'un projet de logement qui se trouve à la route Militaire. Je m'adresse au ministre des terres et du logement, mais je sais qu'il n'est pas au pays, et au ministre Mohamed qui est aussi le député de la circonscription numéro trois. Cette affaire a été discutée au parlement à travers une question orale et a suscité beaucoup de passion mais moi, j'espère sincèrement y trouver une solution durable. J'espère que je me suis bien fait comprendre. Je ne vais pas entrer dans les détails, qui en sont les bénéficiaires, quels ont été les critères de sélection et tous autres exercices qui ont été fait, mais il faut mettre la tête ensemble pour y trouver une solution.

En tant qu'habitant et député de la circonscription numéro trois, je suis pour le développement de la région mais seulement pas à n'importe quel prix. En termes de prix, je veux dire au sens figuré et au sens littéral. Je vais m'expliquer. La Plaine Verte, comme le dit le nom, était une plaine qui était verte. C'était une plaine où il y avait beaucoup d'espace mais avec le temps, avec le développement durant les années, aujourd'hui tous ces espaces verts là ont été réduits et l'espace où ce projet est supposé naître, c'est le dernier espace qui reste à la Plaine Verte; en terme de superficie peut être même à Port Louis, si je ne me trompe pas, c'est le dernier qui reste. Donc, je vous dis que l'emplacement où se situe ce terrain est encadré de quatre cités. Il y a la cité St. Pierre, la cité Martial, la cité Paul Toureau et la cité NHDC tout près de l'entrée de la Vallée des Prêtres. Les gens sont étouffés. Il n'y a que cet espace qui leur permet de respirer. Le quartier est déjà saturé. Ce projet va accentuer la pression sur les habitants de la région et les conséquences seront graves. N'oubliez pas qu'il y a une autoroute, le *ring road* est supposé passer sur ce même terrain. Je pose simplement la question - est-ce qu'une étude a été faite au préalable avant de mettre une autoroute sur un projet à côté d'un projet résidentiel et aussi dans un endroit qui est *densely populated* ?

M. le président, c'est un cri du cœur que je relaie au parlement aujourd'hui de la part des habitants des régions avoisinantes. Il faut à tout prix préserver cet espace sinon les générations futures vont nous blâmer. Gouverner c'est prévoir et une fois que cet espace vert disparaît, c'est pour l'éternité cela ne va jamais revenir. Ce projet là va à l'encontre du concept Maurice Ile Durable, contre l'écologie. Quand même, il y a une solution à ce problème. Il faut simplement délocaliser le projet et il y a un terrain de l'État qui se trouve non loin du projet à deux cents mètres. La topographie du terrain n'est pas pareille mais, aujourd'hui, avec les prouesses de la technologie les choses ont évolué et on a vu cela à travers l'île. Même dans des régions un peu montagneuses on a pu construire des maisons. Même à Port Louis il y a ça; des collèges ont été construits sur des collines, sur des montagnes. Moi, ce que je propose - et aussi je relaie tout ce que les habitants ont dit- il faut délocaliser le projet et en délocalisant le projet, non seulement on va construire dix-huit ou bien trente-six maisonnettes, mais on peut construire des centaines de maisons sur le flanc de la montagne. Tout à l'heure, je le disais au sens littéral. Je crois qu'au sens figuré tout le monde l'a compris ; peut-être si quelqu'un n'a pas compris, il pourra me voir à l'extérieur mais ce que je veux dire au sens littéral, le prix qu'on propose pour le projet de la route Militaire varie de 1.3 à 1.7 millions de roupies.

M. le président, ce qu'il nous faut dans la circonscription numéro trois ce sont des logements sociaux, des logements pour des gens pauvres, pour des gens vulnérables. On n'a pas besoin des logements au delà d'un million de roupies. Ceux qui peuvent s'en procurer des logements au-delà d'un million de roupies ne voient pas la nécessité d'avoir un logement à la route Militaire, à Plaine Verte, à Port Louis. Les gens qui ont le moyen ont aussi le choix. Ils ne sont pas obligés de le faire. On sait très bien qu'un emprunt au-delà de 1.3 millions de roupies sur vingt ans revient le double du montant. Si une personne peut payer une telle somme, comme je vous ai dit, elle peut aller n'importe où et les gens de la localité avoisinante ont essayé de résoudre ce problème d'une façon civilisée. Ils ont écrit au Premier ministre, ils ont écrit au ministre des terres et du logement et, si je ne me trompe pas, au ministre Mohamed aussi, au lord maire, au leader de l'opposition et à moi-même.

Mr Speaker: I am sorry. I will have to interrupt the hon. Member here and suspend the sitting for one hour fifteen minutes.

At 1.00 p.m. the sitting was suspended.

On resuming at 2.30 p.m. with the Deputy Speaker in the Chair.

Mr Ameer Meea: M. le président, je reprends mon discours là où on avait arrêté.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Baloomoody, please!

Mr Ameer Meea: Je parlais du projet de la route Militaire. Je disais que des gens de la localité avoisinante ont essayé de résoudre ce problème dans un dialogue et d'une façon civilisée, ils ont écrit au Premier ministre et au ministre concerné, mais à part le *Leader* de l'opposition, personne ne nous a répondu. Je lance ici un appel pour reprendre le dialogue.

Quand je disais qu'il fallait délocaliser le projet, en ce faisant on pourrait faire d'une pierre deux coups. C'est-à-dire le nouveau projet qu'on aurait pu faire sur le site qui se trouve à 200 mètres du dit site, ici, c'est-à-dire au site de la route Militaire, il faut faire un projet intégré. C'est-à-dire tout le monde, qui habite autour de ces terres là, va bénéficier si on y met un espace vert comme à Beau Bassin, à la rue Vandermeersch où des gens le matin en profitent pour leurs exercices physiques, un *jogging track*, comme on dit, un gymnase pour les enfants, pour les jeunes de la région, et aussi le terrain de football qu'on a actuellement mais on pourrait

l'agrandir et mettre plus de facilités. Donc, c'est cela que je voulais faire le point par rapport au projet intégré. En délocalisant le projet, tout le monde va en bénéficier. Donc, aujourd'hui je réitère mon appel d'une façon solennelle afin que le Premier ministre, le gouvernement puisse revoir ce projet, le délocaliser.

A Plaine Verte - région qui symbolise éminemment la débrouillardise - un plan d'action est nécessaire de la part du gouvernement et de la Municipalité de Port Louis afin de dynamiser les activités de tout genre. C'est devenu, au fil des années, un quartier à forte vocation commerciale. Il faut redessiner ses contours avec un vrai *Marshall Plan*. Il s'agit ici des centaines d'emplois à préserver, créés par des gens qui ont appris à se tenir sur leurs propres jambes.

A Roche Bois, M. le président, il faut une école vocationnelle pour canaliser l'énergie de ces nombreux jeunes qui ne vont pas au collège. Ils sont doués, il leur faut des opportunités d'ouverture. Donnez-leur la formation adéquate dans divers champs d'activités économiques, ils feront des merveilles et participeront aux développements socio-économiques du pays.

Maintenant, j'aurais aimé dire quelques mots sur notre football, ici, à l'île Maurice. Notre football, M. le président, c'est un drame, c'est la débâcle. Des gens se battent comme des chiffonniers et c'est le football qui en pâtit. Les mauriciens qui aiment le football boudent, car le football est quasiment inexistant. A un jet de pierre de ma demeure, il y a le stade St. François Xavier, on y a apporté des grandes innovations à coût des millions de roupies avec l'apport de la FIFA, mais on y joue très rarement, quelques rencontres de première division, bien souvent à huis clos. Les activités footballistiques ont peine à démarrer...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Hossen, please!

Mr Ameer Meea:...notre prestation sur le plan international, M. le président, est preuve que notre football se meurt à petit feu. Les dirigeants des clubs sont au désespoir et sont prêts à jeter l'éponge. Les joueurs se sont mis à l'entraînement, il y a d'énormes dépenses, et des frais financiers conséquents à encourir. On croyait que le ministre de tutelle allait venir avec un plan de sauvetage mais, valeur du jour, rien. Le destin de notre football est entre les mains de

quelques personnes sans grande envergure, hélas ! Pour nous, combien de temps cela va encore durer ? Le football est pris en otage.

Quelques mots sur le projet Maurice Ile Durable. Selon le Dr. Vassant Jogoo, dans une interview accordée à un journal, rien de concret n'a été accompli à ce jour, et de fortes sommes d'argent ont été englouties. Le MID est resté un slogan creux. Il va plus loin en suggérant la conversion des grands villages en des centres urbains, avec des sociétés compactes et avec accessibilité aux services communs.

(Interruptions)

Peut être que l'honorable membre a lu les journaux à l'envers !

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Can the hon. Member address the Chair, please?

Mr Ameer Meea: Toujours selon lui, les décisions ...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: I don't want any interruption from any Member, please!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Assirvaden, didn't you hear?

Mr Ameer Meea: ... sont influencées par le secteur privé, et on développe n'importe comment, sans planification à long terme, sans cohérence, dans un tâtonnement perpétuel. Le MID est resté et reste un concept mal défini.

Je voudrais parler aussi de la drogue, M. le président. La toxicomanie persiste ; nos travailleurs sociaux engagés semblent prêcher dans le désert. Pire que l'indifférence, il y a de la complaisance. Nous croyions que le gouvernement allait se ressaisir et tenterait de reprendre du poil de la bête avec de nouveaux textes de loi très musclés pour casser les reins des magnas de la drogue. Silence radio ; après 25 ans, il est plus que nécessaire d'instituer une nouvelle commission d'enquête avec des pouvoirs étendus, parce que la dernière commission d'enquête qui a été faite sur la drogue remonte à presque 25 ans de cela. Ce mal a beaucoup évolué. La requête d'une nouvelle commission d'enquête est pour réactualiser toutes les données qu'on a par rapport à la drogue et, de ce fait, prendre de nouvelles dispositions. Une suggestion : au lieu

d'utiliser la MBC/TV à des fins de propagande, on aurait dû la mettre aux services de ceux qui militent au péril de leur vie contre tous ces fléaux qui sont en train de finir notre société, tels que la drogue. On aurait dû se servir de la MBC à bon escient.

Nous lisons les journaux, et nous sommes ahuris par le taux de criminalité, cambriolage, viols et meurtres. C'est de l'insécurité généralisée ; c'est très grave pour la réputation de notre pays qu'on se targue de présenter comme une destination de rêve, une partie de paradis sur terre. Que prévoyons-nous pour redorer notre blason ? Toujours des palliatifs ; répressions légales, mesures additionnelles de sécurité et conscientisation ne suffisent pas. Là, il faut attaquer le problème à la source, en éliminant les causes de frustration.

M. le président, j'ai presque terminé ; peut-être une dernière remarque par rapport à la question qui a été débattue mardi dernier sur l'ouverture d'une ambassade en Arabie Saoudite. M. le président, cette question a été débattue pour la première fois ici en 2007 par l'ex-député, M. Husnoo ; la deuxième fois par mon ami, l'honorable Reza Issack, en 2008 ; la troisième fois par moi-même en novembre de l'année dernière et, cette année-ci, donc, la quatrième fois, en novembre, la question a encore été débattue. Et qu'est-ce qu'on a comme réponse ? Les mêmes réponses : il y a des contraintes budgétaires. On ne peut pas ouvrir une ambassade en Arabie Saoudite, parce qu'il y a une contrainte budgétaire, il n'y a pas de ressources, il n'y a pas d'argent. La dernière fois, c'est-à-dire, en novembre 2010, l'honorable ministre Boolell m'avait répondu que le DPM et le Premier ministre allaient faire le voyage. Un an après, rien n'a été fait. Et là, qu'est-ce qu'on nous dit ? Ce n'est pas une priorité ! Mais, laissez-moi rappeler à l'honorable ministre que c'était une promesse de la dernière campagne électorale. Cela a été fait le 23 avril 2010 à la Plaine Verte. Cela a été dit et, comme conséquence, cela a influencé beaucoup de gens. Je dois être honnête ...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Silence !

Mr Ameer Meea: ...envers le député, l'honorable Reza Issack, qui lui, a reconnu. Il a été honnête dans son discours que cela a été effectivement une promesse de la dernière campagne électorale. Donc, aujourd'hui, quand moi je soulève cette question à l'Assemblée nationale, j'ai parfaitement le droit de le faire. Mais, ce que je n'ai pas apprécié, c'est l'attitude du ministre. Il a complètement pété les plombs ce jour-là.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Member should not make any insinuation. I don't want any provocative remark. He should use the proper tone please!

(Interruptions)

Order now!

Mr Ameer Meea: Normalement, je vous dis ...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Assirvaden, please. It's over!

Mr Ameer Meea: M. le président, généralement l'honorable ministre Boolell est un *cool guy* ...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Assirvaden, it's the third time that I am talking to you!

Mr Ameer Meea: ... il est un *Senior Minister*. *He has been here* ...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Lesjongard, please!

Mr Ameer Meea: *He has been here for years*. Je ne comprends pas pourquoi il a perdu les pédales ce jour-là ...

The Deputy Speaker: Alright! The hon. Member should move on with his argument now! No cross-talking!

Mr Ameer Meea: Mais, en tous cas, ce jour-là, M. le président, *he completely lost it*. Donc, je disais que cela a été une promesse de la dernière campagne électorale, et que moi, en tant que député de la circonscription No. 3, je veillerai à ce que cette promesse soit tenue. Voilà, j'ai fait mon point par rapport à cela.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: I don't want hon. Members to start again! Hon. Aimée, please don't join the band!

Mr Ameer Meea: J'ai presque terminé. Une dernière mesure sur laquelle j'aimerais interpellier le ministre des finances, c'est l'augmentation de la taxe sur les motocyclettes dépassant 400 cc. Beaucoup de sportifs - parce que c'est un sport - sont venus me voir pour demander la raison pour laquelle le gouvernement a augmenté la taxe par rapport aux motocyclettes qui dépassent 400 cc. Peut être le ministre des finances pourra nous en dire la raison, si c'est pour l'augmentation des revenus ou à cause des accidents. Mais si c'est par rapport aux accidents, j'ai les chiffres ; les statistiques sont contre, parce que dans la catégorie des grosses cylindrées il y a très peu d'accidents. Ces gens qui pratiquent ce sport le font d'une façon professionnelle. Ils ont leur combinaison, leur casque, leurs gants. Par rapport aux gens qui montent les mobylettes, dans cette catégorie il y a beaucoup plus d'accidents. Donc, j'aurais aimé que le ministre des finances nous donne les raisons de cette augmentation de la taxe sur les grosses cylindrées.

En dernier lieu, on ne sait pas quand auront lieu les élections municipales. Moi, en tant que jeune ...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Mohamed, please!

Mr Ameer Meea: Au fait, l'honorable Mohamed, peut être ...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Please, address the Chair!

Mr Ameer Meea: I can remind the hon. Minister that I am the youngest Member in this House!

(Interruptions)

Je disais donc que l'élection est le fondement de la démocratie, renvoyer les élections municipales est un mauvais signal pour la démocratie et essayer de manigancer pour que les députés ne peuvent pas être candidats, pour que je ne peux pas être candidat, je ne l'admettrais jamais. Il faut me donner la chance d'être candidat aux élections municipales. Je suis prêt à n'importe quel moment...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Please, please!

Mr Ameer Meea: J'ai fait mon point. Pour moi, la réforme est un prétexte. Depuis 2005 on parle de réforme ; ce gouvernement est en place depuis 2005. Ils ont eu six ans pour faire la réforme! Pourquoi parler de réforme? Même si on parle de réforme, si on prend l'année dernière, les élections auraient dû avoir lieu en octobre mais on les a renvoyées pour cette année-ci. Un an est écoulé ...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Henry, please!

Mr Ameer Meea: Un an est écoulé et le texte n'est toujours pas encore prêt. Il n'y a que deux raisons pourquoi on ne fait pas les élections municipales. Pourquoi la réforme n'est pas encore prête ? Soit c'est par incompetence que le texte de loi n'est pas encore prêt ou bien on ne veut pas faire les élections parce que vous allez perdre.

Je saisis cette occasion pour lancer un appel au Premier ministre. Tout à l'heure, on a entendu le ministre Faugoo dire qu'il va être là en 2010 ou 2015...

(Interruptions)

Commencez par donner les élections! Commencez par donner les élections municipales et on va voir ! Je crois que j'ai déjà fait le tour de tout ce que j'avais à dire. Aussi, je rejoins l'honorable Reza Issack dans tout ce qu'il a dit par rapport au *Public Accounts Committee*. Ce sont de très bonnes suggestions qui ont été faites, comme le nom le suggère, le « *Public Accounts Committee* » doit être fait en public. J'adhère à cette idée et par rapport aux gaspillages et tout ...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Please! No cross-talking!

Mr Ameer Ameea:... ce qui est rapporté dans des rapports d'audit. Année après année, il y a des gaspillages qui sont rapportés par le Directeur, mais rien n'a été fait. Donc, je lance un appel et je sais que j'aurais le soutien de mon collègue Mlle Nita Deerpalsing. Elle aussi est

d'accord pour que le *Public Accounts Committee* sont tenu en public et qu'on mette sur pied des unités pour mieux combattre le gaspillage.

Merci, M. le président.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: What is the problem?

(Interruptions)

Hon. Baloomoody, please!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Members, I do not want any of you to start interrupting. We have been listening to all Members in silence; I want this attitude to continue. Hon. Dayal, I think what I said has gone in a deaf ear!

(2.33 p.m.)

The Minister of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment (Mr S. Mohamed):

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, at the outset, I must say that I am pleasantly surprised by some of the contents as well as most importantly the tenor of the address by the hon. Member, Mr Aadil Ameer Meea, the First Member for Constituency No.3. He has adopted a very conciliatory tone and I must say that with this approach a lot more undoubtedly can be achieved. Nevertheless, he has obviously, since it is his duty, made certain suggestions and criticisms as well but, that is, obviously his duty as well as his responsibility to draw the attention of the House and the people of this country as to what problems do exist and he shines the light up on those problems. He has his views and we have our views and this is what we call the democracy. I would like to say congratulations to the hon. Member for his address. There it is indeed a huge difference to the approach adopted by the Member last year and that is why I am very appreciative.

(Interruptions)

I appreciated an element of what he said: that we have to put our heads together in order to thrash out certain difficult situations and come up with solutions.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Please!

Mr Mohamed: Having said that, I must admit that this is the way that we should proceed. However, ...

(Interruptions)

... I am duty bound since this is a debate to reflect also and shine the light on those areas where we do not agree. I will try to do it with the same elegance that he has shown. I will also adopt the same attitude towards this side of the Opposition to which he belongs.

(Interruptions)

With regard to the scandals that he referred to, maybe it was a slip of the tongue on his part or maybe it was juste un simple oubli de sa part. Il a mentionné plusieurs scandales. Si je ne me trompe il s'est référé à Rose Garden, à Betamax mais, ce qui peut être est un oubli de sa part, il a oublié de se référer à l'affaire Med Point.

(Interruptions)

Je pense, de part l'attitude qu'il a adopté *in this august Assembly*, qu'il ne l'a pas fait par exprès. Je pense, et je suis sûr de ce que j'avance, que c'est un simple oubli. J'en suis aussi sûr d'une autre chose que je vais avancer, M. le président, c'est que si on le lui avait rappelé il aurait clairement, sans hésitation, condamné ceux qui méritent d'être condamnés en ce qui concerne Med Point.

(Interruptions)

La prochaine fois, au cours de son intervention, je l'enverrai un morceau de papier pour lui rappeler de Med Point ; je suis sûr qu'il va se référer à ce papier.

En ce qui concerne la démocratisation, M. le président, democratisation of land that has been referred to by the hon. Member, I totally understand his point. Obviously, we are a small island and we want to have a situation where the scarcity of land does not in any way hamper development for our local citizens, a lot of them would like to be owners of property. Even though internationally speaking and when we look at international statistics, we are doing extremely well when it comes to ownership of property in terms of percentage, compared to other countries of the region and even countries in the developing world. However, there is something which our country and our citizens must realise, and I believe that the MMM also realised it, because they say it with a lot of pride that it was them, when they were in power, that came up with the whole scheme called Integrated Resort Schemes. They say that they brought it in. And when they brought it in they realised that it was important, within certain parameters, to have foreigners come to Mauritius in order to invest, that will bring FDI as well and which also enrich the country and the people locally. Other countries have done it and we are not here asking anyone to invent the wheel. Other countries have done it; in Singapore they do it, in Dubai they do it and if we are to emulate countries like Singapore, we are to really *jouer dans la cour des grands*, we have to think big. We have to stop thinking small. That is why I believe that on this side of the House, because I make a distinction between the two sides of the Opposition, you can think big and you should not do like others – think small. What I am trying to say here is that, in this instance, there are clear guidelines, clear parameters, that have been laid down with regard to the purchase of property, immovable property. I can reassure the Members of the House and the Members of the Opposition that never will there be a day when Mauritians will be deprived of property or their own land. That will not come. But, that is why we have put parameters down.

With regard to the Housing situation referred to by the hon. Member, I was happy that this time round he did come up with figures as to what the MSM/ MMM Government had spent in terms of money to build houses.

The figure that the hon. Member came up with is quite a staggering figure, I must admit. If I'm not mistaken, the figure of Rs4.4 billion was mentioned. What is sad about this is that not even R1 was enough for our Constituency No. 3. Rs4.4 billion were spent. This is not what I advance; I am referring to the hon. Member's facts and figures. Not even 1 cent spent on one

single house in Constituency No. 3! That is sad. And in Constituency No. 2 as well! I wonder why is it that this blatant discrimination happened.

That is why this Government, under the able man and friend of mine, the hon. vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Mr Duval, has come up with a Budget that has addressed that problem. When he comes up with the Housing Development Fund, when he comes up with those innovative ideas and he has also set targets as to when those ideas have to be implemented and where they will be implemented, he has made sure that no area of Mauritius is discriminated against. Poverty, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, is not in reference to only ethnic group, poverty is not in reference to only one community or one region of the island, in all corners of this island, poverty exists. That is why I congratulate him on what he has inserted in this Budget as proposals with the excellent work that he is going to carry out with the hon. Minister of Housing and Lands, Dr. Kasenally together with hon. Suren Dayal, Minister of Social Integration and Economic Empowerment. I believe that this is the excellent measures that addressed those problems as to why so much money is voted, but as far as implementation is concerned, there are always problems. So, obviously, here there is goodwill and this goodwill will surely be translated into positive results.

Now, as far as the housing situation in our Constituency is concerned, since the hon. Member has referred to it, I will have to obviously also in reply refer to it. With regard to Route Militaire, I would have been all for a beautiful park - like you have in other countries - in the capital city. There should have been no roads there, just trees and garden and a green space for everyone. That would have been the ideal situation. But, unfortunately, a road is going through there; the ring road because we have to be able to balance the need for a garden with the need *pour décongestionner la capital*, the need for a ring road. *Quand on est là pour gouverner*, it puts us before certain situations where we have to face difficult situations and make difficult decisions. It is when you can take those difficult decisions that you qualify to govern a country. Even though I would have preferred to have a beautiful garden, when there is a highway going to go through there, which is going to be the ring road, I have used all tools at my disposal, in order to come up with a solution. What do we do when you have a huge *autoroute* going through that area? And I have come up with that solution together with the project of housing at Route Militaire, which had started under the previous same Government, under the same Prime Minister, but I was not Minister and Member of that Constituency then. It was Mr Dulull and Mr

Husnoo who were representing that Constituency and Mr Sam Lauthan as well was there. And the project of a housing complex takes shape. That housing complex will go ahead. Contracts have already been signed. It has been months and months now with those who are going to be purchasing that plot of land.

But immediately next to it, on approximately 200 to 300 metres, there is going to be a garden. A garden with a kiosk, *avec un parcours de santé*, that is going to be exactly there, next to the housing development. And with the little lane that goes to Paul Toureau and to the Mosque - and the hon. Member knows that well - that passes by the football pitch that exists there, there is going to be on the other side of the motorway and a tunnel that goes under the road, there is going to be a football pitch, *synthétique* of 40 by 20 metres with floodlights and *gradins*. I have ensured personally - and I have already spoken to my good friend, hon. Minister Dayal about it - that as regards the private companies, they have already seen who, we have already identified them, they are going to come and invest it as CSR and offer it to the people in the neighbourhood and I have convinced them and they are ready and willing to do it. So, what are we going to have at the end of the day? Is a road, is a garden and is an excellent modern football pitch that is better than the one that exists there, with *gradins*, with floodlights in order to satisfy all the people in the region? That is, in my humble view, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, a responsible constructive decision.

With regard to the other plot of land, which is on Priest peak behind the NHDC complex at *la croisée Vallée des Prêtres*, there is going to be a housing development there. There is going to be a mixed housing development there as has previously been announced by the hon. Minister Abu Kasenally. He has said that we are going ahead in 2012 with the construction for approximately 50 housing units, in other words, for very low-income earners and we are also going to have 100 plots for sites and services. As everyone will realise, in the region of Port Louis and in the Constituency, there has never been any project of sites and services, to give the opportunity to people who would like to have plots of land available to build upon for their own family and stop living in very decrepit, difficult situations as tenants. That is the project that is coming ahead and has already been confirmed by Government.

The third housing project in the constituency is where we have the *Centre Jeunesse de Plaine Verte*. The corner of the roads Serang and Maharatta, where there is an old dispensary.

Everyone is aware that this dispensary is old; there should have been a new dispensary constructed there. I will not go into the tiff - let me call it that way - that happened between the former Minister of Health and Quality of Life and myself, with regard to the use of that property. I was insisting that this property should be used for housing, unfortunately, I respect the views of the former Minister, she was not agreeable, I was adamant, so the tiff happened. Let me just call it that way.

(Interruptions)

Now, let me say one thing! The hon. Minister of Health and Quality of Life and the hon. Minister of Housing and Lands have both agreed that this land will indeed be used for housing. So, already we are going to have three immediate projects of housing.

Let me talk about a fourth. The hon. Deputy Prime Minister - before I even became Minister - had started work on a very important project, which is to relocate the squatters from Vallée Pitot, *qui sont sur le tracé* of the ring road and the 18 squatters who are in the Constituency No. 3. 42 plots of land have already been identified by the Ministry of Housing and Lands and together with the strong support of the hon. Deputy Prime Minister, hon. Dr. Beebeejaun. For those plots of land, the hon. Minister of Housing and Lands has already started delivering letters of intent to those people in Constituency No. 3. I have already spoken to hon. Dayal. I have already approached Mr Currimjee from the Currimjee Foundation, who is starting a project of building 50 houses. We are working together in order to make sure that not only people from Constituency No. 2, but also people from Constituency No. 3 will have their plot of land, they will become full-fledged owners and they will have their own house instead of living in a squalor under a tinned roof. This is what we have done.

(Interruptions)

Let me pay a compliment to hon. Ameer Meea who spoke just before me. He was not with the MMM at a point in time and that is why he cannot be blamed if the MMM did not put one cent in the construction of even the foundations or the beginning of *les fouilles d'une fondation pour les maisons à la Plaine Verte*. But let me go further - I have talked about 4 projects - let me say that now, this Government, under the able leadership of our Prime Minister, hon. Dr. Navin Ramgoolam, has led this country since 2005, and we have delivered 16 houses only one month ago in Roche Bois for the low-income groups. This is what we have done and that makes a big

difference when you compare like with like, in other words, the hon. Member and the party. I cannot blame the hon. Member, but the party failed in its responsibility to build a single house in Roche Bois or Plaine Verte or *les alentours pour les gens de la circonscription, même pas un sou n'était disponible de ces R 4.4 milliards.*

Je remercie l'honorable membre pour son honnêteté et il m'a aidé dans ses recherches parce que je trouve cela encore un plus grand scandale que celui dont j'ai mentionné. Those people today are still living in very bad conditions, but we have the heart, and we are going to put them in the situation they deserve, because we have to take care of them.

With regard to that area in Route Militaire, when Mr Lauthan was Minister, there was a huge project to put the electrical lines and electrical wires under that road. It cost millions and millions and that was an excellent move that he did and an excellent project. If I am not mistaken, hon. Bachoo remembers that project very well. There was another project of a school to be built there. So, in other words, that green space would have disappeared in any event. We have to make judicious use of the scarcity of space. There was a project for school, now there is going to be a road. Obviously, there cannot be a school, because of the road. So, we make use of whatever land is left for the good of the inhabitants.

Let me now go on to *centre vocational*. With regard to *le centre vocational* which is being referred to by the hon. Member in Roche Bois, it is an excellent idea, but let me also announce that recently the Cabinet has agreed - I can say it is public knowledge now - for a whole huge plot of land in the Port area next to Roche Bois, to be given to Mr José Thérèse of the *Atelier Mozart*. Only last week, I met M. José Thérèse and we have started working on a project in order to get funds together, for him to be able to build that *Atelier Mozart*, to have a proper building there to house those students from Roche Bois so that they be able to learn this beautiful thing that is music, jazz and that he continues to help them into this art that they love.

Things are being done. Let's not forget that so much money has been invested in MITD in the Constituency when Mr Dulull was Minister. I do not believe that we should have one in Plaine Verte and one in Roche Bois. What I believe shall be done, and what is being done in actual fact is that all facilities are being put in that MITD centre for people of the locality and for others. In other words, we should not segregate people in Roche Bois and Plaine Verte. People in Roche Bois and Plaine Verte should all go towards that centre, because this is exactly what it is to live in unity as brothers and Mauritians. That is what should happen.

Mr Speaker, Sir, what I should also add is that in regard to that *toxicomanie qui persiste* referred to by the hon. Member, when you look at the figures, the use of heroin - and I was with Mr Dhannoo of *Centre Idrice Goomany*, concerning the use of hard drugs, *les opiacés* - has gone down. Things are different as opposed in the 80's, when people were suffering from the consumption of hard drugs like Brown Sugar. Members of this House do know it and the hon. Member also knows it. He has spoken about it in public many times before. How many people and youngsters and members of different families of our constituency and Constituency No. 2 and of various areas of Mauritius in the 1980's, died through drug abuse?

Now, people are shifting to other types of drugs. It is our Prime Minister, hon. Dr. Navinchandra Ramgoolam, under his Government, under his leadership, under his bold and brave vision, that there has been the introduction of the delivery of Methadone in our country. It is through this programme that the use and the dependency *sur les opiacés* have decreased. That is a fact that is accepted by all NGO's. But what we should do - I have said it recently and let me put it properly in order for people not to misunderstand - is to concentrate on the positive like recently Madame Topize in Centre Idrice Goomany, Mr Ally Lazer and Mr Imran Dhannoo got together and they brought women together who were, once upon a time, in the oldest profession of the land, and came out of it and out of drugs, and trained to become hairdressers. They are now in active daily jobs because they have been trained by that centre. Those are acts and doings that we should recognise as being an excellent move, as being positive and constructive, but we cannot go on and on by being negative. Where we have drugs, we have drugs, but what we have to do is be realistic.

Let us not compare the earlier 80s and the late 80s with the days of today and let me be honest about it, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. I always rely on to what Hansard says. This Prime Minister has gone out of his way to increase the methodology of work of our Police Force, to give them the tools, to give them equipment to detect, to modernise our Police Force, to give them the training, *la formation*, which did not exist before. This Prime Minister has brought in that delivery of Methadone, this Prime Minister has gone out of its way to ask for help from foreign countries in order that we may bring down the scourge of drugs. This Prime Minister has also agreed and supported me in my view and the present Minister of Health in order for us to put a proper independent Methadone delivery centre in Abattoir Road in the old Police flats where it becomes an independent proper area with a garden and a modern facility.

I will rely now on what Hansard says when we are to describe the ability of Prime Ministers in dealing with drugs abuse. We have had three Prime Ministers. This Prime Minister has done an excellent job and that cannot be denied. No one can show a finger at this Prime Minister, because facts speak louder than words, but here a fact happened in 1995 in this august Assembly. Hon. Bhagwan has been here for so many years and he already knows what I am referring to *comme un doyen de l'Assemblée Nationale*. The words that come out here are written in Hansard for posterity, for the future generations to look at it and say: this is what was said in this august Assembly. What was said in 1995 during the debate on the Constitution of Mauritius (Amendment) Bill No. VI of 1995 at 3.43 p.m. - the time is important – let us take note and not forget - by the present Leader of the Opposition, I quote from Hansard –

'C'était l'époque où les trafiquants de drogue disaient : « gouvernement dan nou la main », c'était l'époque où les policiers, surintendants, se faisaient gifler en ma présence, en la présence de l'honorable Bashir Khodabux et d'autres. Des policiers étaient transférés à l'autre bout de l'île parce qu'ils osaient s'opposer aux trafiquants de drogue. Ils se faisaient gifler en plein Plaine Verte parce qu'ils essayaient de s'opposer aux trafiquants de drogue. '

I go on from Hansard –

'C'était l'époque où le service d'ordre du MSM était organisé par les trafiquants de drogue pour le 1er mai. '

(Interruptions)

I did not say that. This is Hansard. The Leader of the Opposition now says it, as he is now. You see there is more and I am so shocked that I can't even find where I started.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Please!

Mr Mohamed: You see what I am reading here pains me, pains my heart for the number of people who have died because of this scourge. At the time when he is criticising the Prime Minister who was in office then, and this same, hon. Paul Raymond Bérenger goes on to say -

"C'était l'époque où le service d'ordre du MSM était organisé par les trafiquants de drogue pour le 1er mai, pour les élections, à chaque occasion. C'était l'époque où les

trafiquants de drogue avaient taken over, hijacked des compagnies comme UBS et d'autres compagnies de cette importance. C'était l'époque où Sir Anerood Jugnauth prenait de l'argent dans son bureau - pour le passer à d'autres, supposément - dans une tente, un attaché case ou un brief case."

And, he goes on to say -

"Mais il a admis avoir pris de l'argent des trafiquants de drogue. Et cela explique le refus de l'amendement de Madan Dooloo..."

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Please!

Mr Mohamed: So, when I read this and when I look around nowadays - we are talking about hon. colleague from Constituency No. 3 - and history should never be forgotten - I did not even know about what was said. With age one learns, with experience one changes. The knowledge I did not have it; but if only I had that knowledge, believe me, I would have reacted differently and I would have said worse things than 'small Party'. I did not know it. *Dans notre jeunesse, on fait des erreurs*, and I am one of those, believe me. Because this is what was said and what was shocking even more is that no one stood up in this august Assembly and said "Point of Order!" No one stood up and said "You cannot say those words!" *En d'autres mots, s'il n'y a pas eu d'objections contre ce qui a été dit*, it is confessed, therefore. What I hear today, *que si* that person who is referred to here, *descend encore une fois 'pou ramasse avec petit cuillère Dr. Navinchandra Ramgoolam, mo donne toi ene calchoule, papa! To cuillère ena trou!'*

(Interruptions)

This is the type - what we want? A remake of this! And, you know why the youths of this country today are so disgusted? I will tell you why the youths, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, are so disgusted.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order! Hon. Assirvaden!

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Don't interrupt! Hon. Soodhun!

Mr Mohamed: Please, may I continue by explaining to the House why when I have heard the speeches of the hon. Members - not of hon. Ameer Meea, First Member for Constituency No. 3 for he cannot be blamed for this - I make a distinction and it has to be made, and I totally agree with him that the new generation should elevate oneself and be different. We should be different for posterity and for the future.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Assirvaden and hon. Aimée! You are disturbing your friend!

Mr Mohamed: I guess they are all shocked by what they have just learnt.

The Deputy Speaker: Please, continue!

Mr Mohamed: Yes. I will give them a copy of it later on. Now, when I look at the speeches of last year, I read the speech of hon. Soodhun and he says, for the Budget Speech -

“I wish to assure the hon. Prime Minister that we will spare no efforts to put our competence, sincerity and loyalty at the disposal of the team that he is leading and reiterate our commitment for the continued support for the economic and social progress of our beloved country.”

He then criticised what the hon. Leader of the Opposition was saying. He went on to say how at one point in time hon. Bérenger was talking about hon. Jugnauth as being -

‘une étoile montante, mon petit frère, celui qui va me remplacer comme Premier ministre.’

Enfin des gâteries, quoi!

(Interruptions)

I cannot say *‘ce sont des palabres’*. It's your words!

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Please! Hon. Soodhun! Order! I ask all hon. Members, hon. Soodhun inclusive! The hon. Member will have the opportunity to reply! I think you would do!

Mr Mohamed: Now, we hear criticisms about our Prime Minister but, only a few months before, when the seat was comfortable and when the seat was so *douillet*, then what was said -

“Thanks to the personal relationship of our Prime Minister with his counterpart and the excellent friendly understanding between the two countries, I was able to obtain a special derogation for the import of raw cotton.”

Then our Prime Minister was good! Then our Prime Minister had fantastic contacts!

“Thanks to the personal relationship of our Prime Minister...”

Now, the MSM criticises hon. Duval. What was said by hon. Soodhun about hon. Duval

-

“The setting up of a Ministry of Social Integration bears testimony to this Government’s commitment to promote social justice.”

Those are very strong words, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir! And hon. Member recognises the commitment of Government. It is stronger than the word promise, ‘a commitment’!

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: No cross-talking! Please, Continue!

Mr Mohamed: Now, why are the youngsters again disgusted? Because when the youngsters see this and what they hear today, they say - “wait a minute, which is which? And, I will go on. Hon. Pravind Jugnauth, - *c’est vraiment* fantastic –what was said, here, is that he called the Opposition - sorry, from Opposition Members on this side, I am not saying it - I am just referring to Hansard...”

(Interruptions)

I know you were immune against that but it's nice to remember.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order!

Mr Mohamed: I will quote -

“Mr Speaker, Sir, they are an Opposition ‘*bye looké*’. They are just waiting in the corridor right now, waiting when my summing-up will be over, so that they will come back. My advice is that, if they want to go out, to remain outside, don't make a show, and don't make a fool of themselves. I am respectful of the institutions. I am as a truly democrat.”

Were they true democrats when hon. Seetaram and hon. Mrs Martin were speaking? Were they true democrats then, when they left this Assembly because here we have exactly the opposite and youngsters outside say - “how is it that you were true democrat when you were next to them but, all of a sudden, when it does not suit you, you become the worst of all?”

(Interruptions)

I tried to stop. I am not attacking, here. Otherwise I don't want to say...

The Deputy Speaker: Please, address the Chair!

Mr Mohamed: He goes as far as to talk about, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it reminds me of a person we know is called Johnny. He is a Scottish origin but anyway he keeps walking all the time.

(Interruptions)

When you look at that and you go – “Wait a minute! All of a sudden, which is which? Are we living in Alice in Wonderland of some sort? Are we all of a sudden going to have rabbit pop out of a hat? Here, I must say, we talk about visibility. Today, hon. Pravind Jugnauth goes on to say - *il y a marge de manoeuvre*.

(Interruptions)

Non, manœuvre! T'as mal entendu! Il a essayé de faire les autres manger des couleuvres.
 What did he say for his budget -

I must say he was more pessimistic than most of the analysts that have been writing recently on Europe. This is the situation. There is no visibility. Now, wait a minute. How do you develop *marge de manœuvre* when there is no visibility? Once again, which is which? This is the situation. There is no visibility! Wait a minute, how to you develop a *marge de manoeuvre* when there is no visibility? Once again, which is which? Now, this becomes an interesting reading and one day people are going to wonder what really happened here. When I go on, here it is – *je connais l'acrobatie du leader de l'opposition. Il a été toujours comme ça. Toujours*, and he goes on - *l'acrobatie du leader de l'opposition !* And then, he basically goes on. *Il croit que je peux être comme lui* – talking about the lack of respect that hon. Bérenger has for procedures. It goes on.

Ce n'est pas fini. Je suis sûr que les travailleurs et les syndicalistes ne vont pas oublier la façon cavalière avec laquelle l'honorable Bérenger les avait traités lorsqu'il était ministre de finances entre 2000 et 2003. Allez-voir, c'est ce même Bérenger qui aujourd'hui se présente comme le plus grand défenseur des travailleurs. Qu'a-t-il dit ? Qu'il faut appliquer une politique de rattrapage. Lui, il applique une politique de matraquage ! Il avait envoyé le *riot unit* lorsque les travailleurs manifestaient. Pauvres ouvriers à l'époque dans la zone franche ! *What happened ? All of a sudden, a button was pressed and we had 'reboot' and we forget everything. But Hansard is here, how do we forget that? Unfortunately, there is no button to press 'delete'. It is in soft and hard copy. It is very hard to swallow.*

The Leader of the Opposition who was Minister of Finance, at that time, refused to preside over the tripartite meetings. He even spoke about the big lie that was being said by the Leader of the Opposition. I quote-

“C'est la raison pour laquelle je me sens parfaitement à l'aise dans l'Alliance de l'Avenir avec le Dr. Navin Ramgoolam comme Premier ministre”

Parfaitement à l'aise, M. le président!

En fait la grosse majorité des arguments avancés par les membres de l'opposition ne sont que des parades pour essayer d'épater la galerie. Et, aujourd'hui, qu'est-ce qu'on fait ?

On nous sert le même pâté ! M. le président, en ce qui me concerne, la première réaction est celle qui est la plus importante et la plus appropriée.

If I go on here, I will have to read the whole speech and I don't want to do that. But, what is important here, I would like everyone in Mauritius to remember this. I quote -

“Sir, in fact when you are not sincere and when you say things and do the contrary of what you say; this is what happens. This is why the MMM is in the Opposition today and they will remain there. I have no doubt. They will be as we say - *opposition durable*”.

All of a sudden someone else flew somewhere in the mind of someone else and said: ‘I never said that’. Then when history is going to ask and the youngsters out there are going to ask: ‘did you say that?’ No, no, no, we changed our mind. Do the youths of this country want to see this type of politics? Is this the solution for the problems of the future when Greece, Portugal, Ireland, United States of America are suffering, when Singapore has an economic growth that has gone down by 9% compared to last year? The hon. Leader of the Opposition said: let us compare ourselves to Singapore and talk about 5%. Last year, Singapore had 14.5% economic growth and this year 5%. Let's talk about Trinidad and Tobago, same as Mauritius, slightly more than our labour force 600,000 or so, 6.7 unemployment; negative growth, even this year and next year. When those countries in the world are suffering, when people are trying to get together in order to save the future for the youth, the youth do not want people who do not even remember or know the meaning of what sincerity, loyalty and honesty mean when it comes to politics. This is commitment! This year the hon. leader of the Opposition says that it was a Budget ‘*confetti*’. What is ‘*confetti*’ Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir? They are small bits of paper that are cut up and thrown away everywhere. Normally you do that for celebratory issues like weddings, birthdays. When you are happy, then you throw *confetti*. But, he basically said - for the last year, *c'était fade. C'était des petits bouts collés*. I wonder whether he has time to cut papers!

Let us stop pretending that everything is rosy. Let us stop pretending about supposedly nothing was said in the past. Let us stop pretending that we are not in this august Assembly in order to help the future of this country. We can be in this august Assembly, but outside there, there are millions waiting and wondering what those people have been elected are doing for us.

Just like hon. Bhagwan said - it is true - '*il faut écouter ce que les gens sur le terrain disent*'. He is right and out there, the youth. Look at the blogs on Internet! When they listen to the speeches of this august Assembly, when they see *des changements de position* of certain people, *même pas tactiques ou stratégiques; dégoûtants!* Am I going to leave my country in the hands of people like that?

(Interruptions)

Transfuge, transfuge, I am sorry, we talked about that! That is the attitude on top of it. Instead of basically acquiescing and saying: 'wait a minute' let me ascertain what has been said. Let me just realise that. Wait a minute, people sitting close to me, were only recently saying that basically I will be an *opposition durable*. People sitting next to me have only recently said that I was doing *acrobatie politique* and what not! People recently sitting next to me have insulted us personally. Instead of saying that, what do they do: 'oh, transfuge!' You know what that is? That is basically saying *je vais me voiler la face parce que ce que les autres disent dehors, cela m'importe peu. Ce qui nous concerne c'est de prendre le pouvoir à tout prix. Pas avec n'importe qui. Normalement, on dit : 'faute de mieux, on embrasse sa femme'. Mais là c'est pire. C'est pire, 'qui ou pé embrassé! Ça pas appelle chumma!'*

(Interruptions)

Mr Deputy Speaker: Order, order!

Mr Mohamed: With regard to unemployment, he referred to

(Interruptions)

Oh yes! Hon. Boolell, allow me, once again, no wrong feelings intended. You referred it in your speech and I am duty bound to try to refute that point.

Mr Deputy Speaker: You do it through me!

Mr Mohamed: No, I have to look here. Sorry, I cannot look at you right now. I always would love to look at you, Mr Deputy Speaker, but let me look a bit here. Child labour! You have to go to almost any market; children who should be out in school are there. Obviously, you referred to the importance of detecting child labour and obviously, I am *sympatique à cela*. I totally agree with you.

However, I think it is important to realise that Mauritius has ratified two conventions. True it is, the importance is not simply to ratify conventions, but the importance is also to implement what we have ratified. Let me talk about the implementation. July 1999 to June 2000: 5236 inspections, 21 cases of child labour detected - 21 cases where employment was stopped and there was no prosecution. In the same year; 16 in 2000 to 2001, there was no inspection at all between 2001 and 2003, none. No inspection for child labour. Between 2003 and 2005, 24 cases of child labour and 24 cases they stopped them, but no prosecutions. How can you implement a measure to stop a child labour, if you are not firm, if you do not prosecute, if you do not have people paying fines? Laws are voted not only to look good on paper, but to be implemented. It is only when hon. Dr. Vasant Kumar Bunwaree who was then Minister of Labour and Industrial Relations and Employment, in 2006, that prosecutions started. Every single year that they were detected, they were prosecuted. Each and every *contravenant* paid a fine and was taken to court; it is a criminal offence. In other words, between 2001 and 2005, there were no inspections, and I will not even say who was in power then; not us. From 2001 and 2003, there were no inspections, and from 2003 to 2005, there were 24 inspections. Each and every time, between 2000 and 2005, that there were inspections and cases detected, there were no prosecutions. This is not the way you are going to be serious against child labour. We have shown that we are serious against child labour.

Let me talk about another element concerning my Ministry, which is of utmost importance, that is, employment. With regard to the rate of unemployment, before we look at us here, let's look just next door. 29.5% unemployment rate in Reunion island, and those figures are from *l'Institut Nationale de la Statistique et des Etudes Economiques (INSEE)*.

In Mauritius, there are 20,554 registered unemployed in my Ministry. The unemployment rate is 7.8 % for 2011. The unemployment rate for male is 4.7% and 13% for women. In other words, our vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Finance has identified *où le bât blesse*. There are urgent measures that have to be implemented for youth unemployment; urgent measures have to be implemented with regard to women unemployment, and that is why he has brought about excellent measures in this Budget that will encourage employability by the training that is offered by the Ministry of my hon. colleague, hon. Bunwaree, at the MITD. The HRDC will be doing an excellent job with the 60% that they will be paying and the 40% contributed by the employers. Those are proactive measures, and at the level of my Ministry, at the moment, I have

so many unemployed, but compared to other countries it is still very well controlled; 7.8%. When you look at the job losses for the period of 2001 to 2005, it is even worse. From 2001 to 2005, 57,593 *emplois perdus*. And what's even worse, let me go further 1991 to 1995, 55,561 *emplois perdus*. So, there is consistency.

Whenever there is this partnership between the MMM and the MSM, there seems to be a problem. I am not saying that it is the MMM that is problematic or the MSM. In other words, there is a problem. Each time that those two have been together, there have been massive job losses in the economy. When the Leader of the Opposition was Prime Minister and hon. Pravind Jugnauth was Minister of Finance, job losses were 14,663 in 2003, 16,100 in 2004, 10,085 in 2005. And what did we inherit? An employment rate of 9.6%! Today, in spite of all the crises, in spite of the energy crisis, in spite of the food commodity prices, in spite of the loss of our preferential trade regime that we enjoyed, in spite of the Euro crisis, in spite of the global financial crisis, in spite of second phase financial crisis, it is at 7.8%.

(Interruptions)

If we are to adopt their method of calculation, which they tried, the real unemployment rate today is only 3.5%. If we use the same methodology, the unemployment rate in Mauritius today is only 3.5%.

In this Budget, with young people between 16 and 24 years old, 35% are registered job seekers and, with the training which will be given to them, as I have explained earlier on, I am confident that we will be identifying the needs of the market, the human resource needs. Once we have identified the human resource needs, we will be giving them training. So much money has been put aside in this Budget in the National Resilience Fund to the tune of 7.3 billion, and part of it will also be used for training. When they will be trained, it will be a joint work together with the private sector; to get the private sector to take those people on board. Training in vocational institutions, but training on the job as well, in order to get the practical knowledge. That is where things have really not worked out, and this is where we are coming up with proactive, constructive measures.

Today, we have more than 32,000 work permits, and foreigners are working in the construction sector, in the textile industry, in the Tuna fishing industries, so many places. What we are going to do - and I will do that at the level my Ministry - is basically tell the private

sector: we are not going to renew your work permits for the foreigners, because you have trained staff available locally. And as soon as my hon. colleague, hon. Minister Vasant Bunwaree, the HRDC-MITD have come up and start churning out trained personnel, we will not, at the level of my Ministry, renew work permits, because priority will be given to Mauritian citizens. I, myself, have been involved, together with hon. Bodha, when he was in government, together with hon. Bunwaree and hon. Bachoo and other colleague ministers; we have been helping Mauritians to go to work on cruise ships, and already 140 or so have started their courses at the *école hôtelière* and at the Naval Academy, and many more will go next year.

With regard to opportunities of work in the Gulf region, I have managed to get in touch with Al-Futtaim Group from Dubai that holds the franchise for Carrefour in Dubai and the whole Gulf region. They are soon coming to Mauritius, in order to carry out interviews for Mauritians, not only manual workers, low skilled work, but for accountants, storekeepers, for qualified individuals who will be working in this Group in the Gulf countries.

Let me also commend the hon. Vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Finance with an excellent measure in his Budget. Not only do we have now immediate financial assistance that is payable to laid off workers in the form of transitional unemployment benefit under the workfare programme, which has been introduced in the new labour legislation, but as from January 2012, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, all workers earning up to Rs3,000 per month will not have to pay their share of contribution, that is, the monthly contribution of 1% of their basic wage to be entitled to the financial assistance. Government will instead pay their share of contribution in the National Savings Fund account of the worker. On top of that, this category of workers will no longer have to pay their part of contribution to the NPS. This contribution will also be paid by Government. These measures clearly show government's commitment to protect workers at the lowest range of the ladder. We cannot, therefore, say, when we look at those measures in detail, that this is a Budget for protecting only the private sector *et les gros paltots!* We cannot say that.

Let me also come to the safety and health aspect of my Ministry. I think that it is very important and, maybe, people are going to be quite surprised with the figures that I am going to give. Recently, we had an accident in Ebène where a scaffold had fallen down; unfortunately, a worker passed away. In other countries and the ILO, accidents are measured by fatality rates - the rate of fatal accidents in occupation. And in 2000, the fatality rate of accidents was 2.67; in

2002 the fatality rate was 4.46; in 2003 the fatality rate was 4.80. 2003 was the record year of the number of people who had died while working in their place of work. 2003 had 24 deaths; 2004 had 21 deaths; 2002 had 22 deaths. In spite of those deaths, did we have regulations brought in? Did the Government of the day bring in regulations for scaffolding? Did the Government of the day bring in legislation with regard to noise reduction? Did they bring in regulations with regard to the type of accommodation that expatriates were living in? No regulations! None whatsoever! In other words, people were dying when they were going to work, but, in response to those deaths, nothing was being done by Government.

Today, when we look at other countries in the world, for example, in Seychelles, the rate of fatality is 21.2. How do you calculate it? It is 21.2 of each 100,000 workers. In United Kingdom, the fatality rate is 1.3. In France, the fatality rate is 2.7. In Portugal, the fatality rate is 3.2. In Singapore, the fatality rate is 2.7 and the fatality rate for 2010 in Mauritius was 2.32. In other words, we are at par with the developed world. We are even doing better than Singapore with regard to the fatality rate. This year, we all pray to the Almighty that we are going to do even better. Why? It is because one worker who loses his life is one too many. We have to do everything we can to implement the legislation we have brought in and we have been implementing. When you compare with the years when there were almost 10 to 15 accidents on construction sites, this year, unfortunately, we've had four accidents on construction sites that have led to deaths. We have to make sure that, by December 31, no one, no other worker is to get injured; no other worker is to die. We can only make sure that we can implement it in such a way.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Pillay Chedumbrum and hon. Virahsawmy, please!

Mr Mohamed: I would like to also say here, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that there are a lot of facilities that are being offered by my Ministry, together with Minister Suren Dayal and Minister Bunwaree when we have to basically identify pockets of poverty and train the youth; give them jobs and make sure that we bring down the figure. I am very confident that we will be able to bring down the unemployment rate which is at a very respectable rate because our objective, obviously, is to score the highest and it is to have full employment. We can do it because we are putting our minds together. And the difference with this Budget, as opposed to

last year's budget, it is only the second time on presentation of the Budget Speech that I am a Minister; before that I was a backbencher. It is the first time that I have been involved; there have been consultations with the Minister of Finance for the preparation of this project on a daily basis.

(Interruptions)

Last year, no consultations!

(Interruptions)

Two hours - couldn't even know what was in there. How can you really work as a team if there are no consultations? And that is the whole difference that marked me this time, the whole difference between the previous Minister of Finance, his methodology work as opposed to this one.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Aimée, please!

Mr Mohamed: I would like to also say that we are doing very well as a country, in light of what is happening all over the world. We are doing so well and other countries in the world look at Mauritius and admire what we do and wonder how is it. I talked about Trinidad and Tobago because I was reminded about this by hon. Dr. Arvin Boolell yesterday.

Trinidad and Tobago have petroleum, natural gas. They are a rich country in natural resources. They have negative growth. They have a high rate of fatal accidents. They have an increasing rate of unemployment. They have increasing poverty, deflation. People wonder how is it that in this country you have nothing, no natural resources. Our only natural resources are our people and our only natural resources are not only our people but it is us, who have been elected by the people; even those in the Opposition and those in Government. We are also the natural resources of this country. We are the chosen few whom the people of this country have elected to do them justice and we cannot do them justice if we continue working in the same trend. We cannot do them justice if we simply concentrate on empty criticisms instead of really working together for the good of this country.

We have a Prime Minister who has clearly shown that ever since he has come back to power in 2005 until today, 2011, he has had as priority the creation of employment for the youth.

He has had as priority the betterment of the people of the country. He has had as priority the democratisation of the economy. He has had as priority a modern Mauritius. Instead of basically just coming to Parliament and having such inconsistent remarks, as I have shown clearly, and as our Hansard shows it, we should avoid doing that.

I will here make an appeal to the Member for Constituency No. 3, hon. Aadil Ameer Meea. I appreciated, as I said today, his speech, the conciliatory note and the tone. Government, for instance, has spent in less than two years, one year and $\frac{3}{4}$, almost Rs200 m. on infrastructure in our Constituency.

(Interruptions)

It is not for me it is not only for you, hon. Member, it is for all the inhabitants and the people of Mauritius - as rightly said by hon. Bhagwan - the people out there *sur le terrain*.

(Interruptions)

Very often. Because you see, as the '*doyen*' of this Assembly, I will have to look at the good that you say, not all, but some of the good that you say.

(Interruptions)

I said '*doyen*', not old. What I am trying to say here is that we have to, at least, look at the positives and we have to basically not try to stop someone from working; not try to stop this Government from working simply because we want to get into power. That is not the way forward because, as I have said, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, when this Budget was prepared by the hon. Vice-Prime Minister, he is a Mauritian at heart. He wants the good of his country. He wants the good of his people. He wants the good of all of us and this is what we have to do now as one nation: face the world, encourage investors to come, encourage productivity, encourage our country to become more competitive, encourage our country to move forward and become that modern island. Because we should not think: 'I shall not encourage because I will not be elected next time' or 'I will not get the credit'. We cannot think like that. Because, if we continue thinking in this old archaic way of doing politics, it is the country that suffers and when the country suffers, who cares who will be Member of Parliament, who cares who will be sitting on those benches in this august Assembly, when the country no longer exists, when there will be problems out there, when there will be people who are suffering of hunger and unemployment

because of the mess, because of the conflict and no unity in our approach and no unity in taking the country forward, no unity in our goodwill for the country. If there is not that, then there is no need to even have a Parliament in the future, because this country will then go to the dogs. But I will only say one thing: thank God we have a Prime Minister *qui a le respect des institutions*, thank God we have a Prime Minister who did not let him be influenced by any *chantage*, thank God we have a Prime Minister who does not interfere in any enquiry and respects *l'indépendance des institutions*, thank God we have a Prime Minister who says what he says and means what he says and he does exactly what he says, he will do.

Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

(3.41 p.m.)

Mr P. Jhugroo (First Member for Mahebourg and Souillac): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I thank you for giving me the opportunity ...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Wait! Wait!

(Interruptions)

Mr Jhugroo: ...to address the House.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Please !

Mr Jhugroo: M. le président, je vais être franc et direct en m'exprimant sur la grosse trahison que le MSM a subi pendant les 14 derniers mois que nous étions au gouvernement.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order! Order!

Mr Jhugroo: M. le président, beaucoup d'orateurs ont fait de grands discours dans cette auguste assemblée et puis, après les élections, ils ont disparu de la scène politique. Dans *karo canne!*

Just to remind the House that the previous orator started his political career under the guidance of the former Leader of the MSM.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Please, there is no need to repeat or to make comments.

Mr Jhugroo: And if he is no more in MSM, he knows well why and what happened in 1996 during the municipal election campaign.

The Deputy Speaker: Please!

Mr Jhugroo: Can we forget the Gorah Issac case?

Mr Mohamed: On a point of order!

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Please, yes.

Mr Mohamed: What is he trying to say?

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: No, please!

Mr Mohamed: Well, I am sorry, he cannot make any allusions.

The Deputy Speaker: Wait! Wait! I am on my feet!

Mr Mohamed: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, he cannot make allusions.

The Deputy Speaker: I am on my feet!

(Interruptions)

I am on my feet! Wait! If the hon. Minister wants to make his point, please, I give him the opportunity.

Mr Mohamed: I would like to make my point.

The Deputy Speaker: Yes.

Mr Mohamed: It would be very cowardly...

The Deputy Speaker: Your point of order!

Mr Mohamed: My point of order?

The Deputy Speaker: Yes.

Mr Mohamed: My point of order is as follows - the hon. Member has said word for word: “can we forget the case of Gorah Issac?” It is public knowledge that I had personally been wrongly accused of that case. Now, if he basically...

(Interruptions)

Can I go on? If he is going to talk about Gorah Issac and in a cowardly unparliamentary manner, he has no guts to even mention my name, then he does not have the right to sit here!

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Minister has made his point. I am going to follow the speech of the hon. Member well.

Mr Mohamed: I would not agree that he makes allusions.

The Deputy Speaker: Please, I am on my feet and I gave the hon. Minister the latitude to make his point. The hon. Member should not attack the character of any Member. I am telling it in advance, just to remind him that he should be within the Standing Order.

Mr Jhugroo: Mr Speaker, Sir, allow me to reply to what hon. Minister Faugoo said this morning about the MSM. He said that the MSM is neither significant nor relevant, we are a small party. If such is the case, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, why did his Leader, the hon. Prime Minister, so badly wanted an alliance with the MSM before the last general election?

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Don't disturb! Let the hon. Member make his point!

Mr Jhugroo: Il avait tous les loisirs...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Please! Please!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Varma, I don't want any comments. Everyone has got his style.

(Interruptions)

Please, I understand that...

(Interruptions)

Please, I don't want to be rude, but we had the opportunity to listen to two Members in silence and for the third Member also, I want that he makes his point.

(Interruptions)

Hon. Bundhoo, there is no need for you to repeat. I am warning you.

Mr Jhugroo: M. le président, quand je parle, je parle avec mon cœur.

The Deputy Speaker: Yes, you...

Mr Jhugroo: Et je peux dire qu'il y a beaucoup qui ...

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Jhugroo, address the Chair!

Mr Jhugroo: Je n'étais pas à l'aise pendant mon passage au gouvernement pendant ces 14 mois. Vous savez bien ce qui s'est passé ! Tout à l'heure on viendra...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Please! Hon. Cader Sayen-Hossen!

Mr Jhugroo:...*to konn sa bien twa couma zotte fine faire tamtam là-bas.*

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Please, do not provoke the Member.

Mr Jhugroo: ...le Premier ministre d'aller seul aux élections, mais il avait peur. Et il savait que sans le MSM, *ti pou manze la poussière*. Oui, le MSM...

(Interruptions)

Twa, pas kozé, to pas inn meme gagne ticket.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Jhugroo, you address me!

Mr Jhugroo: Oui, le MSM était ensemble dans une alliance de l'Avenir pour moderniser le pays...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Varma, please!

Mr Jhugroo:...pour bénéficier de l'égalité des chances. Hélas, M. le président ! On ne pouvait continuer avec cette bande de jouisseurs et de *maja caro*. On ne pouvait cautionner scandale après scandale.

Mr Varma: I am sorry! On a point of order, the hon. Member cannot impute motives.

The Deputy Speaker: No...

Mr Varma: He cannot impute motives.

Mr Baloomoody: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, there is a ruling from the Speaker that as long as a Member does not identify an honourable Member, there is no motive. He is speaking generally, he can be allowed to speak. There is a ruling.

The Deputy Speaker: So long as the Member is not referring to any specific Member...

(Interruptions)

No, no. He can refer to the Government as a whole, but not to Members. Please!

Mr Jhugroo: On ne pouvait cautionner, M. le président, scandale après scandale. Laissez-moi parler concernant le scandale de Med Point. Qui avait initié le projet de l'hôpital gériatrique et avec quelle intention ? Qui avait rencontré le Dr. Malhotra avant l'appel d'offres ? Qui avait demandé les spécifications avant de lancer le *tender exercise* ? Qui avait organisé une visite à la clinique Med Point avant l'appel d'offres?

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Silence, silence, please!

Mr Jhugroo: Qui avait demandé à faire une deuxième évaluation de la clinique Med Point?

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Silence, silence! Order!

Mr Jhugroo: Pourquoi le *Government Valuer* a eu le trou de mémoire ?

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order!

Mr Jhugroo: Qui avait dit...

Mr Varma: Again, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the hon. Member is going into the details of the Med Point case which is before the court.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Attorney General is taking a point of order?

Mr Varma: Of course, because this is *sub judice*, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. The hon. Member cannot speak about the case.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Please, wait!

Mr Jhugroo: Qui avait...

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Jhugroo, please, wait!

(Interruptions)

I remind hon. Members that this morning Mr Speaker stated that the issue of Med Point concerning attachment is *sub judice*.

(Interruptions)

The issue of attachment is *sub judice* and we should not refer to it. But, in any event, I'll ask the hon. Member to make his point without, in any manner, trying to make comments on the attachment which is on.

Mr Jhugroo: *Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am making no comments. I want only to have some clarification by asking questions. They always talk about Med Point, as an hon. Member of this National Assembly, I want to have some clarification. Qui aurait dit que l'argent a été cashed le lendemain et transféré à Londres ? Qui sont ceux qui n'avaient pas voté la motion de l'honorable Pravind Jugnauth et pour quelle raison? Maintenant, il y a l'autre scandale concernant Betamax, le scandale de hedging à la STC et au Air Mauritius. La couleur rose de la chemise de mon ami, l'honorable Faugoo, reflète le scandale de Rose Garden.*

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order ! Order !

Mr Jhugroo: Are you aware, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, ...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order!

Mr Faugoo: On a point of order, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the hon. Member has taken my name and he is casting aspersions.

The Deputy Speaker: No.

Mr Faugoo: The hon. Member is talking of allegations ...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Alright, the hon. Minister has made his point.

(Interruptions)

Please!

Mr Faugoo: I want a ruling on this, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. The hon. Member has taken my name and he is casting aspersions.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: I will ask the hon. Member to withdraw.

(Interruptions)

Please! Order! Please, withdraw!

(Interruptions)

Mr Jhugroo: I was only referring ...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Faugoo, Order! Order!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Faugoo! Hon. Jhugroo, have you withdrawn!

Mr Jhugroo: I withdraw my comments regarding the shirt. The Rose Garden scandal, are you aware, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir ...

Mr Faugoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I did not hear the hon. Member withdrawing what he said.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: That is not true. I heard him.

Mr Faugoo: I did not hear him withdrawing. There was a ruling that he should withdraw. I did not hear him withdrawing.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Faugoo, please sit down! When you took a point of order, I asked him to withdraw and he withdrew, I heard it, you were not listening.

Mr Jhugroo: I can withdraw for a second time *pour les sourds*.

(Interruptions)

Caleçon moi mo pas tiré, toi qui tire caleçon! Et to conné cote to tire caleçon !

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Faugoo, I am warning you.

(Interruptions)

Mr Jhugroo: Are you aware ...

The Deputy Speaker: Please, sit down! Hon. Faugoo, I am warning you, if you continue, I will have to take sanctions. You have got the right to take a point of order, but you should please then listen. If you are going to act like this, unfortunately...

Mr Jhugroo: On a point of order, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, why doesn't the hon. Minister withdraw when he said about *tire caleçon*?

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: No, please! The hon. Member must continue with his speech!

(Interruptions)

Silence now!

Mr Jhugroo: *Zotte gagne du mal!* Are you aware, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, ...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order! Hon. Seetaram, there is no need to join in! Hon. Bundhoo!

Mr Jhugroo: M. le président, savez-vous que ce présent gouvernement est aux soins intensifs sous perfusion du PMSD et de deux transfuges ?

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Aimée, please! Hon. Sayed-Hossen, what is the problem?

Mr Jhugroo: C'est important de commencer par cela, car si le budget 2012 a été présenté par un autre ministre que celui de l'année dernière, la raison c'est qu'il y a eu une grosse trahison politique. *Fine servi MSM ...*

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Faugoo, last warning for you!

Mr Jhugroo: *Fine servi MSM pou vine au pouvoir et fine essaye attache laqué ferblanc avek nou. Et banne masque pé tombé et pou tombé encore ! Fidèle à notre habitude ...*

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Please, the official language is French and English.

Mr Jhugroo: These words are more spicy.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: No, the hon. Member should use French or English language, please!

Mr Jhugroo: Fidèle à notre habitude, le MSM était en alliance avec le Parti Travailleiste, avec beaucoup de sincérité et de bonne volonté, comme cela a été toujours le cas quand nous travaillons dans une alliance.

*Unfortunately, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we have been forced to realise que la bonne volonté et la sincérité n'étaient que de notre part et pas dans la culture du Parti Travailleiste. Connaissant mieux aujourd'hui la culture du Parti Travailleiste, je dirai que leur philosophie ne se résume qu'à des mots – *maja caro et magouilles.**

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Vice-Prime Minister and the Minister of Finance on Friday last stated that the Budget 2012 will be about dealing with issues that resonate in the daily life of our people. If we look at the first five minutes of his Budget Speech, we understand clearly that his people are *les barons du secteur privé qui ont bénéficié d'un pactole de plusieurs milliards de roupies sur le dos du petit peuple*, by his decision to completely abolish the Solidarity Tax on dividends and interests and on the Capital Gains Tax.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I can't understand how the Members of the Labour Party and PMSD *ti tape la table* when Sithanen introduced NRPT and tax on interest. Last year, when the then Minister of Finance, hon. Pravind Jugnauth, abolished these two taxes and introduced the Capital Gains Tax, tax on dividend, *ala zotte tape la table encore plus fort!*

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it is most unbelievable and unbecoming when Friday last, when the Minister of Finance announced the removal of Capital Gains Tax and tax on dividends, *ala zotte re tape la table encore plus fort ! M. le président, il est clair que les membres du Parti Travailleiste sont bons pou tape la table, tape are cerf et tapé.*

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Please translate it in French!

Mr Jhugroo: M. le président, c'est un budget fade, décousu et sans vision.

While going through the Budget Speech, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we note that the Minister of Finance, hon. Xavier-Luc Duval, a fait un aveu d'échec concernant la démocratisation de l'économie prônée par le Premier ministre, l'honorable Dr. Navin Ramgoolam, infligeant du même coup, un carton rouge au tandem Cader Sayed-Hossen et Nita Deerpalsing, lorsqu'il vient, après six années d'existence, dire that they will now work with relevant Ministries to implement a pilot programme. C'est une honte et c'est cela leur bonne gouvernance – ala zotte fine voyager papa, tam tam qui fine democratise sa commission- là !

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Please!

Mr Jhugroo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, are you aware that over and above her monthly salary, the Deputy Chairman of Committees gets an allowance of Rs30,000 per month plus an official car, plus a driver's allowance of Rs7,000 - *bien tape cote*.

M. le président, le Premier ministre a toujours fait le combat contre la fraude et la corruption son cheval de bataille. Malheureusement, nous notons qu'aucune mention n'a été faite dans ce budget à ce sujet. Pourtant, les propos de notre DSK local, l'honorable Dhiraj Singh Khamajeet, tenus à Bon Accueil en Septembre dernier viennent confirmer les magouilles, la corruption....

(Interruptions)

Mr Mohamed: On a point of order, he has basically referred to a Member of this House and has accused him of *magouilles*, I insist that he withdraws that.

The Deputy Speaker: Yes, you withdraw the word *magouilles* and you make your point!

(Interruptions)

Please!

(Interruptions)

Mr Jhugroo: I am referring to what he said...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Please wait; you withdraw, first of all, what you have stated! Hon. Faugoo!

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: I will ask hon. Faugoo to withdraw first!

Mr Faugoo: Okay, I just said *tire calecon*, but I withdraw it.

The Deputy Speaker: Yes, you withdraw it first.

(Interruptions)

Hon. Jhugroo, now.

(Interruptions)

I did not hear you!

Mr Jhugroo: I withdraw only the word “*magouilles*”.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: That is over now.

(Interruptions)

Mr Jhugroo: Après un tel incident déplorable, nous attendions à une mesure ferme dans notre budget afin de rétablir confiance dans nos institutions telles que la PSC et la Disciplinary Forces Service Commission, mais rien n’a été fait. Au contraire...

The Deputy Speaker: No, please the hon. Member can’t make reference to the Commission.

Mr Jhugroo: *I am only mentioning our institutions, that’s all.* Mais rien n’a été fait. Au contraire, des portes étaient grandes ouvertes pour l’éventuel recrutement des petits copains et petites copines.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Minister of Finance announced in this Budget the recruitment of 800 Police Officers. My question is very simple: will it be done according to the criteria...

The Deputy Speaker: No, the hon. Member cannot impute any motive to the Commission, please.

(Interruptions)

Mr Jhugroo: No, I am asking questions.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order! You cannot refer to the Commission.

(Interruptions)

Order!

Mr Jhugroo: I am only asking a question.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: I gave a ruling and you will not question my ruling. You rephrase your argumentation, please!

Mr Jhugroo: Will it be done as it was done before or according to hon. Khamajeet's style?

(Interruptions)

Mr Mohamed: On a point of order, he has just withdrawn the word *magouilles* and now he is coming again and saying Khamajeet's style. He is referring to the same issue.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: No. I do not think that it is out of order. He is not casting any aspersion on the Member.

(Interruptions)

Please, you can continue.

Mr Jhugroo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, how can we expect good governance and equal opportunity to everyone when Ministers appoint close relatives in strategic positions as in the case of the LGSE?

The Deputy Speaker: No, please. I repeat again no mention of Commissions!

(Interruptions)

Mr Mohamed: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with all due respect to the process of this august Assembly, now that he has said it, could he withdraw it? Not say it again, but withdraw what he just said.

The Deputy Speaker: Yes, I think that I should advise the Member, I know what you mean but according to our Standing Order, you cannot refer to the Commission.

Mr Jhugroo: So, I will....

The Deputy Speaker: No, please you withdraw it first.

Mr Jhugroo: I will withdraw only the LGSE.

(Interruptions)

...appoint close relatives in strategic positions.

The Deputy Speaker: Yes, okay.

Mr Jhugroo: Finish, full stop. *Zote conner qui fine passer après.*

(Interruptions)

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I note that in paragraph 104 at page 16 of the Budget Speech,

....

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: I do not want to hear any talking. The next Member who makes comment, I am going to ask him to leave.

Mr Jhugroo: Let me quote –

“...the Office of Public Sector Governance has been set up under the Prime Minister’s Office. It will, in priority, assist public enterprises to improve governance, efficiency, services and cut off waste.”

Quelle est l’utilité de cette mesure, M. le président, après que le pays ait connu d’énormes gaspillages et de dilapidations de fonds public? Preuve de *mismanagement* du gouvernement actuel comme confirmer par le rapport de l’Audit. L’octroi du contrat du transport des produits pétroliers par voie maritime, connu comme le méga scandale Betamax, et à l’encontre de l’esprit de bonne gouvernance. M. le président, comme nous le savons tous, ce contrat d’une durée de 15 ans taillé sur mesure, à la faveur du clan familial Jeetah-Bunjun, contient beaucoup de zone d’ombre....

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Make your point.

Mr Mohamed: My point is, once again, he has referred to the family of this hon. Member and of hon. Jeetah.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: No, I do not think that he went outside the Standing Order!

(Interruptions)

Mr Jhugroo: So what?

The Deputy Speaker: I gave my ruling.

Mr Jhugroo:... contient beaucoup de zone d’ombre tel que le nombre de voyages effectués annuellement, le tonnage par chaque voyage et tout cela, M. le président, conclu sans l’autorisation du SLO et ni d’appel d’offres - R8 milliards! Jackpot! Malgré le rapport de l’Audit

qui relève le gaspillage dans nos institutions par milliards de roupies, aucune mention n'a été faite dans le Budget par le ministre des finances pour éliminer ces gaspillages. *This is public funds, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, going down the drain.*

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in the same breath while talking about good governance, I feel much aggrieved de cet état des choses, d'autant plus, que cela perdure aussi dans plusieurs des nos collectivités locales. Encore une fois, je tiens à déplorer le vil comportement de certains conseillers Travailleurs dans les municipalités. À la mairie de la ville de Quatre Bornes, on ne peut pas oublier qu'une conseillère avec *so cabat*, a été prise en flagrant délit alors qu'elle vendait des permis pour l'octroi des étaux sur une plage publique. Ce cas est toujours en suspense et notre chère institution - je crois que je peux mentionner l'ICAC – l'ICAC, enquête toujours et depuis belle lurette, c'est cela la bonne gouvernance. Incroyable, mais vrai, M. le président! Du jamais vu! Un maire en exercice a été forcé de *leve paquet aller* au beau milieu de son mandat pour les scandales que nous connaissons tous à Vacoas Phoenix – *khaler piler*. Il avait l'intention de faire une balade avec ces collègues dans un jet privé, mais malheureusement, il a été botté hors de ses fonctions comme maire. C'est cela la culture du Parti travailliste

M. le président, comment peut-on qualifier ce gouvernement qui est venu imposer une taxe de 20% sur chaque SMS envoyé par les jeunes de notre République?

En les privant de ces moments heureux, *can we call this Government a caring Government, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir? 'Arrête faire dominère are nu zeunesse'*.

What amount do you think this will bring to Government, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir? It is only Rs150 m. and these are peanuts, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, compared to the billion of rupees lost by this Government in the hedging saga; both at STC and Air Mauritius. What signal are we giving to our youth, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir? When will they be asked to pay for the incompetence and mismanagement of this Government?

Dans quel pays du monde, M. le président, voit-on les casinos qui font des pertes? Si on est dans cette situation, M. le président, c'est principalement dû à une mauvaise gestion de nos casinos. Qu'est-ce qu'on n'a pas vu, M. le président? Les petits copains et petites copines, qui sont casés et qui font la pluie et le beau temps pour ruiner les bijoux de l'état. Cette situation met en péril aujourd'hui le gagne-pain de quelques centaines de petits employés. Je me pose la

question, M. le président, n'y avait-il pas un agenda bien calculé, pour arriver aujourd'hui à justifier la vente des ces bijoux de l'état, tel que le Port Louis Waterfront...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Dayal, please!

Mr Jhugroo: M. le président, au train où l'on va, je crains qu'on va aussi vendre ...

(Interruptions)

C'est bon d'écouter. Je crains qu'on aille aussi vendre les statues du père de la nation et de Basdeo Bissoondoyal. Heureusement, M. le président, que la statue de Sir Gaëtan Duval se trouve ailleurs!

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Budget mentions reforms of the institutions, I cannot be more agreeable to that. *L'exemple vient d'en haut, M. le président.* What we have witnessed at the Mauritius Duty Free Paradise is contrary to what the Budget is aiming at. Someone who has been fired after having been charged of forgery and other charges has been reinstated to his former post. The very same board, which had sacked him, had to reinstate him after having received directives from Cabinet decision. Have you ever heard, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, whiskies are getting expired and evaporated? Jewelleries are getting expired. Perfumes are getting expired and champagne as well are getting expired, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir!

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Yes, hon. Aimée! Do you want to leave early?

Mr Jhugroo: This is what happened at the Mauritius Duty Free Paradise.

M. le président, c'est un vrai paradis pour les petits copains de ce gouvernement. *C'est comme cela que le Parti Travailleiste veut combattre la corruption.*

On the other hand, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this was raised this morning in a PNQ, the fate of a female trade unionist, Mrs Rehana Ameer, at the MBC, has been completely ignored. In this case, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, there has been no forgery, no real charges against her, despite that she was fired without any justification. This morning, I think that a wise decision has been taken by the hon. Prime Minister and I thank him very much for that.

Celui qui fine coquin dans Mauritius Duty Free Paradise ...

The Deputy Speaker: No Creole!

Mr Jhugroo: ... has been reinstated. An innocent woman at the MBC in '*dans carreau cannes*'. I hope that the hon. Prime Minister will reinstate this lady, who has suffered more than one year, as already mentioned by my friend, hon. Bhagwan, because of a dictator at the MBC. Hitler! '*C'est comme sa qui pu donne considération banne madames*', which has always been mentioned by the hon. Prime Minister ...

The Deputy Speaker: Don't use a third language again. Please make your point.

Mr Jhugroo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this is more spicy. The hon. Minister of Finance mentioned in the Budget Speech, the appointment of two roving ambassadors for Africa. Will Government assure the House that the choice of these two ambassadors will be made out of a selection of people having a diplomatic career and competence? It will be a very a bad signal, if these ambassadors would be *des nominés politiques*, just to please their '*colleurs d'affiches*'. This will lead to more '*maja caro*' and more '*tamtam*' as it is in the philosophy of *Parti Travailleiste* and PMSD.

As you are well aware, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, on a specific matter, which I had raised recently in this august House, regarding the presence of a wild stag in the region of Sodnac. The movement of the stag, from *un terrain chassé* to Sodnac raises to many pertinent questions.

The Deputy Speaker: Please, look at me. Don't turn your back to me!

Mr Jhugroo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, is it because of lack of water due to drought season? Is it due to lack of food? Or, is it just because Sodnac, *c'est un plaisir*? The hon. Minister Anil Bachoo is always very attentive and a very responsive Minister. He is doing very well. I am confident that he will do the needful so that our VIPs can drive safely in this region to avoid, '*tappe are cerf*' again.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the present Government has projected to reach two million tourists ...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order now!

Mr Jhugroo: .. by year 2015. We will still be under the bar of one million tourists in year 2012. The situation has not changed. Mauritius is still as dirty as before. Stray dogs invade our beaches. Beach hawkers are constantly harassing the foreign visitors. Violence and aggressions against tourists have increased, leading to disrepute on the international scene. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, can we still consider Mauritius, *c'est un plaisir*, and still aiming at two million tourists in these lamentable conditions mentioned above?

M. le président, lors de son intervention mercredi dernier, l'*Attorney General* a pointé du doigt deux membres du *front bench* de ce côté de la Chambre, comme des accusés dans le scandale de Med Point. Il les a déjà condamnés, alors que l'enquête se poursuit et les procès sont en cours. Franchement, M. le président, il ne respecte même pas sa fonction d'*Attorney General*.

Mr Varma: I am sorry, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. My speech is on record. I, at no point in time, said that. I said that there are two members of the front bench of the party there who have been provisionally charged. There is a world of difference.

(Interruptions)

No! The hon. Member has to look at the speech!

The Deputy Speaker: Please. The hon. Minister clarified the situation. I will ask the hon. Member not to refer to the way he did. But I won't ask him to withdraw, because the hon. Minister clarified the situation. He is going to rephrase his comment, because I have not checked.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, can I make one point? The point was made by the Attorney General and, in fact, if we listen..

The Deputy Speaker: You made your point. I will have to check the record and, if need be, I'll come with an announcement in the House.

Mr Mohammed: For the guidance of the House, if I could interject. In any event, when hon. Jhugroo makes a speech and he is making an assertion that that was said, the least that we do expect is that he has in his possession Hansard, and if he does not have that with him right now, he cannot basically come and affirm that it was said.

The Deputy Speaker: He stated so from memory and, quite often...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: No, wait! I don't want to argue on this. The hon. Member referred to it out of memory. That happens very often. The hon. Minister who made the statement had the opportunity to stand up, clarify the situation, and we take it as it is. The matter is closed, but if there is need for me to check the record, I'll check it, and I will make an announcement in due course. But I take it that both members acted in good faith.

Mr Jhugroo: En contrepartie, M. le président, pourquoi n'a t-il pas fait mention des autres membres du gouvernement qui sont impliqués? Le peuple va les juger en temps et lieu. *Don't worry! Nous tan dire l'ICAC pas guet figire!* Sans commentaires! M. le président, attention au retour de manivelle!

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in this period of severe drought prevailing in Mauritius, the hon. Minister of Finance has completely overlooked this issue so important, that is, water, as if this is not his concern. On the contrary, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it is our priority of priorities. It is most urgent; without water, we will die. Can I ask the hon. Minister of Finance what decision the government has taken so far in this prevailing condition? Nothing, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

M. le président, le sport a été toujours un véritable vecteur de rassemblement. Lorsqu'il est accessible à tous, le sport est un élément unificateur, et ses valeurs sociales sont reconnues par tous - petits, grands, obèses, fragiles ou musclés. Le budget de l'honorable Xavier Duval en fait mention au paragraphe 315. M. le président, j'ai l'impression que l'honorable ministre des finances se substitue au ministre des sports, et il ne parle que du *Trust Fund*. Pourquoi? Parce que tout le monde sait très bien comment se porte le sport en général ici, chez nous à Maurice. Tous nos stades sont désertés par le grand public pour toutes les activités sportives. Le ministre Ritoo n'est jamais venu dépoussiérer le *Sports Act* et remettre à jour les lois obsolètes. Le ministre ne fait que se cantonner dans son fauteuil et gérer le sport au jour le jour. Déjà, sous l'ère Ritoo, le sport tourne aussi mal ou plus mal que du temps de ses prédécesseurs. M. le président, tout récemment, nous avons vécu le dernier Jeux des îles aux Seychelles. Et quelle a été la moisson? La débâcle ressemble à l'ancien ministre Sylvio Tang. Le ministre Ritoo et ses

acolytes se sont transformés en marchands de rêve avant et pendant ces jeux. Ils ont berné toute la population, M. le président; ils ont berné toute la population, et c'est là où le bât blesse.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Jhugroo, please! Address the Chair!

(Interruptions)

Mr Jhugroo: *Ale cachiète !*

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Jhugroo!

Mr Jhugroo: Dilapide fonds ! Betamax ! Scandale !

The Deputy Speaker: Please, address the Chair!

Mr Jhugroo: Il ne faut pas se voiler la face avec notre sport roi, c'est-à-dire, le football, qui est à son plus bas niveau et dans le trou. Il ne faut pas commettre l'erreur de croire que tout va bien dans le foot avec notre deuxième ...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Please, no cross-talking!

Mr Jhugroo: ...place du podium aux Seychelles. Non, M. le président! Je pense sincèrement qu'une remise en question n'est que plus nécessaire. Nous avons fait piètre figure aux Seychelles, et c'est le constat de tout un chacun.

I have said previously in the same House that the former Minister of Sports, Mr Sylvio Tang, *a mis notre football dans le trou*. Unfortunately, our present Minister Ritoo cannot get our football out of the *trou*, and it is sad to see, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that, day by day, it is going deeper and deeper. En sus de cela, la MFA est *en bas là haut*, le problème se corse avec deux groupes qui veulent chacun diriger cette association au détriment des joueurs de foot. Le ministre des sports reste un acteur silencieux à ce problème.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Mrs Labelle, please!

Mr Jhugroo: Autre exemple, le volleyball qui faisait honneur au pays dans le passé est aussi dans un trou profond, M. le président. J'attire votre attention que le président de cette discipline n'a pas organisé l'Assemblée générale...

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Quirin and hon. Abdullah Hossen, please!

Mr Jhugroo: *Mo trouve ban transfuge koz bokou.*

The Deputy Speaker: Please!

Mr Jhugroo: Le président de cette discipline n'a pas organisé d'assemblée générale durant trois années consécutives, et sans présenter son bilan financier. Et tout cela avec le silence complice du ministre des sports. Où va-t-on, M. le président, avec de tels dirigeants ? Le ministre est incapable d'avoir un œil attentif et d'agir dans les guéguerres dans plusieurs fédérations sportives. Un *leader* doit prendre des décisions et ne pas se cacher au troisième niveau du *Registrar Building*. Je sais que le sport n'a jamais été le cheval de bataille du Parti travailliste, et en parcourant les noms des ministres précédents qui ont dirigé le sport, nous retenons les noms de Navin Soonarane, Arouff-Parfait, Sylvio Tang, et actuellement Devanand Ritoo. Je sais que le sport va à la dérive, et que la chute du sport mauricien est irréversible.

Avant de terminer, M. le président, je voudrais, au nom de mon *Leader*, mes collègues, - *'ene seul leader, pas comment zote, transfuges!'* - et en mon nom personnel et au nom de mon parti, le MSM, remercier le Premier ministre, le *Deputy Prime Minister*, le *Leader* de l'Opposition, le Vice-Premier ministre, le ministre de la Santé, les autres membres du gouvernement, mes amis, les parlementaires du MMM, et tout le monde, le *Speaker*, le *Deputy Speaker*, la presse, la population qui ont témoigné leur sympathie à la famille Dookun-Luchoomun suite au récent accident de notre collègue, l'honorable Mme Leela Devi Dookun-Luchoomun.

Merci, M. le president.

Mrs Bappoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I move that the debate be now adjourned.

Dr. Bunwaree rose and seconded.

Question put and agreed to.

Debate adjourned accordingly.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

ATTORNEY GENERAL – SPEECH ON BUDGET

(4.31 p.m.)

The Attorney General (Mr Y. Varma): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have a point of personal explanation. I have got a copy of my speech now, and I quote from what I said -

“He belongs to a party, Mr Speaker, Sir, where two of the front benchers had been arrested in connection with corruption related offences and are actually on bail.”

At no point in time did I say that they had been charged.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you for your clarification.

ADJOURNMENT

The Deputy Prime Minister: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that this Assembly do now adjourn to Monday 14 November 2011 at 11.30 a.m.

Mr Bachoo rose and seconded.

Question put and agreed to.

The Deputy Speaker: The House stands adjourned.

At 4.32 p.m. the Assembly was, on its rising, adjourned to Monday 14 November 2011, at 11.30 a.m.