

No.26 of 2011



REPUBLIC OF MAURITIUS

FIFTH NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

**PARLIAMENTARY
DEBATES
(HANSARD)**

**FIRST SESSION
TUESDAY 15 NOVEMBER 2011**

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MAURITIUS

Fifth National Assembly

FIRST SESSION

Debate No. 26 of 2011

Sitting of Tuesday 15 November 2011

The Assembly met in the Assembly House, Port Louis

at 11.30 a.m.

The National Anthem was played

(Mr Speaker in the Chair)

PAPER LAID

The Prime Minister: Sir, the Paper has been laid on the Table –

Prime Minister's Office –

Certificate of Urgency in respect of the Bail (Amendment) Bill
(No. XXVII of 2011)

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS**INTERNATIONAL LONG DISTANCE OPERATORS – FRAUD TRACKING SYSTEM**

The Leader of the Opposition (Mr P. Bérenger) (*By Private Notice*) asked the Minister of Information and Communication Technology whether, in regard to the International Long Distance Operators, he will state who decided to set up the Fraud Tracking System and, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the -

- (a) Information and Communication Technologies Authority, information as to how Enterprise Telecom (ENTEL) was chosen for the implementation thereof, indicating if -
 - (i) potential fraud has been detected concerning two operators;
 - (ii) money has been –
 - (i) contributed to the Universal Service Fund;
 - (ii) credited to the Fraud Tracking Account,and, if so, the amount thereof, as at to date;
 - (iii) payment to Enterprise Telecom (ENTEL) has been stopped and, if so, why, and
- (b) Mauritius Telecom, information as to if it has written off the debts of one operator.

Mr Pillay Chedumbrum: Mr Speaker, Sir, as the House is aware, call termination in Mauritius is a telecommunication service whereby a duly licensed local International Long Distance (ILD) Operator collects international calls from a foreign ILD and terminates same onto either the fixed telephone network or the mobile network, so that the electronic communication will be established between a person from abroad and one in Mauritius.

For the purpose of this activity, a termination rate is payable by the foreign ILD operator to its local counterpart and a sum of 0.025 US\$ per minute of international call which a public operator terminates in Mauritius is paid into the Universal Service Fund on a monthly basis.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the termination rate is the amount of money that is paid per minute in respect of call termination service that the local operator offers to the foreign operators.

I am informed that, as far back as in year 2009, persistent representations were made by local ILD operators to the effect that the termination rate was falling drastically to the extent of jeopardizing their very existence in the market, and even preventing them from making contribution due to the Universal Service Fund. It is to be pointed out that an operator who indulges in undercutting of the termination rate commits a criminal offence under Section 46 of the ICT Act, and for which, upon conviction, the defaulter is liable, in accordance with the provisions under Section 47, to a fine not exceeding Rs1 m. and to imprisonment up to five years. The Secretary to Cabinet and Head of the Civil Service called a meeting on 14 October 2009 to discuss the matter and the Information and Communication Technologies Authority (ICTA) was tasked with the responsibility of coming up with a solution on the matter of fraud tracking on incoming international calls and with a view to stabilising the market.

I am further informed that the ICTA held consultations with the ILD operators so that a consensual solution could be found to the problem on hand. On the basis of information supplied by the operators, the Board of ICTA, at its meeting of 21 October 2009, decided that a system should be set up to track fraud on terminating calls and, for that matter, a tender exercise should be undertaken to identify a carrier neutral entity to establish a monitoring unit within ICTA for the purpose of tracking grey route traffic and undercutting, thereby establishing accountability within the existing legal and technical frameworks.

Mr Speaker, Sir, ICTA drew up a list of potential solution providers in consultation with all local ILD operators. ICTA then proceeded with a formal Request for Proposal (RFP), that is, a formal bidding process. The bidders made a presentation each on their respective proposals to all the local ILD operators. ICTA enlisted the services of a consulting firm of international repute from South Africa to make an evaluation of the five proposals received and to make a recommendation accordingly. On 14 April 2010, the Consultancy Firm submitted its Evaluation Report and the relevant recommendation. The recommendation was that "Enterprise Telecom", that is, ENTEL be retained as the solution provider and N-Soft as the alternative, should ENTEL decline the offer. In accordance with good procurement procedure, ICTA communicated the

outcome of the RFP exercise to all the ILD operators. The contract to ENTEL was awarded on 23 April 2010 and was signed on 27 August 2010.

Mr Speaker, Sir, for part (a)(i) 'potential fraud has been detected', the answer is: no. We must bear in mind that the Fraud Tracking System has not yet been fully installed.

For part (a) (ii)(i), since the establishment of the Universal Service Fund in 2008, the amount contributed to that Fund till date is Rs218,995,709.46.

For part (a) (ii)(ii), the amount credited into the Fraud Tracking Account, since its establishment in October 2010 is Rs43,073,251.42.

Mr Speaker, Sir, regarding part (a)(iii) of the question, I am informed that payment was effected to ENTEL until August 2011 when it was stopped. I am made to understand that given that ICAC was in the presence of representations regarding the award of the contract and the conditions attached thereto, it was the best and most reasonable step to take. In the light of the prevailing circumstances, ICTA has solicited legal advice on the way forward and a reply is awaited.

As for part (b) of the question, Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Mauritius Telecom that it has not written off the debt in relation to any ILD operator. However, upon specific request and based on the merit of such a request, MT does re-schedule payment due by operators who are facing financial difficulties.

Mr Bérenger: Mr Speaker, Sir, we are informed that the Fraud Tracking System mechanism was as a result of complaints received by the operators themselves, allegations of fraud undercutting the rate for incoming international calls. I am given to understand, Mr Speaker, Sir, that there were five bidders and that the bids for setting up of this fraud tracking mechanism, there was an assessment done by an international assessor, Broadband Communication Technologies of South Africa. I am given to understand they assessed and they recommended ENTEL. Can I know how the international assessor itself, Broadband Communication Technologies of South Africa, how was it chosen?

Mr Pillay Chedumbrum: Mr Speaker, Sir, being given that all the operators were present when we had the list of potential carrier neutral solution providers, proposals were requested from three potential consultancy firms, namely Broadband Communication

Technologies of South Africa, Department of Telecommunications of India, Kalba International, Inc. of USA. On the basis of competitive bidding process, Broadband Communication Technologies submitted the lowest financial proposals.

Mr Bérenger: As to whether potential fraud has been detected, we are informed that things have stopped in their track, that the fraud tracking mechanism is not yet operational. Is it not a fact that ICTA has itself detracted a very serious anomaly insofar as one of the operators is concerned, one of the smaller ones controls 40% of the incoming market, incoming calls, whereas the three big ones, Mauritius Telecom, Emtel and MTML altogether, control less than 50% and, therefore, ICTA found this to be a very seriously anomalous situation?

Mr Pillay Chedumbrum: Mr Speaker, Sir, as I have mentioned before, being given that the nature of the offence is of a criminal nature and we have, in all cases which is of a criminal nature, to prove it beyond all reasonable doubt. As I said, the Fraud Tracking System has not yet been fully installed. That's why the answer to the question was: no, we cannot, at this stage, say whether any fraud has been detected concerning the operators.

Mr Bérenger: My question was whether it is not a fact that ICTA has reported any seriously anomalous situation, there has been no answer to that. Is it not a fact that, apart from ICTA having detected undercutting of the minimum charge for terminating incoming international calls, ICTA has also been provided with information to the effect that money that should come into Mauritius in this international long distance operation business is, in fact, staying outside Mauritius?

Mr Pillay Chedumbrum: Mr Speaker, Sir, that's the whole purpose of setting up the Fraud Tracking System. As I said, we are still in the process of fine-tuning the proper installation of that Fraud Tracking System and once it is established, then we will be in a better position to make the assertion.

Mr Bérenger: In the meantime, everything has stopped in its track. I will come to that later on, Mr Speaker, Sir. As far as the fraud tracking account is concerned, we have been informed that since it became operational, Rs43 m. have gone into that fraud tracking account. Am I right in saying that there are some of the eight International Long Distance Operators that are refusing to pay, that have not paid into that fraud tracking account, that are refusing to pay and, if yes, can we have the names and the sums concerned?

Mr Pillay Chedumbrum: Mr Speaker, Sir, in fact, when those operators were involved in serious financial problems due to that grey market which was there, the idea of setting up that Fraud Tracking System was introduced. Along the line, Mr Speaker, Sir, they have problems, and as mentioned above, termination rate was falling drastically to the extent of jeopardising their very existence and could not effect regular payments in the USF Fund.

(Interruptions)

No, they have problems to pay, but they are paying. I have to check this information from ICTA, but I can tell you, Mr Speaker, Sir, that, at a certain time, those operators were having problems to face with that grey market system and now they have made a request to ICTA to effect payment at a later stage, this is being done.

Mr Bérenger: Is the hon. Minister telling the House that all these International Long Distance Operators are paying their contribution into the Fraud Tracking Account? Can I put it to him that, at least, one TLC has refused and is refusing to pay, and can I know therefore what action has been or is being taken?

Mr Pillay Chedumbrum: Mr Speaker, Sir, insofar as this operator is concerned, I do not have that information.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Let the hon. Minister answer!

(Interruptions)

Order!

Mr Pillay Chedumbrum: I do not have that information at this stage. I'll have to check it from ICTA and I will communicate it.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order!

Mr Bérenger: Is the hon. Minister aware that it is also the same firm that controls 40% of that market which ICTA has found anomalous?

Mr Pillay Chedumbrum: Mr Speaker, Sir, as I said, being given that this problem is of a criminal nature, we have to investigate. What the hon. Leader of the Opposition is saying, I do not have that information right now, but, anyway, insofar as that operator is concerned, I am going to check it with ICTA and we will come back and we will give the appropriate answer.

Mr Bérenger: I am not saying that this is of a criminal nature. You said that if a firm is undercutting the fee to be charged that is of a criminal nature. I am saying whether that firm is refusing to pay its contribution into the Fraud Tracking System. I am not saying that this is criminal; I am saying my information is that it has refused and therefore I wish to know how much it owes this fraud tracking account.

Mr Pillay Chedumbrum: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am aware that there are some operators who are having – not only one operator who is having problems – problems, but, anyway, ICTA is looking into it and has given them certain moratorium delay to effect their payment, but, at this stage, I cannot say that they have refused payment. They have not refused to effect payment, but they have asked for certain moratorium period which has been given to them.

Mr Bérenger: A fraud is taking place. ICTA has found that. A Fraud Tracking Mechanism was set up in Mauritius. Now, everything has stopped supposedly, because somebody has made some report at l'ICAC. Can I know from the hon. Minister whether he can tell us what kind of a report has been made to l'ICAC? Who has decided – it can't be l'ICAC – that the setting up of this Fraud Tracking Mechanism was to be stopped?

Mr Pillay Chedumbrum: Mr Speaker, Sir, once there has been representation made to ICAC insofar as that Fraud Tracking Mechanism is concerned, ICTA has stopped immediately all payments to ENTEL, Enterprise Telecom, which has been mentioned, because we don't want to find ourselves in the same situation as we have had in the case of MedPoint, and then later come with a case before Court to freeze payment effected.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order, Order! Order, please! Let the Minister answer!

Mr Pillay Chedumbrum: Mr Speaker, Sir, we have to wait for the enquiry to be completed and then, in the light of it, we are going to effect the payment. We all know *qui paie mal, paie deux fois*. So, we don't want to be in the same situation.

Mr Bérenger: The hon. Minister made reference to MedPoint. That enquiry is going on for one year. Are we going to meet with the same kind of situation here also and that operators will be allowed not to contribute, because ICAC, supposedly – we are not supposed to know – is carrying out an enquiry? Is that the situation?

Mr Pillay Chedumbrum: I cannot answer this question, Mr Speaker, Sir. I cannot know how much time ICAC will take.

Mr Bérenger: We should make them pay in the meantime. Mr Speaker, Sir, since ENTEL was on its way to setting up this Fraud Tracking Mechanism, it has been stopped, not only stopped in its work, but payment has stopped, is it not the case, therefore, that, that firm that was chosen through a tender procedure is now suing ICTA for millions, because they purchased equipment? They were granted this project; now they have stopped receiving monthly payment even. Is that the situation?

Mr Pillay Chedumbrum: In fact, Mr Speaker, Sir, as I have just mentioned, the ICTA Board has decided that it was in the best interest at this stage to stop the system until the enquiry is over. This is what ICTA has decided. ICTA oversees the operation of the system.

Mr Bérenger: Is it not a fact that Mauritius Telecom has objected to this firm ENTEL setting up anti-fraud equipment under the pretext that there would be a breach of confidentiality, under the pretext that those equipments set up by ENTEL would allow some people to listen to conversation, whereas ENTEL gave the guarantee that what they will measure through these instruments is the number of calls received, the length of the calls received, and were not equipment to listen to anything?

Mr Pillay Chedumbrum: Yes, Mr Speaker, Sir, but, as I said, at the office of operators, we have already installed the system of fraud tracking; others are still in the process of being done. There were certain problems which we want to sort out with ENTEL, how it is going to function. This issue has not been thrashed out yet with all the operators, and once it is done, then the whole set will go on accordingly.

Mr Bérenger: The Minister is not replying to any question. I put a simple question as to whether it is not a fact that Mauritius Telecom has objected to these instruments being installed at Mauritius Telecom itself and, if yes, are there any other operators that have objected to that?

Mr Pillay Chedumbrum: Mr Speaker, Sir, as I said, Mauritius Telecom, in fact, at a certain stage, made certain remarks concerning ICTA on that issue. Mr Speaker, Sir, the contract mentioned about a turnkey solution which is not yet provided by ENTEL. ICTA cannot pay for a system which is not fully implemented. At this stage, as I said, once Mauritius Telecom amongst others, got connected, then the system will operate fully.

(Interruptions)

Mr Bérenger: We have just been informed that everything has been stopped because of a complaint at ICAC. Now, we are told that ENTEL, supposedly, is not providing the required solution. Which is which?

Mr Pillay Chedumbrum: Mr Speaker, Sir, we must not create confusion.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Let the hon. Minister answer! It's a very technical matter.

Mr Pillay Chedumbrum: The solution provided is a forensic tool and it is internationally accepted. Rigid safeguards are in-built to protect the integrity and confidentiality of the information exchanged through calls. That's why, Mr Speaker, Sir, we have to look into it and we have to protect confidentiality of information. That is why the operator wants to get the necessary assurance from the company which has been chosen to do that fraud tracking before connecting those instruments.

Mr Bérenger: I come to the last part of my question - that's in a word. The hon. Minister has told us that Mauritius Telecom has said that they have not written off the debt of any operator, but that arrangements, that amount, in fact, to be written off, have taken place. Can I know whether that concerns more than one operator or whether it concerns TLC again and can we be provided with the details of the arrangements arrived at between Mauritius Telecom and that firm?

Mr Pillay Chedumbrum: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Mauritius Telecom that there has been no written off of any debt in relation to any ILD Operator. However, upon specific requests, and based on the merit of such requests, MT does reschedule payment due by - not only one - operators. At times, they have financial problems and there is rescheduling of payment. This is what has happened, not only with one operator, but with several operators.

This is the case. If the Leader of the Opposition wants further details as to the amount involved and the extent of facilities that they have asked for, such information can be provided for in due course, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Bérenger: Because the hon. Minister is talking about Rs5 m. there! Therefore, will the Minister provide all the details of that *arrangement* between that firm and Mauritius Telecom and will he ask Mauritius Telecom whether there was not another ministerial interference to allow the same operator particularly in favourable conditions to operate the international private lead circuit?

Mr Pillay Chedumbrum: Can the Leader of the Opposition, please, repeat the question? I have had some difficulty to hear it.

Mr Bérenger: I am first requesting that we have all the details of that *arrangement* between Mauritius Telecom and that firm and whether he will seek information from Mauritius Telecom if there was not again ministerial interference to make that firm obtain particularly favourable conditions for the rental of the international private lead circuit.

Mr Pillay Chedumbrum: Mr Speaker, Sir, I must assure the Leader of the Opposition that Mauritius Telecom is a company governed by the Companies Act.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order!

Mr Pillay Chedumbrum: The Board of Directors of the company is answerable to its shareholders in general meetings for all matters relating to the affairs of the company. All debts written off relate to the day-to-day commercial operations of the company and are approved by the Board of Directors.

Mr Jugnauth: Will the hon. Minister say how the interconnection agreement between Mauritius Telecom and the private company, TLC, compares with the other operators and will he be in a position – not now, but ultimately – to lay a copy of that interconnection agreement on the Table of the Assembly?

Mr Pillay Chedumbrum: I'll look into it, Mr Speaker, Sir, and we will communicate same, if need be.

Mr Bhagwan: Sir, the Minister has not given any reply to the question asked concerning how much money TLC should have paid to the Fraud Tracking Account. Can the hon. Minister confirm to the House, the country and the nation that special facilities have been given to the firm TLC Ltd. because one of its directors, Mr Morvan, is the *porte-parole* of the PMSD ...

(Interruptions)

This is not the case...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order! Hon. Bhagwan, order! There is no need to mention names! According to the ...

(Interruptions)

No, TLC. Members name the company, but not the name of the person. The Minister can carry on.

Mr Pillay Chedumbrum: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am not in presence of the request made by the hon. Member, but I am going to look into it.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Bodha!

Mr Bodha: Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order! Hon. Bhagwan, order!

Mr Bodha: As regards the TLC, Mr Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Minister whether the TLC has stated that they handle 5 million minutes of calls whereas the other operators have stated the TLC handles about 35-40%, that is, about 70 million. That is a huge discrepancy between....

Mr Speaker: Is the hon. Member making a statement? Please put the question!

Mr Bodha: I am asking whether he can verify this statement because of the ICAC inquiry, the situation is continuing; it means that ICTA is losing huge amounts of money?

(Interruptions)

Mr Chedumbrum Pillay: It is a repetition of the question which has been asked by the Leader of the Opposition. It has already been answered, Mr Speaker, Sir.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Hon. Uteem!

(Interruptions)

Order!

Mr Uteem: The hon. Minister ...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order!

Mr Uteem: The hon. Minister mentioned that the contract awarded to ENTEL was awarded in August 2010 and they stopped payment in August 2011. May I know from the hon. Minister, in the space of one year, whether ENTEL had issued any interim report stating that fraud was being carried out in Mauritius on the incoming calls?

Mr Chedumbrum Pillay: No, as I said before, this fraud tracking mechanism has not yet been installed completely. So, you cannot, by piecemeal, say that there has been fraud here; once the fraud tracking system has been established everywhere, it is only then that you can identify whether there is fraud or not.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Hon. Li Kwong Wing!

(Interruptions)

Mr Li Kwong Wing: Mr Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Minister whether he is aware that, in fact, all the servers and materials have been installed in every single operator's premises except the Mauritius Telecom and that, as late as last week, a full report has been submitted by ENTEL to ICTA detailing out with proofs and evidences the amount of illegal undercutting that is taking place from international calls coming out of France?

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order!

Mr Chedumbrum Pillay: Mr Speaker, Sir, what has been asserted by the hon. Member is not to my knowledge. I will check it with the ICTA.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Hon. Leader of the Opposition, any further question?

Mr Bérenger: Can I just point out that we are talking about ENTEL, the French firm and not the EMTEL, the local operator, in case there is confusion?

Mr Speaker, Sir, ICTA came to the conclusion that there is serious concern for fraud on the undercutting of the fees to be paid, on the amount of minutes that come in through this or that operator and also money staying out there in France especially instead of coming back to Mauritius. On the basis of such information, ICTA went ahead to set up a fraud tracking account. What we have heard today, will the Minister agree that it is urgent that ENTEL be allowed to pursue its work, install those fraud tracking apparatus everywhere, every operator including the Mauritius Telecom? Does he agree with me that there is an urgency to act?

Mr Chedumbrum Pillay: In the first place, that is what we wanted to do. But, Mr Speaker, Sir, we have to take into consideration that this is what we wanted. The problem of fraud tracking has existed a long time before and we came with a solution. But being given, as I said, that there is that inquiry which is being conducted into the appointment of ENTEL to do that job, Mr Speaker, Sir, we have to look into it before taking any action.

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

OLD PARLIAMENT HOUSE – REFURBISHMENT

(No. B/860) Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in regard to the refurbishment of the Old Parliament House, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to -

- (a) if there is any delay in the completion thereof and, if so, the reasons therefor, and
- (b) the amount disbursed as at to date.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Clerk of the National Assembly that following a tender exercise, the contract for the refurbishment of the Old Parliament House, which is listed as a National Heritage building, was awarded on 01 March 2010, to the firm IREKO Construction Ltd. for the sum of three hundred and twenty-seven million, five hundred and seventy-four thousand and seven hundred and eighty-one rupees and twelve cents (Rs327,574,781.12), including a contingency sum of twenty seven million rupees (Rs27 m). Works started on 02 April 2010 and were scheduled to be completed by 11 June 2011.

In regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed that the project is behind schedule in view of the fact that when the contractor started the project, additional works, unforeseen at the time of the award of the contract, were identified. At the time the consultant for the project was working on the details of the project, it was decided to replace only 35% of the timber structure of the building based on visual assessment of the state of the building. It was only when the contractor started demolition works that the actual state of the timber structure became apparent and it was decided to replace the whole timber structure. Furthermore, after the award of the contract, the National Heritage Fund raised objection to the use of stainless steel plates in the project and it was decided to use traditional wooden jointing systems which required additional time for execution. Accordingly, the scope of works was amended and an extension was granted to the contractor to enable him to complete the additional works. The project is now expected to be completed by the end of December 2011.

It is to be noted that the use of traditional wooden jointing systems led to savings of about six million rupees (Rs6 m.) under the project. As for the replacement of the whole timber structure, this entailed an additional cost of twenty four million rupees (Rs24 m.), which is being met under the contingency sum of twenty-seven million rupees (Rs27 m.) provided in the contract which I mentioned earlier. Therefore, there will be no increase in the overall cost of the project.

In regard to part (b) of the question, I am informed that to date, an amount of one hundred and sixty-five million, six hundred and eighty-nine thousand and one hundred and forty-two rupees and eighty-four cents (Rs165,689,142.84) has been disbursed to the contractor.

Mr Bhagwan: Can I know from the hon. Prime Minister whether the refurbishment of the Sir Harilall Vaghjee Hall forms part of the contract of this project?

The Prime Minister: I do not know the full extent, I believe not.

Mr Bhagwan: Can I know from the hon. Prime Minister whether the Central Procurement Board has been apprised of all these changes mentioned in the contract where changes have been allowed to the contractor?

The Prime Minister: I presume it has been, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Bhagwan: I have one last question, Sir. Being given that next year will be the *centenaire* of late Sir Harilall Vaghjee, what about the provision where Government agreed to put a stele of late Sir Harilall Vaghjee, the first Mauritian Speaker, somewhere in the building? I asked that question last year and Government agreed. As next year will be the *centenaire de feu* Sir Harilall Vaghjee, can I know from the Prime Minister whether Government will take this opportunity to have this commemorated and the stele be placed in a well placed area?

The Prime Minister: Yes, it is fitting that we should have a stele of Sir Harilall Vaghjee there. He was first elected to the National Assembly in 1948 together with the Father of the Nation and Mr Anauth Beejadhur. He was also appointed Speaker in March 1960 and stayed as Speaker until he passed away in 1979. So, it is fitting that we should have his stele there. In fact, I understand, the hon. Member has said whether it should be at a proper place, it is going to be, from what I see, a very proper place where they are going to put it.

Mr Bhagwan: Can I just make a final request to the hon. Prime Minister; we were being told that this question of stele was monitored by the Ministry of Arts and Culture. I have some problems; can I make a request to the hon. Prime Minister that this project be monitored by his Office?

(Interruptions)

The Prime Minister: In fact, the Minister of Arts and Culture is doing all the procedures for the launching of the tender which I am monitoring.

Mr Ameer Meea: Mr Speaker, Sir, the hon. Prime Minister stated that traditional wood has been used instead of steel and this has resulted in a saving of Rs6 m. Can I ask the hon. Prime Minister if this sum would be deducted in the contract amount?

The Prime Minister: As I have explained, the replacement of the timber structure is costing more, I think, Rs24 m. as I mentioned. This is provided under the Contingency Fund, which is going to be used. So, all of these would be added up, I am sure.

Mr Speaker: There is a supplementary question from hon. Lesjongard.

Mr Lesjongard: May I ask the hon. Prime Minister since he has said that there have been delays in the completion of the works; can we have an indication of the date of completion? The hon. Prime Minister has also stated that there are variations; will there be penalties also for the delay?

The Prime Minister: No, there is a due contract which has been signed. They were thinking that there was about 35% of the timber structure, which would have to be replaced, but they could not say until they started breaking and looking at the structure, what is the state of the timber and its worth. When they started the demolition works, then it became quite clear that the timber structure was not in a position to be left there, so they replaced it. This cannot be made as if it was their fault because they cannot know until they start the work. It is expected to be completed by the end of December of this year.

ROAD ACCIDENTS (FATAL) – PREVENTION

(No. B/861) Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in regard to fatal road accidents, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to the number of reported cases thereof, since January 2011 to date, indicating if all the steps announced for the prevention thereof have been implemented and, if so, if they are yielding expected results, and, if not, if corrective steps will be taken.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that from January 2011 to 14 November 2011, that is, yesterday, 106 fatal road accidents occurred resulting in the death of 125 persons.

In my replies to the Private Notice Question on 21 June 2011 and Parliamentary Question B/822 on 08 November 2011, I dwelt extensively on the measures taken by Government through the Police Department, the Traffic Management and Road Safety Unit of the Ministry of Public

Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping and the Special Road Safety Unit of my Office to reduce fatalities on our roads.

Mr Speaker, Sir, statistics indicate that these measures are yielding positive results – not good enough - I am the first to admit that they are yielding some positive results. In fact, a comparison between figures for the period of January to November 2010 and the figures for the same period this year demonstrates a decrease of approximately 16% in the number of fatal road accidents.

Mr Speaker, Sir, as I have mentioned on several occasions, road safety remains a priority issue of the Government, and we are sparing no efforts to reinforce these measures taken to address the issue so as to get further positive results. The measures include - I don't want to go and list all the measures, but they also include -

- (i) the intensification of public awareness and sensitisation campaigns on road safety matters for the population at large. I believe, for example, during the festive season, they will have lots of advertisements on the dangers of drinking and driving at the same time;
- (ii) road safety audits by the Traffic Management and Road Safety Unit of the Ministry of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping and the Traffic Branch of the Police Department with a view to identifying the black spots that we have. A list of 33 such black spots has already been established by the Ministry of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping;
- (iii) also the purchase of 53 additional fixed and mobile speed cameras by the Ministry of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping. 25 of these new cameras will be received, I understand, by April 2012 and will be operational, as soon as they can, because there is a procedure to make them operational;
- (iv) the purchase of 900 Belisha flashing lamps by the Ministry of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping to be installed at pedestrian crossings along classification roads. Tender procedures in this connection have already been initiated by the Ministry of Public

Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping and the Belisha flashing lamps are expected to be delivered by April 2012, and they are expected to be installed by August 2012;

- (v) the review of the legal framework with a view to introducing the Penalty Point System in the first instance and thereafter the introduction of a probationary driving licence scheme. The draft of the Bill is nearly finalised. Also we are putting up a special Squad Unit to control that all road users are abiding by the law. Additional motorcycles – around 50 – are being purchased at the moment, and
- (vi) the setting up of a Driver Education and Training Centre to provide for formal and systematic training and education programmes designed to improve road user skills, and promote responsible attitudes and behaviours amongst drivers. Land of an extent of 20 hectares has already been identified at Highlands for the project and I stated this in my reply to Parliamentary Question No. B/819 which was tabled as a written reply.

Mr Bérenger: I think that the Ministry concerned and the Police are doing their best currently to bring fatal road accidents on the decrease. When we have temporary structures like the one, diversion on the *autoroute*, why did we have to wait for more than 12 accidents at this diversion, at Sorèze and the near fatal accident of somebody on motorcycle, for the hon. Minister to pay a visit and certain arrangements were made? We could have had fatal accidents and maybe the nearly fatal one and maybe the gentleman may have died in the meantime. Why don't we plan for such temporary problems better?

The Prime Minister: My understating is that there had been monitoring from the very start, it is not when the accident happened. When the accident happened, obviously they went to have another look.

Mr Bérenger: Can I point out to the hon. Prime Minister something which I raised regularly here. It is still going on, that is, people are not aware that they are to leave the fast lane. They drive slowly on the fast lane. When we see those cars at high speed, swerve to the left and swerve back to the right, why can't the Police and the Traffic Authority do something, that is, educate the drivers, not just the lady drivers, but all the drivers to stay on the right when driving slowly?

The Prime Minister: Yes, of course, you can't drive fast because you are on the fast lane. I even got somebody to be stopped; I do not want to mention names here because they are just unfit to drive. They just don't know. If they are going to turn at Jumbo, from here they are going to drive on the right lane, that is, the problem. That is why we are having the Driving Centre, which is going to be very strict. We are going to have new licences issued. A campaign is going to start, but we are not going to start it just yet because we are not quite ready. This has to be done. With the additional number of 50 policemen on motorcycles, this also will be part of the job to do.

Mr Bhagwan: The hon. Prime Minister has given us a list of measures, some are good measures, but each time when there is an accident, we hear his special adviser coming and speak only on one measure, *permis à point*. He does not speak about other measures. Every time there is a pretext, we are coming with *permis à point*. I think there should be a concerted action and give, at least, some replies and directives to the population.

The Prime Minister: Maybe he is speaking of that because this is imminent, but there are a lot of measures. He cannot speak on the MBC for 15 minutes either, he won't be given time.

Mr Bhagwan: I hope that the hon. Prime Minister will not take it personally. There is one thing that I have talked to him last time. Every time when we are driving on the motorway, when we have the VVIPs coming with their *bolides* – it happened to me five or six times *et connaissant ma grande gueule, M. le président* – I don't know whether the hon. Prime Minister is aware about the new formula one motorcycles - I am not talking for him personally even the hon. Deputy Prime Minister. This does not only give a bad image to them, which we at least canvassed more, try to give them some directives so as to prevent further accidents. There had been accidents in Sorèze, at least involving one of these motorcycles recently.

The Prime Minister: This was because the lady stopped right in the fast track. She was told to go to the left, I do not want to go into the details, but I understand that she was told to go to the left. She started to go to the left and stopped again. I tend to agree with the hon. Member and I have been saying this, since before when I was Leader of the Opposition. That's the way they have been trained. I keep telling them and, in fact, I try to go when there is less traffic on the

road. I spend more time lost on the road than otherwise, in spite of the motorcycles. So, I will pass on that request.

Mr Jhugroo: Mr Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Prime Minister whether he will consider to make use of facilities of helicopters to intervene, to rescue victims of fatal accidents where access by road is difficult, especially due to traffic jam?

The Prime Minister: I totally agree with this; we are doing this. In fact, there have been requests also from the private hospitals to be allowed to use helicopters. We are also allowing motorcycles, because they do this in Europe, as they can go through the traffic very quickly. We are also doing this.

Dr. S. Boolell: Mr Speaker, Sir, would it be possible to ask the hon. Prime Minister to consider the introduction of flashing lights, near all zebra crossings - I nearly said stag crossings? There must be some study about accidents in relation to poor lighting at night.

The Prime Minister: I suppose the hon. Member is talking about the belisha flashing lights I mentioned. I have mentioned the purchasing of 900 of these. We are going to look at this, because there are going to be problems with vandalism. We are also tightening the law.

Mr Bhagwan: Mr Speaker, Sir, can I ask the hon. Prime Minister whether it is not time to review the operational orders, whenever there are accidents, concerning all the different services - even the Fire Services, which can be of great use - especially with regard to access for ambulances? Very often, the ambulances have problems when there are cases of accidents, and we know that many drivers *sont inconscients*. Can I ask the hon. Prime Minister if the Commissioner of Police could review the operational orders involving all the different services, especially the Fire Services, the Red Cross and the ambulance service?

The Prime Minister: In fact, we are looking at all this; we are looking at the whole panoply of measures, including the idea that you automatically have to arrest somebody who might be innocent, sitting in the car; there is an accident, and you go and arrest him. We are looking at that also.

SSR INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT – ON-GROUND OPERATORS

(No. B/862) **Mrs F. Labelle (Third Member for Vacoas & Floreal)** asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in regard to

the small on-ground operators at the airports, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Airports of Mauritius Ltd., information as to the facilities, if any, extended thereto, in the performance of their duties.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, the Airports of Mauritius Co. Ltd., as any company governed by the Companies Act and its constitution, has its own internal procedures. The management of the company is vested in its Directors and its Management. It would, therefore, not be appropriate to embark on a debate about the terms and conditions under which on-ground operators at Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam International Airport are allowed to operate, as this is a management issue falling under the responsibility of the senior management and Board of Directors.

Small on-ground operators are at liberty to take up any issues concerning their operations direct with the management of Airports of Mauritius Ltd.

SSR INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT – NEW TERMINAL

(No. B/863) Ms S. Anquetil (Fourth Member for Vacoas & Floreal) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in regard to the Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam International Airport, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from Airports of Mauritius Ltd., information as to where matters stand as to the construction of the new terminal therefor.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, the main objective of the construction of a new terminal at Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam International Airport is to provide a modern state-of-the-art one and to position it as a hub in the region. The major components of the project are -

- (a) a surface area of 57,000 square metres, with a capacity to accommodate 4 million passengers;
- (b) 5 boarding gates, one of which will be A380 compatible;
- (c) a new terminal with a pedestrian bridge leading to the existing terminal;
- (d) a new aircraft parking area;
- (e) 5 telescopic passenger boarding bridges;
- (f) 6 baggage claim carrousel;

- (g) 52 check-in desks;
- (h) a landside car park located in front of the new terminal;
- (i) a viaduct elevated access roadway, and
- (j) new cooling and emergency power plants.

As the House is aware, Airports of Mauritius Ltd. has entered into a strategic partnership with *Aéroports de Paris* Management for the implementation of the project and a new company, Airport Terminal Operations Ltd. has been set up for that purpose. The financing of the project is through a loan of USD260 m., secured in February 2009 by the Airports of Mauritius Ltd. from Exim Bank of China at a concessionary rate of 2% for a period of 15 years.

Following a tendering exercise, the contract was awarded to the firm China State Construction Engineering Corporation Ltd. on 30 December 2009 for an amount of USD305,813,752. The Chinese company is one of the largest companies in China and has a world-wide reputation for having implemented successfully several similar projects in different countries, including Europe. It is, in fact, ranked amongst the 16 largest international general contractors worldwide.

Works on site at SSR International Airport started on 30 March 2011. So far, 41% of the project has been completed. Concrete works on the new passenger terminal are 90% complete, and curtain walls and glazing installations are already visible on site. Two new aircraft parking stands have been completed and already handed over to Airports of Mauritius Ltd. The overall apron construction is 60% complete. According to Airport Terminal Operations Ltd., the works are progressing satisfactorily.

The completion date for construction works was scheduled for September of next year, that is, 2012. However, the contractor has been granted a three months extension in view of the fact that additional works were identified following sub-surface soil investigations, which revealed the presence of caves at the construction site. It must be pointed out that these additional works will not impact on the project cost. The project is now expected to be completed by December 2012, and the new terminal to be operational by early 2013.

Mr Bérenger: I go along with the hon. Prime Minister that this Chinese construction firm is one of the best in the world. But, for the record, is it a fact that the tendering procedure was open only to Chinese firms?

The Prime Minister: Yes, Mr Speaker, Sir. That is part of the conditions of the loan.

Mr Bérenger: I heard the hon. Prime Minister say that a new company - management, consultancy, project implementation committee; I have lost the name - has been set up by Airports of Mauritius Ltd and *Aéroports de Paris*. Can we have the shareholding of that company?

The Prime Minister: The shareholding is as follows: AML has 90% of the shares and *Aéroports de Paris* 10% of the shares.

Mr Lesjongard: Mr Speaker, Sir, since the hon. Prime Minister has stated that the main contractor is Chinese, can we know from him whether the Chinese contractor has recruited local contractors, and can we have the name of same?

The Prime Minister: I cannot go into the details where they went and sub-contract. All they have to do is respect our contract and carry out the works. What they do with sub-contracting, we do not get into that.

Mr Seeruttun: Merci, M. le président. L'honorable Premier ministre doit sûrement savoir que les travaux se font aussi dans la nuit à l'aéroport et, comme cela se trouve dans une région résidentielle, cela cause pas mal de *hardship* sur les gens de la région. Est-ce qu'il compte quand même revoir cette position afin que les travaux cessent la nuit? Car cela permettra aux gens de dormir tranquillement.

The Prime Minister: Unfortunately, we can't do that, Mr Speaker, Sir. They have a tight schedule, they have to deliver in time, and they are working during the night. It is quite far away, and I am not sure that they disturb people.

Mr Jhugroo: After the construction of the ...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order!

Mr Jhugroo: ...terminal, with regard to new spaces, will the hon. Prime Minister see to it that transparent procedures will be used to allocate the commercial units?

The Prime Minister: I understand that those who are already operating will have preferential access, but this will be the case.

POLICE OFFICERS – OVERSEAS MISSIONS, COURSES & SCHOLARSHIPS

(No. B/864) Mr K. Li Kwong Wing (Second Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in regard to the Police Officers, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, a list thereof who have, since January 2006 to date -

- (a) proceeded on overseas missions;
- (b) been offered overseas courses, and
- (c) been awarded overseas scholarships, indicating in each case, the
 - (i) grade and posting of the police officer;
 - (ii) country in which same was undertaken, and
 - (iii) composition of the panel which carried out the designation/selection therefor.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, as regards parts (a), (b), and (c) (i) and (ii) of the question, the information requested by the hon. Member is being compiled and will be laid on the Table of the National Assembly as soon as it is ready.

As regards to part (c) (iii), I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that a Selection Board is set up depending on the subject matter. The Board, normally chaired by the Officer-in-Charge of the Unit concerned, comprises members selected by the Officer-in-Charge from the relevant Unit.

In addition to the specific criteria for the course, the assessment is also based on the following -

- (a) medical and physical fitness;
- (b) age, length of service, qualification and experience in the relevant field;

- (c) service employability;
- (d) technical knowledge;
- (e) general knowledge;
- (f) communication skills/turnout, and
- (g) conduct and performance at work.

The Selection Board submits its recommendations to the Commissioner of Police for approval at his level. The nomination is then forwarded to the Permanent Secretary of my Office for administrative approval and transmission to the authorities concerned.

Mr Speaker, Sir, in case a training course is meant to enhance the nominee's chances of promotion, the course is then advertised to the whole Force in a Special Routine Order, inviting interested and eligible candidates to submit their application thereof. The candidates meeting the set criteria are required to undergo physical/medical tests. Thereafter, the successful candidates are assessed by a Selection Board set up to select the best candidate for the course and chaired by the Commissioner of Police. The approval of the Disciplined Forces Service Commission (DFSC) is sought for the nomination.

Mr Li Kwong Wing: Mr Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Prime Minister whether he would request the Commissioner of Police to ensure that overseas scholarships in specific subjects be allocated to Police officers actually serving in these resident areas and also to ascertain that equal opportunities are really given to all serving officers so that we don't have the same click of officers getting a privilege of enjoying these overseas training all the time?

The Prime Minister: In fact, I can tell the hon. Member that, not now, but even before - during my first term - I had noticed that there is a tendency for the same persons to be selected and we know why afterwards, because there was an inquiry. But, I always say that because we need to have not just one person, but we need to train the others as well. That has been passed on to the Commissioner of Police.

INDEPENDENT BROADCASTING AUTHORITY - LEGAL ADVISERS

(No. B/865) Dr. R. Sorefan (Fourth Member for La Caverne & Phoenix) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in

regard to the Independent Broadcasting Authority, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Authority, information as to the names of the full time and part time legal advisers whose services have been retained, since 2007 to date, indicating in each case, the -

- (a) effective date thereof;
- (b) terms and conditions thereof;
- (c) quantum of fees paid thereto, and
- (d) number of overseas trips undertaken, indicating in each case, the -
 - (i) cost;
 - (ii) country visited, and
 - (iii) purpose therefor.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Director of the Independent Broadcasting Authority that, since 2007 to date, the Authority has retained the services of two part-time Legal Advisers, namely, Ms Aruna Devi Narain and Mr Nawaz Dookhee.

In regard to part (a) of the Question, I am informed by the Director of the IBA that Ms Narain served as part-time Legal Adviser during the period March 2007 to 30 June 2011 when she took up the position of Parliamentary Counsel. Mr Dookhee's services have been retained since October 2009.

Regarding part (b) of the Question, I am informed by the Director of the IBA that the services of Ms Narain were enlisted on a retainer basis against payment of a monthly fee whereas Mr Dookhee served on a retainer basis for the period of October 2009 to 30 September 2011 against payment of a monthly fee. He was also remunerated for his other professional services, on a case-to-case basis.

In order to cope with the increasing volume of work, the Authority has, as from 01 October 2011, retained the services of Mr Dookhee, as part-time Legal Adviser, against payment of revised legal fees, on the condition that he appears in Court in at least one case in a month without additional remuneration and he would continue to be remunerated for his other professional services, on a case-to-case basis.

In regard to part (c) of the Question, I am informed by the Director of the Authority that Ms Narain was paid a monthly retainer fee of Rs8,000 monthly. For his part, Mr Dookhee was entitled to a retainer fee of Rs25,000 (rupees twenty five thousand) monthly for the period October 2009 to 30 September 2011. He was paid an amount of Rs64,706 (rupees sixty-four thousand seven hundred and six) as revised legal fees for the month of October 2011. In addition, he drew an amount of Rs203,500 (rupees two hundred and three thousand and five hundred) for professional services provided to the Authority for the period October 2009 to date.

Regarding part (d) of the Question, I am informed by the Director of the Authority that the legal advisers have not undertaken any overseas trips on behalf of the Authority. So, the other parts of the Question do not arise.

PEREYBÈRE - POLICE STATION

(No. B/866) Mr A. Gungah (First Member for Grand' Baie & Poudre d'Or) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in regard to the setting up of a Police Station at Pereybère, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to if land has already been identified therefor and, if so, indicate the -

- (a) location, and
- (b) extent thereof.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that the village of Pereybère falls under the policing jurisdiction of Grand' Baie Police Station which is located some two kilometres away.

In 2001, procedures were initiated for the setting up of a Police Station in Pereybère following requests from the inhabitants of that village. Subsequently, on 20 December 2001, a plot of land of an extent of 1,393m² situated at the corner of Old Mill Road and Grand' Baie/Cap Malheureux Road was vested in the Police Department for the construction of a Police Station.

However, the project was put on hold as the region of Pereybère was felt adequately policed by the Grand' Baie Police Station and its attached units.

Furthermore, the recent installation of a CCTV Surveillance System in the Grand' Baie region and which covers Pereybère and its surroundings areas has reinforced security there.

Therefore, it is not proposed to proceed with the construction of a Police Station at Pereybère for the time being. It has not been cancelled but, for the time being that is not felt to be a priority.

Mr Speaker: Time is over! I must inform the House that PQ Nos. B/869 and B/870 addressed to Dr. the hon. Prime Minister have been withdrawn! Questions addressed to hon. Ministers! Hon. Mrs Radegonde!

RIVIERE DES GALETS - SEA SWELLS

(No. B/877) Mrs J. Radegonde (Fourth Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Minister of Housing and Lands whether, in regard to Rivière des Galets, he will state where matters stand as to the proposed steps to be taken for the protection of the inhabitants thereof in the face of the dangers that the recurrence of sea swells represent thereto.

Dr. Kasenally: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed that following storms surges which occurred in May 2007, a Technical Committee was set up at the then Ministry of Environment and National Development Unit to propose appropriate measures to protect the shoreline and residences at Rivière des Galets.

I am further informed by the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development, that, upon recommendation of the Technical Committee, rehabilitation works comprising installation of new gabion works and the construction of a second line of defence over some 450 metres to the tune of Rs19 m. were carried out in 2008.

Furthermore, Mr Speaker, Sir, the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development is also undertaking replacement of the damaged gabions. The works are expected to be completed by end of January 2012.

I am also informed by the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development that under the “Climate Change Adaptation Programme in the coastal Zone of Mauritius” funded by the UNDP, works being envisaged include -

- (a) Design and construction of detached offshore submerged structures (sloped rock mounds) to attenuate the impact of surges and waves, and
- (b) Drains works to redirect surge flood water and wave overtopping water from the village back of the bay.

These Works are expected to be completed by the end of 2014.

The Technical Committee also recommended the relocation of the inhabitants of Rivière des Galets to higher grounds for security and safety reasons. In this respect, my Ministry is in the process of identifying a suitable site.

Mrs Radegonde: Mr Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Minister if budgetary provision has been made for the drain work that is stated?

Dr. Kasenally: This falls within the precincts of the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development. I am certain that it has been done because it has been projected to start and due to finish in 2012.

DREAM BRIDGE PROJECT - LAND ACQUISITION

(No. B/878) Mr A. Ameer Meea (First Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Minister of Housing and Lands whether, in regard to the Dream Bridge Project, he will state if Government proposes to compulsorily acquire the lands and houses found in the region of Quartier Shell, Roche Bois, therefor and, if so, indicate -

- (a) the number thereof, and
- (b) if the procedures have already been initiated, and if so, where matters stand.

Dr. Kasenally: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Road Development Authority that Preliminary Survey exercise has been completed in the region of Quartier Shell, Roche Bois for the Harbour Bridge Project.

I am further informed that no housing units will be affected, except the Shell Filling Station which is on State land.

As soon as the survey reports are submitted to my Ministry, action will be taken for Notices under Section 6 of the Land Acquisition Act to be published. This is expected to be done around mid-January 2012.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Leader of the Opposition!

Mr Bérenger: Can I ask the hon. Minister whether, at the Roche Bois end and on this side, the alignment of the bridge and the route leading to the bridge have been finalised?

Dr. Kasenally: Yes, I understand that they have been finalised and, in fact, we have sent notices for acquisition of private land and, I think, the procedure is well under way, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Jugnauth: Can the hon. Minister say whether Government had initially agreed on a first alignment and thereafter, the same project was reviewed and there was a second alignment that was adopted by Government?

Dr. Kasenally: Yes. Mr Speaker, Sir, a second alignment was undertaken, in fact, to save as much of acquisition of private lands and maintain the property of individuals.

Mr Uteem: Mr Speaker, Sir, may I know from the hon. Minister whether the procurement procedures, tenders, have been launched to get the person who is going to build that bridge before acquiring land all around?

Mr Speaker: No. The question is about acquisition of land. You are going too far now! Hon. Ameer Meea!

Mr Ameer Meea: Mr Speaker, Sir, I thank the hon. Minister to reassure the House that the people from Quartier Shell won't be affected with the...

Mr Speaker: There is no need for the hon. Member to repeat what the hon. Minister has said!

(Interruptions)

I am telling the hon. Member that he has no right to repeat what the hon. Minister has said! This is a statement! The hon. Member has to put questions to ask clarifications on the answer which the hon. Minister has given. This is the Standing Order!

Mr Ameer Meea: Can I ask the hon. Minister if other parts of the region of Roche Bois, apart from Quartier Shell would be affected by this Dream Bridge Project?

Dr. Kasenally: So far, as I understand, from the Ministry of Public Infrastructure, no information has been provided to me. But, as I said, as the information is provided, I will take appropriate action and if a question is put, I will answer it.

Mr Jugnauth: Can the hon. Minister say the difference in terms of expenses that would have had to be incurred in terms of compulsorily acquiring land between the first and the second alignment?

Dr. Kasenally: Apparently this exercise has been carried out by the Ministry of Public Infrastructure and the sole object of the exercise is to reduce cost. By how much, I am not aware of it, but apparently it is of a substantial nature.

**MUNICIPAL COUNCIL OF PORT LOUIS - BEST CARE COMPANY LTD - GOODS
PURCHASE**

(No. B/879) Mr A. Ameer Meea (First Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the Best Care Company Limited, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Municipal Council of Port Louis, information as to the quantity of goods purchased therefrom, since October 2005 to date, giving details thereof, including the –

- (a) cost thereof;
- (b) date of purchase;
- (c) total amount of money paid thereto, on a yearly basis, and
- (d) procedures followed.

Mr Aimée: Mr Speaker, Sir, the information requested by the hon. Member is very lengthy and is being in the Library.

Mr Ameer Meea: I understand that the information is very lengthy. According to my information; indeed, there has been voluminous purchase from Best Care Company Limited. Can I ask the hon. Minister if he is aware that the proprietor of this company is a Municipal Councillor of the Council of Port Louis?

Mr Aimée: I am not aware, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Speaker: Next question, hon. Labelle!

MR M. P. - EYE SURGERY – MEDICAL NEGLIGENCE

(No. B/880) Mrs F. Labelle (Third Member for Vacoas & Floreal) asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether, in regard to medical negligence, he will state if an alleged

case thereof has been reported to his Ministry concerning one Mr M. P., in relation to an eye surgery and, if so, if an inquiry has been carried out thereinto, indicating the outcome thereof.

Mr Bundhoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, I wish to thank the hon. Member for this question. I am informed that Mr M. P., 71 years old started eye treatment at the Subramania Bharati Eye Hospital in 2006. He was suffering from dimness of vision in both eyes caused by cataract.

The patient underwent surgery on his left eye on 17 August 2007 by the Consultant in Charge. The next day he developed a minor post operative complication which, I am being informed, was successfully managed by the treating doctor. He was regularly followed up at the hospital and underwent surgery in his right eye on 25 May 2009. Following the surgeries, the patient attended hospital on several occasions, complaining of sticky eyes and poor vision in the left eye. He was prescribed medication.

Upon the request of the patient, two different eminent visiting doctors in Ophthalmology, namely Professor Tabatabay, and Dr. Leveziel from renowned Centres in Switzerland and France examined him on 12 May and 18 July 2010 respectively. Both doctors recommended that the patient needed no surgery but only eye drops as treatment.

On 25 October 2010, the patient proceeded to England on his own at the London Ophthalmology Centre. He underwent a surgical intervention in his left eye (repositioning of the intra ocular lens and separation of adhesions) at the British Hospital and was prescribed eye drops. After the operation, on his return to Mauritius, the patient applied to my Ministry for a refund amounting to five thousand pounds (£ 5,000), in connection with his treatment in U.K.

Following his overseas treatment in 2010, he was assessed on 21 July 2011 by Professor Wajid Ali Khan, Visiting Professor from Pakistan. The Professor was of the opinion that his vision did not improve in spite of his surgical operation in U.K. He was reviewed on 03 August 2011 by his treating doctor and was given appointment to be seen again.

Mr Speaker Sir, on 19 September 2011, a letter was addressed to my Ministry by Mr M. P., the patient. Following this, a preliminary enquiry was carried out at the level of Moka Eye Hospital on 14 October 2011 to look into this case. Subsequent to the report of the preliminary enquiry, the matter is now being referred to the Medical Council of Mauritius for an in-depth, independent enquiry.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Minister whether he is aware of the report submitted by Dr. Sharma, Consultant, stating that some iris tissue has been damaged from the first surgery? Has he taken cognizance of this report?

Mr Bundhoo: Yes, Mr Speaker, Sir, I have taken cognizance of this report and I have also taken cognizance of the report submitted to my Ministry from the Moka Eye Hospital and precisely because of this I have initiated personally and requested that the whole matter be referred to an independent body, the Medical Council.

Mr Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition!

Mr Bérenger: The hon. Minister told us that the patient put in a request for financial assistance but he did not tell us what happened next. Can we know from him whether he obtained financial assistance?

Mr Bundhoo: In fact, the patient did put a request, Mr Speaker, Sir through his Attorney, Mr Nathoo, I understand. He was subsequently replied by the Ministry. But he was turned down because he did not follow the procedure and this is also precisely because there was an alleged malpractice. He was turned down because he did not apply for the financial assistance prior to going to the UK, but despite all of this, because of the nature of the case, I have myself decided to refer it to an independent body. Subsequently, in accordance to the report by the independent body, we shall act accordingly.

Dr. S. Boolell: In a matter relating to an alleged case of malpractice in an eye hospital like in this case, does the hon. Minister consider it normal to have a first report from doctors of that same hospital or would the Minister not consider to have an independent body from retired ophthalmologists to look into it, which might be a fairer proposition?

Mr Bundhoo: This is exactly what I said because the report was from the Moka Eye Hospital and it was written by a doctor who is junior to the doctor who conducted the operation firstly. It is as if asking a surgeon to make a report on the inspector. This is precisely why I have decided in my own deliberate judgment to refer it to an independent body to do the inquiry.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister mentioned that a Consultant after having examined the patient stated that after the surgery, his eye sight did not improve. But is the hon. Minister aware that in a letter sent to his Ministry, this patient was not complaining of

the eyesight, but his eye was itching and so on and this was the condition which he was complaining. Has this been improved after the surgery?

Mr Bundhoo: I have to say one thing, Mr Speaker, Sir. Three specialist doctors from overseas, France, Switzerland and Pakistan, all of them, their views are in concordance. What happened in the UK, I am not a doctor; I am not able to say exactly what happened there. This is precisely why subsequent to the questions from hon. S. Boolell and your previous questions, we have decided to refer it to an independent body so as to shed lights into the whole issue once and for all.

MR I. S. - MORCELLEMENT PERMIT - APPLICATION

(No. B/881) Mrs S. B. Hanoomanjee (Second Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Minister of Housing and Lands whether he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the *Morcellement* Board, information as to if Mr I. S. has submitted an application for the issue of a *Morcellement* permit in respect of a plot of land in Henrietta, Vacoas, and, if so, when.

Dr. Kasenally: Mr Speaker Sir, I am informed that Mr I. S. submitted an application on 26 May, 2005 for the issue of a *Morcellement* permit on a plot of land of an extent of 10A 42 perches in relation to a residential *Morcellement* at Henrietta, Vacoas.

At the time of application, the then Ministry of Agriculture, Food Technology and Natural Resources had already, on 25 August 2004, issued a Land Conversion Permit in respect of the said site.

The application for *Morcellement* permit was examined by the Board, and after recommendation of the latter, approval was granted in September 2007 for the issue of a letter of intent. Same was issued on 18 September, 2007.

Conditions in the letter of intent were, *inter alia*, to the effect that the applicant had to produce various clearances from different authorities. To date, not all clearances have been produced but on 15 October, 2010 an amended plan for the *Morcellement* project has been submitted to the *Morcellement* Board. The matter is still under consideration.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Mr Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister just said that the Letter of Intent had been issued on 18 of September 2007. Is the hon. Minister aware that, before the Letter of Intent was issued, Mr I.S. had already sold several plots of land?

Dr. Kasenally: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am not aware of this situation.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Can the Minister say whether he is aware that, according to the *Morcellement* Act, a developer who has not been issued with a *Morcellement* permit cannot sell or enter into any agreement and that, therefore, the agreement of sale is in contravention and should be declared null and void?

Mr Speaker: The Minister has said that he is not aware that the person who applied for the permit had already started selling or sold the land. If the hon. Member has got this information, either she gives it to the hon. Minister, or takes whatever actions she seems fit and proper.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Can I ask that, before a *Morcellement* permit is given, the procedure is that officers of his Ministry should visit to see that infrastructural works have been completed? Have this been done?

Dr. Kasenally: Mr Speaker, Sir, as far as matters of *Morcellement* are concerned, we have not issued any *Morcellement* permit and we are not aware. If proper information is forwarded to us, we shall act and see whatever can be done within our power and jurisdiction?

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Mr Speaker, Sir, can the hon. Minister say whether in this case, he is aware that the promoter Mr I.S. has unlawfully allowed constructions on the site, because he has pocketed 100 % of the payment claimed from the land by the buyers?

Dr. Kasenally: Mr Speaker, Sir, I cannot say, because I am not aware.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Mr Speaker, Sir, according to the *Morcellement* Act, as I have just said, the owner of the land cannot sign any sale or presale agreement without prior authorisation of the *Morcellement* Board. Can I lay a copy of that document on the Table of the Assembly where the owner of that *Morcellement* has unlawfully pocketed money and that the deed of sale has to be declared null and void? Can I lay this in the Table on the Assembly?

Mr Speaker: Yes.

Mr Bérenger: Can I ask the hon. Minister whether he does not think that he should not have such a restrictive view of the duties and performance of the *Morcellement* Board? Am I not right? Am I not right in saying that the *Morcellement* Board is there to process or request, see to

it that all the required conditions are met, and then implementation also. Will he review that standard? Once it is granted, or it is not granted, the *Morcellement* Board has nothing to do.

Dr. Kasenally: Mr Speaker, Sir, this would tantamount to a huge task, if I am going to go and look around all over Mauritius whether they have continued the work or not.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Let the Minister answer!

Dr. Kasenally: They are given certain conditions. If they don't meet these conditions, they will not be given it. What has been told to me today, I will probably take a stock of it and see to it.

(Interruptions)

Dr. Kasenally: I will certainly do it!

Mrs Labelle: Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. Now, that the hon. Minister is aware that infrastructural works have not been done properly and also in view of the hardship that these people are facing - because for years now, they have been waiting for the *contrat de terrain*, they have only a *bordereau*, and they have been seeking this for years now - what steps he can take to alleviate the sufferings of these poor people, because they have been paying so much money for this land.

(Interruptions)

Dr. Kasenally: Mr Speaker, Sir, I do care for poor people. I spend all my time caring for poor people, but this is a matter of personal transaction. If one party is not satisfied, they have got ways and means to go and seek redress.

Mr Obegadoo: Being given the very serious nature of the allegations levelled in this House this morning, will he in the public interest undertake to have a comprehensive inquiry conducted as a matter of urgency and come to the House with a full statement as soon as possible?

Dr. Kasenally: Mr Speaker, Sir, I will only act as far as the law allows me to. I cannot go beyond my mandate and beyond what I am supposed to do. There is a limit to what I can do but, I have said, I will look into all the aspects and see what can be done.

Mr Jugnauth: I will take on what my colleague hon. Obeegadoo has said. The hon. Minister's Ministry has the powers to conduct an inquiry into that matter. Will he give, in all fairness to the House, and to those people who have purchased land, an undertaking that an inquiry will be carried out and, ultimately, the report be tabled to this Assembly?

(Interruptions)

Dr. Kasenally: Mr Speaker, Sir, as I have said, I will only go on as far as legal responsibilities are concerned.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: *M. le president, c'est un scandale parce qu'il y a certaines personnes* who are asking for their money and they can't get their money back. Can the hon. Minister say whether he can intervene so that, at least, these persons get their money back as soon as possible?

Mr Speaker: How can he do that? The Minister has said it is a private transaction. Let us use the legal provisions available in the country.

Mr Bhagwan: Sir, can the hon. Minister give an undertaking to the House that once his report is completed and if there is a case of misdoing, it will be referred to the Police?

Dr. Kasenally: When we will come to that bridge, we shall cross it.

At 12.57 the sitting was suspended.

On resuming at 2.20 p.m. with Mr Speaker in the Chair.

ROADS – HAZARDOUS - MEASURES

(No. B/882) Dr. R. Sorefan (Fourth Member for La Caverne & Phoenix) asked the vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to the classified roads which have been identified as black spots and/or as being hazardous, he will -

- (a) give a list thereof, and
- (b) state the steps that have been or will be taken to prevent road accidents thereat.

The vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping (Mr A. Bachoo): Mr Speaker, Sir, I wish to inform the

House that following a kilometre Grid Analysis carried out along classified roads by the Traffic Management and Road Safety Unit, 33 locations have been identified as black spots.

I am tabling the list of the black spots.

With regard to part (b) of the question, I have been informed by the TMRSU that steps taken to maximise road safety at these locations include -

- Road safety audit in all road/accident black spots
- Improvement of visibility at junctions
- Fixing of Traffic Warning Signs, chevron signs and delineators
- Setting up of traffic lights
- Setting up of fixed speed cameras
- Fixing of Guardrails and Handrails
- Construction of foot path and foot bridges
- Widening of hazardous road and construction of hard shoulders.

Dr. Sorefan: Mr Speaker, Sir, may I know from the hon. Minister if the diversion at Soreze forms part of the list?

Mr Bachoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, the diversion at Soreze is a temporary measure. When we are talking of black spots, it means places where really there is a big danger and where works have to be done either as far as junctions are concerned including enlargement of roads. These are the black spots which have already been worked out. I would request the hon. Member to go through the list and then come forward with another question, but Soreze is only a temporary measure which we have taken.

Dr. Sorefan: Regarding the same Soreze diversion, coming from Réduit to Port Louis, the sign on the road is a SS showing the road track whereas from Port Louis going to Réduit, it is a Z road track. Could the Minister check it so that people don't get confused because both directions are the same parallel SS road tracks?

Mr Bachoo: Well, it depends if you're going towards southbound: the curve might be different from the one when you are coming down but, nevertheless, I am going to request the TMRSU to have a look and, as at now, one Police officer has been posted almost on a permanent

basis in the morning and afternoon and, at the same time, technicians of my Ministry are trying almost daily to monitor the situation.

Mr Bhagwan: Can I once again draw the attention of the vice-Prime Minister concerning the traffic lights? What is the time limit for its repairs? I can give one clear example - the traffic light at corner Royal Road and Malartic Street, Rose Hill near filling Sookhee which is one of the spots which is a burning area. It is so used. At least twice weekly traffic lights are out of order and it takes days to have them repaired and there any minute we can have an accident. Can the Minister, at least, give an indication to the House what is the time limit his Ministry takes to have these traffic lights being repaired or else change it where there are problems?

Mr Bachoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, in fact, we've got 226 traffic lights throughout the island and there is only one contractor who is expert in that. Unfortunately, year in and year out, when we launch tenders in order to get competent people to do the work, we don't get them. That explains the problem that we get, but, at the same time, whenever such things are brought to our attention, we give instructions to start the work immediately, but I'm going to take note of that and I'll look into that issue.

ASIA AND AFRICA – PROMOTION MISSIONS

(No. B/883) Mr K. Li Kwong Wing (Second Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to the Board of Investment, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Board, a list of the promotion missions carried out in Asia and Africa, since 2005 to 2011, on a yearly basis, indicating in each case, the -

- (a) cost of the air tickets and of hotel accommodation and other allowances;
- (b) countries visited;
- (c) purpose therefor;
- (d) economic sectors targeted;
- (e) names of foreign firms and organisations which participated therein, and
- (f) amount of Foreign Direct Investment obtained as a result thereof in each economic sector.

The vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development (Mr X. L. Duval): Mr Speaker, Sir, the information requested is being compiled and will be laid in the Library as soon as it is ready.

Mr Li Kwong Wing: With regard to the marketing missions carried out in the context of the Triangular Cooperation between Mauritius, Congo and Singapore, may I ask the Minister how much has been spent on such missions and how much FDI really has been obtained so far for this Triangular Cooperation because Singapore has already bagged millions of dollars of contracts directly without going through Mauritius from Congo?

Mr Duval: Mr Speaker, no doubt that will be included in the information provided.

Mr Li Kwong Wing: With regard to the Regional Development Company in Africa, will the Minister also inform us whether the missions that have been carried out to promote the company for investment into Africa have brought any tangible results?

Mr Duval: Mr Speaker, Sir, if I read the question it says the cost, the countries, the purpose, names, amount of Foreign Direct Investment obtained. It is pointless asking me the questions over and over again. It will all be provided to the hon. Member.

Mr Li Kwong Wing: On a point of explanation, Mr Speaker, Sir, it is the fifth time that the Minister is just tabling an answer and he expects us to get information after reading the answer which is not yet available. I am just, out of main question, asking some particular details on some specific projects which should be available in the answer, if he is able to answer.

Mr Duval: Mr Speaker, if I may say....

Mr Speaker: I do understand the position of the Minister. The question is: about countries visited; purpose therefor; economic sectors targeted etc. Now if the hon. Member gets the answer and he feels to have specific questions put on a specific issue on a specific region, he can come with it, but he has to wait.

Mr Duval: If I may answer, Mr Speaker.

Mr Speaker: Yes.

Mr Duval: These are information for six years back. In 2005, it was a complete different management at BOI and we are having some problems to get the information. We are willing to

do so, but we are not there just to answer questions. We are trying to get it and when we will get it, we will give it. There is no reason why I shouldn't give it. The hon. Member has to be patient.

Mr Li Kwong Wing: Mr Speaker, Sir, since this year the budget for such marketing missions will be more than Rs500 m. may I ask the Minister whether he will be in a position to table to the Assembly a Marketing Plan on all these missions because it is such a big vote that has been appropriated for this type of missions for which the previous years' missions have yielded very little results?

Mr Duval: I wouldn't agree, Mr Speaker, Sir. I think Mauritius has topped the list of many countries insofar as bringing in FDI is concerned. We had a problem in 2011. I can go into that if the hon. Member likes, but Mauritius has done extremely well in generating FDI. That is evidence from everybody apart from the very most cynical. That is the first thing.

The second thing is, Mr Speaker, Sir, yes there is a deliberate policy of Government and that's a good thing that we will have a bigger footprint overseas. It is a deliberate policy. There is money in each of the parastatals that are supposed to do that plus a provision in the National Resilience Fund.

Mr Uteem: May I ask the hon. vice-Prime Minister when he is computing this list to be tabled, if he could also indicate the composition of the mission and the criteria used to select the composition of the mission.

Mr Duval: I will look into it, Mr Speaker, Sir.

NATIONAL WEIGHTLIFTING TEAM – FORMER DTN – MONEY RECOUP

(No. B/884) Mr F. Quirin (Third Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether, in regard to the training camp held in Bulgaria attended to by the national weightlifting team, he will state if there is unspent money out of the amount budgeted therefor in possession of the former *Directeur Technique National* of the team and, if so, if same has now been recovered and, if not, why not.

Mr Ritoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, a Training Camp in Weightlifting in Bulgaria was scheduled for 70 days during the period 18 April 2011 to 30 June 2011. Mr Trendafil Stoychev who was appointed as National Technical Director accompanied 9 Weightlifters. He was given responsibility to act as head of delegation and to handle money meant for expenses in Bulgaria.

As per current practice, money meant for board and lodging and other sundry expenses for the whole delegation for the duration of the training camp was handed to him as Head of delegation.

As the athletes were having adaptation problems, the President of the Federation went to Bulgaria. It was there and then decided to return the whole delegation on 03 June i.e. only after 46 days.

As a result all unspent money has remained in possession of the head of delegation. The latter was granted one week's leave to spend with his family and was expected to come back to Mauritius on 10 June 2011.

Subsequently a breakdown of expenses was requested from him. From the receipts submitted, it was found that an amount of Rs442,893 was unspent and has remained in his possession.

As he was definitely not coming back, he was requested to effect the refund. The last letter was addressed to him on 21 September 2011 giving him one month's time limit for the refund. Since there has been no response, the matter has been referred to Police. I have also informed the International Federation concerning the matter.

Mr Quirin: M. le président, j'ai cru comprendre dans la réponse du ministre qu'effectivement il y a une somme de plus de quatre cents milles roupies qui se trouvent encore en la possession de l'ex-DTN. Il est vrai que six mois après cette somme d'argent aurait pu servir justement...

Mr Speaker: Là vous êtes en train de faire des commentaires.

Mr Quirin: ...à financer d'autres déplacements. M. le président, j'aimerais que le ministre nous dise: est-ce qu'il garde toujours espoir à récupérer cet argent? Est-ce qu'il a reçu tous les justificatifs concernant les dépenses effectuées en Bulgarie et si la somme qui n'est pas retournée n'est pas encore plus forte que ces quatre cents milles roupies dont il vient de faire mention.

Mr Ritoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, it is the President of the Federation who decides who is going to be the National Technical Director. He got various recommendations. I think that the National Technical Director was also in charge of the Indian National Team, Iraq National Team,

Vietnam National Team and Tunisia National Team. So, he has got a precise CV and he came to Mauritius upon the advice of the President of the local Federation and he was given the responsibility to coach the national team regarding the IOIG games. Now, had he remained there for the 70 days, of course, the money would have been spent there. The fact that the delegation returned earlier, this sum has remained there and we have informed the Police as well as the international Federation who gives the licence to the National Technical Director to act as DTN in other countries. Since he is not responding to any phone calls or any correspondence addressed to him, so, we are trying to see if the Police can trace him and recover that money.

Dr. S. Boolell: Mr Speaker, Sir, I would like to know whether it is a common practice to entrust such a large sum in the hand of one Head of a delegation on trips outside.

Mr Ritoo: Normally, the practice is that you give the money to the Head of delegation, but in that particular case, the fact is that he was in Bulgaria, where we do not have any diplomatic ties and we have the problem of language. So, he was acting as Head of delegation and the fact that - he is on contract with the Ministry anyway - that's why we gave him that money. We do have problems, when you go in any part in Africa, even in India, with your Credit Card, you cannot withdraw money at certain places, so that's why we gave the money. It was an exceptional case, because it is the first time that such money was given to a Head of delegation.

Mr Jhugroo: Can I ask the hon. Minister whether he is the same guy who was involved in a case of doping in the past?

Mr Ritoo: No, he has never been involved in any doping case.

SPORTS ACT - AMENDMENT

(No. B/885) Mr F. Quirin (Third Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether, in regard to the Mauritius Football Association, he will state if his Ministry proposes to take on board the stand of the *Fédération Internationale de Football Association* against the replacement of the Chairperson of the Association by the Executive Committee in the proposed amendments to be brought to the Sports Act.

Mr Ritoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, I wish to inform the hon. Member that the stand of the FIFA has to be adopted by the MFA in the first instance. Once adopted, the new rules will have to be

approved by FIFA. Subsequently, these will have to be harmonised with the Sports Act and the Registration of Associations Act.

In view of the implications and the need for consultation with various organisations, this matter needs to be studied in depth.

I have, therefore, requested officers of my Ministry to follow up on the matter.

Mr Quirin: Est-ce que le ministre peut nous dire qui est actuellement le président de la MFA ?

Mr Ritoo: C'est le plus gros problème. Actuellement, nous avons une lettre émanant de la Fédération Mauricienne du Football nous disant que c'est M. Vinod Parsenoo, d'après la FIFA qui est le président et d'après le *Registrar of Associations* c'est Anoop Madhow qui est le président. Donc, we leave the matter so that they can thrash out and let us know. Now I understand unofficially that there is a third president today.

Mr Quirin: M. le président, il y a eu une lettre que le président du Comité Olympique Mauricien a fait parvenir à la FIFA récemment, dans laquelle il explique que le ministre des sports aurait – je dis bien aurait - émis le souhait ouvertement à ce que le comité exécutif de la MFA remplace M. Parsenoo par quelqu'un d'autre, peut-être en l'occurrence M. Madhow et j'aimerais que le ministre nous dit si cette affirmation du président du comité Olympique Mauricien est vraie ou pas ?

Mr Ritoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, this is totally false. For me, whoever is the president, he will have to work together with me, be it Parsenoo or Anoop Madhu or whoever he is – Sameer Sobha or whatever. So, I do not interfere in cases of the Federation. So, I don't know how the President of the National Olympic Committee has written such a letter and putting such remarks.

Mr Bhagwan: On avait été témoins de ce qui se passe au niveau de la MFA durant ces dernières semaines, qui fait honte à l'île Maurice et aussi à la classe sportive. Est-ce qu'il n'est pas temps – le ministre lui-même en tant qu'ancien footballeur le sait et je crois que c'est le souhait de la nation – to put some order ? We all know that the federations are independent, but we have the *Comité National Olympique Mauricien*, the Minister may have some link with the *Comité International*. Can the Minister inform the House whether it is of paramount importance,

not only the Minister of Sports as a fanatic of football, to put some order so that our football *peut être relancé encore?*

Mr Ritoo: I think the hon. Member knows quite well that we are not allowed to interfere in the federation as they are autonomous, but we are all very sad of what is happening. Do not forget that due to this *mauvaise manoeuvre de la fédération*, they are not able today to participate in the qualifying world cup.

Mr Quirin: M. le président, j'aimerais que le ministre nous dise, quelles sont les actions que son ministère compte prendre vu la position de la FIFA qui est venue rendre caduque certaines lois du pays, notamment le *Sports Act*, le *Registrar of Associations Act*. J'aimerais que le ministre nous dise un peu plus sur ses actions futures.

Mr Ritoo: I think I stated, Mr Speaker, Sir, in my answer that officers of my Ministry are following up the matter. Presently, the situation is that the rules of the MFA provide for the elected members of the managing committee to elect from among themselves a chairperson, while the FIFA states that the chairperson has to be a president elected by the National General Assembly. So, the officers of my Ministry are actually working on this.

Mr Jhugroo: Mr Speaker, Sir, about what I heard this morning on the radio, can the hon. Minister confirm whether Mr Parsenoo has delegated some of his powers to someone else?

Mr Ritoo: In fact, this is another issue which I learned today, but it is unofficial that he has delegated powers, he is the person who has delegated his powers to someone else, but this has never existed in any rules actually in the MFA statutes.

GRAND'BAIE - VINGT PIEDS ROAD – STREET LIGHTING

(No. B/886) Mr A. Gungah (First Member for Grand'Baie & Poudre d'Or) asked the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the Vingt Pieds Road, in Grand' Baie, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Pamplemousses/Rivière du Rempart District Council, information as to if there is a lack of street lighting points thereat and, if so, if consideration will be given for the reviewing of the whole street lighting system and the installation of additional street lanterns thereat, in view of the fact that the road is being used as a shortcut even at night and the increase in number of night life activities thereat.

Mr Aimée: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Pamplemousses/Rivière du Rempart District Council that street lanterns have been fixed on every pole along Vingt Pieds from Sottise to La Salette Road. However, from La Salette Road up to Cap Malheureux, the street lighting network cannot be extended due to the fact that there is a high voltage power supply and no electric street lighting phase is available.

I am also informed that once the Central Electricity Board will extend the street lighting phase, the Council will consider the possibility of fixing street lighting points thereat.

Mr Gungah: On that portion where street lightings have been fixed, I would ask the hon. Minister whether he can see to it that the lamps are connected, because, in fact, they are not connected and it is not lighting.

Mr Aimée: From the information that I have, Mr Speaker, Sir, the parts that are being fed with power supply, there are light points everywhere. Only the part where it is not conducted to....

(Interruptions)

Mr Lesjongard: Mr Speaker, Sir, what I heard from the Minister it is that until and unless the Central Electricity Board extends the network, the District Council will not be able to provide for street lanterns. May I ask the hon. Minister whether there has been a request from the District Council for an extension for the District Council to be able to put street lanterns?

Mr Aimée: Since I got the PQ on Thursday, Mr Speaker, Sir, I have made a request to the Pamplemousses/Rivière du Rempart District Council to have a proper network to this required area and to have street lighting on each and every point there.

PIG BREEDERS – FOOD SECURITY FUND

(No. B/887) Mr G. Lesjongard (Second Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue) asked the Minister of Agro-Industry and Food Security whether, in regard to the pig breeders, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Food Security Fund, information as to the –

- (a) total amount of money disbursed
 - (i) for the re-launching of the pig industry, and

(ii) to each beneficiary thereof, indicating the names thereof, and

(b) increase in the production of pork meat on the local market, since 2008 to date.

Mr Faugoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, as the House is aware, there was an outbreak of the African Swine Fever in the year 2007. The pig population which was at 18,000 came down to a mere 4,000. With this magnitude of the epidemics one would have thought that this was the end for the sector. We had the option of phasing out this sector completely and provide compensation to the pig breeders for them to move out of this activity. This would have been the easiest solution for Government. However, we transformed this challenge into an opportunity and took bold measures to reform the sector and modernise it. We also seize this opportunity to cluster the pig breeding activity to enable them to move away from backyard farming. Today, I am proud to say that we have succeeded, and the pig population now stands at some 24,000, which is a record high ever.

In order to give a special attention to the sector, the programme was entrusted to a Pig Sector Restructuring Committee, which was set up under the aegis of the then Empowerment Programme, which subsequently became the National Empowerment Foundation. Since July 2011, this restructure programme is under the responsibility of my Ministry.

The PSRC was set up to ensure, *inter alia*, that the pig breeders restart their activity in a more professional manner by adopting good husbandry practices. Some 150 breeders at Roche Bois and its vicinity, Albion and Bassin Carré were relocated to St Martin. This is in line with the clustering principle adopted by my Ministry. This is ensuring that services and incentives provided to these breeders are delivered in an effective manner. For bio security reason, these breeders are carrying out fattening activities only. Reproduction will be carried out at La Chaumière and La Laura on lands allocated by the MSPA under the 2000A Scheme.

As regards part (a) (i) of the question, I wish to remind the hon. second Member for Port Louis North and Montagne Longue that funds for the relaunch of the sector was not met under the Food Security Fund. A total sum of some Rs233 m. has been disbursed so far. The sum is made up as follows -

- renovation, upgrading works at existing cooperatives at St. Martin and Bassin Requin, provision of water, electricity and road network at St Martin for the 150 breeders, import of animals from South Africa of superior breed to the tune of Rs77 m.;

- income support to the tune of Rs36 m. for some 533 breeders, and
- a total loan amount of Rs120 m. in favour of 303 breeders, which includes a grant element of Rs26.4 m.

With regard to part (a) (ii) of the question, I am tabling the -

- list of breeders who have benefited from the income support, and
- list of breeders who have purchased animals which were imported from South Africa.

With regard to part (b), statistics on production of local pork meat as published in the Digest of Agricultural Statistics are as follows -

Year	Production
2008	330 tonnes
2009	428 tonnes
2010	623 tonnes
2011 (estimate)	650 tonnes

Production has increased by 89% from year 2008 to 2011, that is, this year. By contrast, from year 2000 to 2005, there has been a decrease of 20%.

Mr Speaker Sir, with the superior breed of animals imported from South Africa, the quality of the meat has improved significantly. Local processors have been urged to procure a substantial part of their requirement from the local breeders, which will help to reduce imports. My Ministry is monitoring the level of imports as well.

Mr Speaker, Sir, our programme of research and development and training has been strengthened with the support provided from Chinese experts. A Pig Artificial Insemination Unit has been set up at Albion for that purpose. The facilities at the Mauritius Meat Authority will be made available for the setting up of a *salle de découpe*, which will be financed under the Food Security Fund and put at the disposal of the Federation of pig breeders.

Since the transfer of the relaunch program to my Ministry, I have set up a Pig Steering Committee, which comprises all relevant stakeholders, including the breeders. The Committee met on two occasions and took cognizance of progress achieved so far and also has prioritised the main actions to be implemented in the forthcoming year.

Mr Lesjongard: Mr Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Minister whether the Pig Restructuring Committee still exists and, if yes, who are the members of that Committee?

Mr Faugoo: I have just mentioned, Mr Speaker, Sir. Is the hon. Member referring to the Pig Steering Committee?

Mr Lesjongard: The Pig Restructuring Committee.

Mr Faugoo: No, I said, that was under the Empowerment Programme, and this does not exist anymore. The responsibilities have been transferred to my Ministry since July of this year.

Mr Lesjongard: May I ask the hon. Minister whether he is aware that there have been complaints from the pig community with regard to funds disbursed concerning the relaunching of the sector and they have asked for an enquiry?

Mr Faugoo: I am not aware of same, Mr Speaker, Sir. I have heard of complaints about marketing and all other sort of problems, but I have never heard of any problem to do with finance and funds.

Mr Barbier: Mr Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Minister whether there is any resistance from some pig breeders to move from Roche Bois to St Martin? Because actually, we have some pig breeders who are still operating in this area.

Mr Faugoo: The majority of them have moved out, Mr Speaker, Sir. But there are still a few who are operating in some of the regions, including Roche Bois. But we have a programme. AREU is working on this to see to it that most of them, if not all, should move in the cluster, that is, at Bassin Requin in the East or at St Martin.

Mr Barbier: Mr Speaker, Sir, can I ask the hon. Minister whether there is a time frame for all these pig breeders to be moved out from Roche Bois?

Mr Faugoo: It is not an easy task, Mr Speaker, Sir, but we are trying. We will do our best to move them out as soon as we can.

Mr Lesjongard: Mr Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Minister to confirm whether, although they are producing pig meat, he is aware that they are facing problems to sell that meat on the local market?

Mr Faugoo: I also said in my intervention on the Budget Speech that they are as if victims of their own success. It's the first time ever that pig breeding has reached that status, Mr Speaker, Sir, coming from 15,000 in the year 2005, 18,000 in 2008, coming down to 4,000 after the swine fever and, today, we are producing 24,000. So, it seems they have a problem of marketing. This is why I also said we are reviewing the imports; we are forcing the importers on the local market to take some of their stock. We are trying to help them, Mr Speaker, Sir, as much as we can.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister mentioned that the piglets were imported from South Africa. May I ask him whether there have been a number of piglets which were lost while they were in *quarantaine*?

Mr Faugoo: I am not aware of this, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Lesjongard: Mr Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister has just stated that they are forcing the local importers to buy from the local producers. May we know how this is going to be done?

Mr Faugoo: The business of import is regulated, Mr Speaker, Sir. They need a permit. So, we are controlling the imports.

ABERCROMBIE MARKET FAIR – STALLS - ALLOCATION

(No. B/888) Mr G. Lesjongard (Second Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue) asked the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the Abercrombie market fair, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Municipal Council of Port Louis, information as to the -

- (a) number of stalls that will be allocated, indicating when the exercise will be effected;
- (b) names of the existing stall owners, and
- (c) number of vacant stalls, indicating the eligibility criteria for the allocation thereof.

Mr Aimée: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Municipal Council of Port Louis that provision has been made for 300 stalls in the new Abercrombie Market Fair, and the allocation exercise is expected to be made once the new market becomes operational.

With regard to part (b) of the question, a list of all existing stallholders is being placed in the Library.

As far as part (c) of the question is concerned, I am informed that 42 stalls are vacant, and the allocation criteria has not yet been finalised.

Mr Lesjongard: Mr Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Minister when will the allocation start?

Mr Aimée: Mr Speaker, Sir, the site has been handed over on 14 December 2010. However, works have been delayed for the following reasons -

- power disconnection by CEB;
- inclement weather;
- design amendment due to inaccurate site plan given to contractor;
- vacation of the site by tenant;
- restriction of casting of concrete during three days of the week;
- approval of TMRSU to relocate the existing bus stop.

Mr Aimée: Work has been handed over now on 31 October. So, we will start allocating the stalls next month.

Mr Lesjongard: Can the hon. Minister give us the number of existing stall owners?

Mr Aimée: I mentioned before, Mr Speaker, Sir, 300 stalls; out of those which were there before, we have 42 only.

Mr Lesjongard: My question is whether there are 300 stalls available there or whether there are 300 stall owners there who have to be accommodated?

Mr Aimée: I said in my reply, the capacity of the market fair there is 300 stalls, out of which there are only 42 that are free now and people can apply.

Mr Lesjongard: That is not my question. My question is how many stall owners are there who have been shifted next to the market and who have to get back again inside the market, how many?

Mr Aimée: That is easy...

Mr Speaker: Answer the question!

Mr Aimée: 300 less 42.

(Interruptions)

Mr Ameer Meea: Can I ask the hon. Minister what would be the rent for each stall in that market?

Mr Aimée: I said in my reply that the Council will decide for the criteria of allocation of these stalls for the next 42 which are free.

Mr Ameer Meea: Mr Speaker, Sir, please allow me to insist. I did not ask about the criteria, I asked for the rent.

Mr Speaker: Does the Minister have the information about the rent?

Mr Aimée: As I said, the Council will decide for the criteria and the rent at the same time.

Mr Speaker: That is the answer? Yes, hon. Lesjongard!

(Interruptions)

Mr Lesjongard: Mr Speaker, Sir, can we have an indication as to how many people are on the waiting list?

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

STC - FLOUR - IMPORTATION

(No. B/889) Mr R. Uteem (Second Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central) asked the Minister of Industry, Commerce and Consumer Protection whether, in regard to flour, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the State Trading Corporation, information as to the quantity thereof imported, since 2010 to date, indicating the –

(a) purchase price thereof;

- (b) name and address of the supplier thereof;
- (c) procurement method used therefor, and
- (d) quantity thereof which remain unsold.

Mr Sayed-Hossen: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed that the quantity of flour imported by the State Trading Corporation since 2010 is as follows -

- (i) in 2010 : Nil
 - (ii) in 2011 (that is, from January 2011 to 11 November 2011) : 22,950 metric tonnes.
- The total purchase price of the consignments amounts to USD 11,053,800.

With regard to part (b) of the question, the name and address of the supplier for 2011 is Erisler Flour Mills, Istanbul, Turkey.

Concerning part (c) of the question, the procurement method used is open advertised international bidding.

As regards part (d) of the question, Mr Speaker Sir, I am a bit at pain to understand that, being given that the stock of flour at the sheds is a rotating stock so there is no closure of operation to be able to say that there is 'X' quantity of flour which remains unsold.

Mr Uteem: May I know from the hon. Minister what is the cost per tonne of flour for transport from the container park to the shed?

Mr Sayed-Hossen: If you allow me, Mr Speaker, Sir, I will give some details on that. There is a bidding price so the imported flour is landed at the port at a given price and local charges amount to USD 13.58. This accounts for the cost of landing and transporting the flour from the ship to the shed.

Mr Uteem: If my calculation is correct, that would make a total per tonne price of USD 505. Is that correct?

Mr Sayed-Hossen: Well, it depends what consignment we are speaking about. I mentioned in my answer that the total purchase price of the 22,950 tonnes which have been imported up to 11 November 2011, was USD 11,053,800. Divided by the number of tonnes, that is, 22,950 tonnes, that gives you an average cost of USD 481.65 per metric tonne. When you add USD 13.58 to that, it amounts to USD 495 and something, not USD 505.

Mr Bérenger: I think I heard the hon. Minister say that for 2010 no imports; 2011, I heard him I think, say that there was only one firm from Turkey. Has there, therefore, been a change, because in old days when Mauritian investors wanted to move to the import of wheat and turn it into flour - in the days of Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam - they were given certain guarantees, and that is why, until recently, as far as I knew, the tendering procedure was for the STC to tender for half of our annual requirements. That half would go to the cheapest firm and then *Les Moulins de la Concorde*, which had invested, would get the other half but, at the price of the first cheapest supplier. Has there been a change therein?

Mr Sayed-Hossen: Mr Speaker, Sir, there has been no change actually. What happened in 2010, which explains the fact that the State Trading Corporation did not import flour, is that the total requirement of wheat flour for the country was supplied by *Les Moulins de la Concorde*, that is, 98,000 metric tonnes for the whole of 2010 and this is made up of two types of flour, one is what we call type 'A' which is used to make bread at USD 381 per tonne and the other one, type 'B', the Australian type, which is used to make *faratas*, etc. This is a little bit more expensive, 390 per metric tonne.

At the end of 2010, STC launched an open advertised international tender for the supply of half the amount - at least the forecast amount - of our needs in flour, and Erisler Flour Mills from Turkey was the lowest bidder at a price of USD 490 per tonne.

Subsequently to that, the Ministry - hon. Soodhun was Minister then - carried out negotiations with Erisler Flour Mills and that price was reduced to USD 480 for the first 18,000 tonnes. That was a commitment taken by Erisler, which means that *Les Moulins de la Concorde*, in 2011, was awarded the right to import and to deliver flour at the price of USD 490 per tonne which is the lowest price before negotiations between the Ministry and the lowest bidder.

Mr Bérenger: I think the Minister is wrong. *Les Moulins de la Concorde* must not have been awarded the right to import flour, I am sure they were allowed to import wheat but sell the processed wheat at the flour price of the Turkish supplier.

Mr Sayed-Hossen: Yes, Mr Speaker, Sir, the hon. Leader of the Opposition is right. To import wheat, but to deliver flour at that given price.

Mr Bérenger: May I know from the hon. Minister whether in 2010 - I now understand that *Les Moulins de la Concorde* supplied the whole of our annual requirements - was there a tendering procedure?

Mr Sayed-Hossen: Yes, my understanding is that there was a tendering procedure and the lowest bidder was *Les Moulins de la Concorde*.

Mr Uteem: The Minister mentioned that for only 18 tonnes to be imported, the price has been reduced. Does the hon. Minister agree with me, for the balance of wheat that we are going to import, the actual cost to the STC, including the transport cost to the shed, will actually be more than the price which they are buying from *Les Moulins de la Concorde*?

Mr Sayed-Hossen: Mr Speaker, Sir, we don't produce wheat, so we depend on imports to do that. The price quoted by Erisler Flour Mills was USD 490 per metric tonnes. Negotiations were carried out by my predecessor in that Ministry and prices were reduced to USD 480 per tonne. For the first 18,000 tonnes, that was the undertaking, which Erisler Flour Mills committed itself to, in respect to only 18,000 tonnes. Further negotiations were carried out and Erisler indicated that they could not maintain that price USD 480. They could not even go to USD 490 and so, they went up to USD 505. But, as I have explained to the House, Mr Speaker, Sir, up to now, from January to September, we look at the average and the average is that we have imported flour at USD 481.65 per metric tonne, to which we add USD 13.58 and that is still lower than USD 505. So, the hypothesis that we are importing at a price, which is more expensive than the price quoted by the *les Moulins de La Concorde* is not correct.

Mr Uteem: Mr Speaker, Sir, in the circumstances, may I get the confirmation from the hon. Minister that for the importation of the flour, both the approval of the STC was received and the Cabinet was informed of the decision?

Mr Speaker: No, the hon. Member cannot ask whether the Cabinet was informed of the decision. Next question, hon. Nagalingum!

GOVERNMENT FIRE SERVICES - VACANCIES

(No. B/890) Mr D. Nagalingum (Second Member for Stanley & Rose Hill) asked the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the Government Fire

Services, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Services, a list of the vacancies that presently exist thereat, in each grade, indicating when same will be filled.

Mr Aimée: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed that the following vacancies exist at the Fire Services Department -

- (i) Assistant Chief Fire Officer – 1 post, which will be filled next year;
- (ii) Divisional Officer – 1 post, which will be filled next year;
- (iii) Station Officer – 13 posts, which will be filled next year;
- (iv) Sub Officer – 4 posts, which will be filled next year;
- (v) Firefighter – 127 posts, out of which 41 posts will be filled in the current financial year and for which selection exercises are being conducted by the Disciplined Forces Service Commission whereas 23 posts will be filled in the next financial year;
- (vi) Handyworker – 1 post, which has already been advertised;
- (vii) Panel Beater – 1 post, which will be filled next year;
- (viii) Mason – 1 post, which will be filled next year, and
- (ix) General Worker – 2 posts, which will be filled next year.

There are other vacancies, but same will not be filled as follows -

- (a) Motor Mechanic ...

Mr Speaker: The question is about when same will be filled; the question is not about which posts will not be filled. Yes, hon. Nagalingum.

Mr Nagalingum: Can the hon. Minister tell us if provision has been made in the Budget of 2012 for the filling of these vacancies?

Mr Aimée: As I said before, firefighters, there are 127 posts of which 41 are actually in process. No, there is no provision in the Budget.

(Interruptions)

I don't know whether I explained very well myself. I said there are vacancies for 127 firefighters, 41 actually will be filled in this current financial year and exercises are being conducted ...

Mr Speaker: The question was a simple question. Whether there is money in the Budget to fill these posts.

Mr Aimée: Yes.

Mr Nagalingum: Is the hon. Minister aware that local leaves are not being granted to fire officers, due to an acute lack of fire officers actually.

Mr Aimée: Yes, I am aware, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Ameer Meea: Can I ask the hon. Minister since how long all these numerous posts are vacant?

Mr Speaker: Since when?

Mr Aimée: In fact, for the firefighters, it is since April or May 2011. But then it is not because we don't want to fill these posts; it is due to the problem between two different unions where they are not agreeable to the scheme of duty. That's why this has lasted for so long and I have contacted my friend, the hon. Minister of Civil Service Affairs, to look into it, and then we can remediate the situation. It is not a question of the firefighters department.

Mr Jhugroo: Can the hon. Minister confirm whether proper procedures will be followed regarding filling of these posts?

Mr Speaker: This is not allowed.

Mrs Ribot: Can I ask the hon. Minister whether the new recruits are going to get a new scheme of service?

Mr Aimée: Sorry, can the hon. Member repeat the question?

Mrs Ribot: Are the new recruits going to get a new scheme of service?

Mr Aimée: No, the 41 new recruits who will come will have the scheme of service which already existed.

Mrs Ribot: Mr Speaker, Sir, from what we understood, we are waiting for the time when the two unions were going to be agreeable to the new scheme of service, that's why I asked the question and now we hear that there is no new scheme of service for the new recruits. I wanted to know which is which.

Mr Aimée: Mr Speaker, Sir, we have a problem of staffing in the Fire Department. The unions are fighting, but, in the meantime, the country will suffer. So, we have to find ways and means to fill these posts. That's why we have taken only 41 instead of 127, just to fill in

temporarily the posts that are vacant and to continue with our service. That's the only way, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Speaker: Yes, but the hon. Minister cannot become the brigade to stop the fighting.

Mr Ameer Meea: Would the hon. Minister agree with me that all these vacancies - since all this time has elapsed - have caused prejudice to the Government Fire Services.

Mr Aimée: No, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Speaker: The hon. Member is asking for an opinion from the hon. Minister. This is not fair. Next question, hon. Mrs Radegonde!

CHAMAREL - PRE-PRIMARY SCHOOL - CONSTRUCTION

(No. B/891) **Mrs J. Radegonde (Fourth Member for Savanne & Black River)** asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether, in regard to the proposed construction of a pre-primary school in Chamarel, he will state where matters stand.

Dr. Bunwaree: Mr Speaker, Sir, a first tender exercise for the construction of a new pre-primary unit at Chamarel was launched in January 2011. Bids were invited by the Ministry on 10 January 2011 on an Open Advertised Bidding mode, via newspapers and websites of the Ministry. 18 bidders purchased the bidding documents. The closing date was 22 February 2011. 11 Bids were submitted and necessary evaluation was carried out.

I am told that it was a long and laborious exercise, which lasted some eight months. The Solicitor General had to be consulted over legal issues, which arose during the evaluation process. At the close of this process, none of the bidders was found compliant. As a result, the exercise had to be cancelled on 21 October 2011.

The Ministry is presently putting up new bidding documents in view of a new bidding, which would be launched anew by the end of this month and hopefully the contract may be awarded by March next year. Works will be of a contractual duration of 9 months and should everything proceed smoothly, the Pre-primary Unit is expected to be operational for school resumption in January 2013. I must seize this opportunity, Mr Speaker, Sir, to reassure the House that the delay has in no way hampered the smooth running of the pre-primary classes in Chamarel.

MUNICIPAL TENANTS TAX – AMOUNT COLLECTED

(No. B/892) Mr P. Jugnauth (First Member for Quartier Militaire & Moka) ask the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the Municipal Tenants Tax, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from each municipal council, information as to the amount thereof collected for each of the financial years 2010 and 2011.

Mr Aimée: Mr Speaker, Sir, the information requested by hon. Member will be placed in the Library. This is a new decision. I have certain information, but I want to reassure myself with the Minister of Finance and to get more details so that I can come with some more information.

Mr Jugnauth: Mr Speaker, Sir, if I can enlighten the hon. Minister; the breakdown is about for the year 2010, the new measure is only now in the Budget. The hon. Minister can at least communicate the details.

Mr Aimée: I said to the hon. Member that the information will be laid on the Table of the Assembly.

Mr Jugnauth: Can I ask the hon. Minister if there are businesses which have been in arrears for the different Municipal Councils, for the years mentioned?

Mr Aimée: I know that there are businesses that have arrears at the Municipal Councils, but I don't have the figures now.

Mr Jugnauth: Concerning the new measure, I know probably it is not the right Minister, but since the question is being answered, did the hon. Minister consider differentiating between big businesses and small businesses?

Mr Aimée: Mr Speaker, Sir, this is a collective decision in Cabinet; I can't differentiate now between the big businesses and the small ones. This is a decision taken by Government.

Mr Nagalingum: In the same line, Mr Speaker, Sir, can we know how the short for money be allocated between the different Municipalities out of the budget fund?

Mr Aimée: As it is said in the Budget Speech and it is in the Bill, it is *pro rata*.

Mr Lesjongard: Since Government has taken the decision in this Budget to abolish the Municipal Tenants Tax and the hon. Minister has confirmed that there are arrears, is Government also considering writing off the arrears?

Mr Aimée: No, Mr Speaker, Sir. In fact, not only the Tenants Tax, but also all other taxes would be chased by the MRA actually.

**R. SEWPAL GOVERNMENT SCHOOL - CHILD K. T. - CAUSTIC SODA -
SWALLOWING**

(No. B/893) **Mrs L. Ribot (Third Member for Stanley & Rose Hill)** asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether, in regard to the case of child K. T. who swallowed caustic soda at the R. Sewpal Government School, in Chemin Grenier, on 11 June 2011, he will state if an inquiry has been carried out into the circumstances thereof, and if so, the outcome thereof.

Dr. Bunwaree: Mr Speaker, Sir, I have been informed of that unfortunate incident whereby a pupil named K.T is reported to have swallowed caustic soda at R. Sewpal Government School in Chemin Grenier on 11 June 2011.

An enquiry has been carried out into the circumstances which led to that incident at school.

However, I wish to inform the House that in relation to the above case, a plaint with summons has been lodged by the responsible party of the child and the case is coming for mention before the Supreme Court on 26 January 2012.

As the matter is *sub judice*, it is considered that it would not be proper for me to comment further on this case.

Mr Speaker: Before any Member or a Minister raises the issue of *sub judice*, they have to consult me. I agree with the hon. Minister that he has been given an answer, but the *sub judice* rule does not apply in this case. The *sub judice* rule applies in a civil matter when the pleadings are closed and are awaiting trial.

(Interruptions)

I know the Minister is not to be blamed because he has been given the answer. But next time, I would like that they let me know when they are going to raise the issue and the pleadings must be sent to my office for me to decide.

Dr. Bunwaree: This is what we ought to have done, but I was given that advice. I would plead with the hon. Member if we can meet and sit down and see what is the best way forward, because it is a pathetic case, in fact, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister has mentioned that an inquiry has been carried out. May we know from the hon. Minister whether he has been given the findings of the inquiry carried out by his Ministry?

Dr. Bunwaree: Yes, I have got the findings; I have seen the file. But, as I said, the case is on. I don't want to give information here that can play in one way or the other, but I think the best thing is what I have said.

Mr Bérenger: I am sure he has already taken corrective measures at that school and, in any other school, for that kind incident not to happen.

Dr. Bunwaree: Yes, certainly, Mr Speaker, Sir. There were some precautions taken already, but children are children and sometimes things happen.

Mrs Labelle: May I ask the hon. Minister whether, among the measures he has already taken, there is proper labeling of contents?

Dr. Bunwaree: Of what contents? This was *une fiole avec une solution*, which was found among the remains of what was being used or not used for the construction purposes. It so happened. This is not something that we find in all schools where we have to do labeling.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Speaker, Sir, excuse me to insist. Very often, these cleaning companies bring products in small portion and put it in any bottle. It can be a coke bottle; it can be in any bottle. This is the reason of my question: whether we are ensuring that products are being put in proper lodgment and that we label it properly. For example, for such product, according to the Health and Safety Regulations, it has to be put in something with a red cap and so on. Are these being followed?

Dr. Bunwaree: What is mentioned in the question is an isolated accident which took place where there was construction going on in the school. What the hon. Member is saying is

about companies which take care of the cleaning. Of course, we have to look into it. We will take care of that.

Mrs Ribot: Mr Speaker, Sir, it seems that that child, however, exceptional be the case according to the Minister, is suffering from *une sévère érosion de la membrane muqueuse bucale et pour se nourrir maintenant il a besoin d'avoir recours à un tube*. I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether the Government is envisaging to pay for the full cost of the treatment of the child?

Dr. Bunwaree: The parents were given the authorisation to collect funds and so on. This is one thing...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Let the hon. Minister answer! He is answering. Don't become impatient!

Dr. Bunwaree: It is because I am not satisfied with that, this is why I said that other things have to be done. But what I want to say is that we can't enter into the details of the medical aspect of the case, because then other questions will have to be put. So, I prefer not to enter into the details. But being a medical practitioner myself, I believe that there are things that should be done, in fact, for this family and this is the point I made at the beginning of the question.

Mrs Ribot: Mr Speaker, Sir, we are a bit shocked to hear that the family is raising funds.

(Interruptions)

Ce n'est pas fini, M. le président! Il a y un enfant qui souffre et on demande à la famille de soulever des fonds. By the time, the outcome of the inquiry comes out, I think the Government should foot the Bill.

Dr. Bunwaree: The case is in court. Now if the hon. Member says that Government should foot the Bill, she understands that Government is already...

(Interruptions)

... providing all the necessary for the health problem. This is why I am saying that we can solve this matter entirely, but I can't do it alone. This is why things have to be done – *les bons offices doivent être utilisés*.

Mr Bodha: In view of the fact that funds are required for the treatment of the child and there is a case in court as regards to damages, can the hon. Minister consider the possibility of an out of court settlement where the Government will take into consideration the expenses for the treatment of that child?

Dr. Bunwaree: This is, in fact, what I meant, Mr Speaker, Sir.

GRAND SABLE – MINORS T. F. C. & R. C. - DEATH

(No. B/894) Mrs L. Ribot (Third Member for Stanley & Rose Hill) asked the Minister of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare whether, in regard to the death of children T. F. and B. C. at Grand Sable, on 28 October 2011, she will state if an inquiry has been carried out into the circumstances thereof, and if so, the outcome thereof.

Mrs Martin: Mr Speaker, Sir, I assume that the hon. Member is referring to the case of the two minors namely, T.F.C. and R.C. who died on 24 October 2011 following a fire which completely burnt down their house at Royal Road, Grand Sable.

Regarding the circumstances of the death of those two children and the outcome thereof, given that this is a criminal matter, the Police is accordingly carrying out an investigation which is still under way.

I have been informed by the Police that there were nine children living under the same roof, seven belonging to Mr. S.C. and two are children of his brother Mr. P.S.C. who were present in the house when the fire broke out. Seven children were removed safely while two passed away. The cause of death was attributed by the Chief Police Medical Officer as being due to 'Extensive Burns'.

I would like to inform the House that as soon as my Ministry learnt of this disaster on 24 October 2011, the officers of my Ministry promptly effected a site visit at Grand Sable.

As per information obtained, five minors namely K.C. aged 8 years, A.P. and P.C., both aged 6 years, S.C and J.C both aged 3 years were brought by the Police to Mahebourg Hospital for examination and were returned on the same day. While the other two children, P.C aged 6 years and D.C of 2 months were taken into care by their parents, Mr. P.S.C. and Mrs. V.C.

Since the mother, Mrs. D.P. was injured and was admitted in hospital and the father, Mr S.C. was brought to the Old Grand Port Police Station for further enquiry, the CDU officers

found these five children in a very precarious condition. Furthermore, given that on that day, officers learnt about promiscuous situation prevailing in the family, the five children were taken in charge by the CDU of my Ministry on the same day, that is, 24 October 2011. They were thus brought to the J. Nehru Hospital for further medical check-up and observation and they were provided with psychological support and counselling. Once discharged from the hospital on 28 October 2011, they have been placed at the Shelter of my Ministry under Emergency Protection Orders and are since being closely followed.

Mrs Ribot: Mr Speaker, Sir, I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether these children go to school or not?

Mrs Martin: I don't have this information with me, but I would assume that they are going to school, now.

(Interruptions)

Mrs Ribot: Mr Speaker, Sir, it seems that that family has received a cheque of Rs48,000, may we know to whom the cheque has been given, to the man, to concubine, I don't know?

Mr Speaker: No. I will not allow this question. This question is about the death of two children and about the inquiry which is being carried out. It is not a question of whether cheque has been drawn and paid to whom! Hon. Obeegadoo!

Mr Obeegadoo: Could the hon. Minister confirm that before the incident of 24 October, social workers had, in fact, referred the situation of this family to the CDU and, if so, may we know what action the CDU took?

Mr Speaker: The hon. Member cannot ask the hon. Minister to confirm! I will allow the rest of the question!

Mrs Martin: That is not exact, Mr Speaker, Sir. Actually, the officers of the Child Development Unit came across the case while going for another case because they saw children on the streets. They went to visit the mother and the mother said that the children were at home during school hours because of financial problems and she could not send the children to school. Consequently, the CDU referred the case to the NEF.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Mrs Labelle!

Mrs Labelle: Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. May I know from the hon. Minister whether any help has been extended to that family and, if so, which help?

Mr Speaker: This is not relevant to the question!

Mrs Labelle: ...after having seen the situation of this family that she has mentioned?

Mr Speaker: I do agree with you. A clarification about a question answered, should be clarification on the answer given. I will allow you but there is no question of money or help which is extended.

Mr Bérenger: In regard to the death, whether an inquiry has been carried out and, if so, the outcome thereof? I take it that the inquiry, the outcome, is also possibly financial help or whatever.

Mr Speaker: I take it that the inquiry is by the Police and not by anybody else!

Mrs Ribot: Mr Speaker, Sir, we just heard the hon. Minister assume that the children were going to school and now, we hear that they were not going to school. I would like to ask the hon. Minister whether in her Ministry there is a department going out to see the children who are neglected and who do not go to school.

Mr Speaker: Repeat the question!

Mrs Ribot: I would like to know from the hon. Minister, basing myself on this particular case, whether there is a department in her Ministry which goes around to see children who do not go to school and who are neglected?

Mrs Martin: I would like to inform the hon. Member that actually, at the CDU, we have officers who go to visit cases that are reported to the CDU and sometimes, when they come across other cases, that's when they go, but they don't systematically go and check whoever goes to school or not in each and every Mauritian family.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order! Hon. Baloomoody!

Mr Baloomoody: Can I ask the hon. Minister to give us the exact date when the CDU became aware of the situation in this case?

Mrs Martin: Actually, the CDU came across those children who were not at home during school hours on 28 September and the case was reported to the Ministry of Social Integration and Economic Empowerment, that is, the NEF on 29 September.

Mr Lesjongard: Mr Speaker, Sir, can I ask the hon. Minister how preventive measures are taken at the level of her Ministry if she does not know well in advance what are the situations of those precarious families?

Mr Speaker: But, the hon. Minister has answered that cases are reported to her Ministry.

(Interruptions)

I don't know. What is the mechanism that the hon. Minister has in her Ministry to become aware whether a child needs help?

Mrs Martin: Actually, Mr Speaker, Sir, whenever a case is reported at the CDU, that's when we enquire into the case. Otherwise, we do have Child Protection Committees in different schools. We have Child Watch Programmes in different communities as well and that is how we manage to get the cases that are not reported to us.

Mr Obeegadoo: I want to go back to 28 September, Mr Speaker, Sir, when we are told the CDU came across the children and referred the matter to the National Empowerment Foundation. I want to know from the hon. Minister whether there was any follow-up from her Ministry with the National Empowerment Foundation to see what action was taken; with the Ministry of Education and Human Resources to inform the Ministry that there are children not going to school and I want to know what the CDU and her Ministry did following 29 September to avoid what eventually happened to these two children.

Mrs Martin: The hon. Member is making it sound as if we did not do anything in that case. No. I think, I am the Minister and I am...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order! Hon. Jhugroo, this is the last time I am calling you to order! I have been hearing what remarks you are making! I am asking you to keep quiet!

Mrs Martin: Mr Speaker, Sir, I will repeat again what I have said earlier, it is humanely not possible for the officers of the CDU to go into each and every household.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: The question from hon. Obeegadoo is a very specific and clear question - whether there was a follow-up by your Ministry from 29 September with the Ministry of Social Integration and Economic Empowerment and with the Ministry of Education and Human Resources? That is the simple question!

Mrs Martin: We have consequently sent a letter to the NEF and the NEF responded on 12 October to see the family.

Mrs Ribot: Mr Speaker, Sir, now that the Ministry has benefited from 20 additional officers, I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether she is thinking of setting up a mechanism for preventive measures so that we do not find ourselves in front of such cases again in the future?

Mrs Martin: This not relative to the original question.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Last question, hon. Obeegadoo! Order! Order now!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Labelle! I have given you so many opportunities to put questions. I am asking you to keep quiet now. Please, do me a favour!

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Speaker, I want to get the facts clear. On 28 September the CDU come across these children. It refers the matter to the Empowerment Foundation, apparently not to the Ministry of Education which has a mandate for ensuring that all children go to school and then, on 12 October, the CDU receives a letter from the Empowerment Foundation. I would like to know whether there was any follow up between 12 October and 24 October when these two children died.

Mrs Martin: According to the information that I have, the mother – when the CDU officers effected a visit at her house – said that she could not send her children to school due to financial problems. I repeat it, I am entitled to answer. He is entitled to ask his questions.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order! Order!

Mrs Martin: Well if you don't want me to answer I can drop the question!

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order! Next question!

(Interruptions)

I said order. I can just advise hon. Members that if they want to pursue the matter further they can either come with other questions or at adjournment time. Order! Order now!

ROSE BELLE S.E – LAND SALE

(No. B/895) Mr M. Seeruttun (Second Member for Vieux Grand Port & Rose Belle) asked the Minister of Agro-Industry and Food Security whether, in regard to the sale of land by the Rose Belle Sugar Estate to finance the Voluntary Retirement Scheme, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to the –

- (a) procedures followed for the sale thereof;
- (b) number of bids received ;
- (c) criteria used for the selection of the bidders, and
- (d) who conducted the valuation of the land, indicating if the Indian Consortium Ltd. was the preferred choice of the Rose Belle Sugar Estate.

Mr Faugoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, Rose Belle Sugar Estate implemented the Voluntary Retirement Scheme I for its employees in December 2001.

Mr Speaker: Let me hear the answer, please!

As per Section 29(1) (d) of the Sugar Industry Efficiency Act, Rose Belle Sugar Estate is entitled to recoup costs incurred under the VRS through conversion of agricultural lands and sale thereof.

On the basis of costs incurred for the VRS I, Rose Belle Sugar Estate has converted 9 plots covering an area of 287.73 *arpents* of agricultural land. Out of these 9 plots, 3 plots of an aggregate extent of 98.61 *arpents* have actually been sold. Approval for sale was conveyed by my Ministry in respect of all these 3 plots in the year 2006.

With respect to part (a) of the question, different procedures have been adopted for the sale of the 3 plots and are as follows -

Plot 1 through an open tender exercise for an area of *57 arpents 74 perches*.

Plot 2 through Government acquisition for *12 arpents 86 perches* for relocation of inhabitants of Mare Chicose Village.

Plot 3 through unsolicited request for an area of around *27 arpents*.

With respect to part (b) of the question, Plot 1 is the only case where there was a tender exercise carried out and three bids were received.

As regards part (c), the criterion used for the selection for Plot 1, where there was an open tender exercise, was the price quoted and the property was sold to SIT which was the highest bidder, Mr Speaker, Sir. For Plots 2 and 3, the criteria of selection do not arise.

With respect to part (d), for Plot 1, no valuation was carried out by Rose Belle Sugar State Board. For Plot 2, valuation was carried out by the Government Valuation Office on behalf of the Ministry of Housing and Lands

With regard to the second limb of part (d) of the question, the sale of land effected to the Indian Consortium Limited in respect of Plot 3 (where there was no bidding exercise), I am giving a comprehensive description of the procedures adopted by ...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order!

Mr Faugoo: ...Rose Belle Sugar Estate as they are fraught with irregularities that necessitated severe actions against the then General Manager, the Chairman and the Financial Controller Cum Corporate Secretary.

Mr Speaker, Sir, on 24 April 2006, the Rose Belle Sugar Estate received an application from the Indian Consortium Ltd, a Mauritian company, comprising one Mauritian and two Indian shareholders for *27 arpents* of land for a project to construct a hotel and commercial complex. It is to be pointed out that the land, for which the application was made, was issued in 2004 with a Land Conversion Permit for residential purposes and not for commercial and hotel construction purpose.

On 27 August 2006, Rose Belle Sugar Estate Board approved -

- (i) the sale of land for the proposed project on the basis of the quantum of FDI, some Rs300m. that it would bring and the substantive number of jobs it would have created, and they also approved
- (ii) the issue of a Letter of Intent (LOI) to Indian Consortium Ltd with specific conditions.

On 02 September 2006, the Letter of Intent was issued with conditions prior to the Ministry being notified of the Board approval of the proposed sale.

On 14 November 2006, the Government Valuation Office assessed the value of the plot at Rs50m. that is, Rs1.85m. per *arpent*.

On 21 November 2006, promoter requested for a review of the price and submitted a counter proposal of Rs1.3m. per *arpent*, that is, for a total value of Rs 36.4m.

On 12 December 2006, Rose Belle S.E. Board unilaterally and unanimously approved the revised price of Rs1.3m. per *arpent* as per the promoter's request without reverting back to the valuation office.

Mr Speaker: Order!

Mr Faugoo: On 21 December 2006, Rose Belle Sugar Estate sought approval of the parent Ministry to effect the sale on conditions stipulated in the Letter of Intent.

On 29 December 2006, Ministry conveyed approval for the sale of this plot. I was back in December 2006.

On 04 June 2008, a presale agreement was signed between Rose Belle Sugar Estate Board, which made mention of the conditions as per the LOI that is Letter of Intent. Over and above these conditions, the presale agreement also clearly stipulated the following –

- (i) All clearances (namely, from the Board of Investment, Prime Minister's Office and Ministry of Tourism) should be made available within six months given that the consortium comprised foreign shareholders;
- (ii) The final deed of sale must be signed within six months of the signature of the presale agreement, and also it stipulated;

- (iii) If all documents and clearances required under the presale agreement were not submitted by 03 December 2008, the presale agreement meaning expiry of six months, the presale agreement would lapse '*de plein droit*'. Meaning the consortium would have no legal recourse.

On 03 December 2008, the presale agreement expired in the absence of submission of the relevant documents and clearances required in the presale agreement

On 21 January 2009, despite expiry of the presale agreement and non submission of documents and clearances, the sale was effected. Moreover, the conditions mentioned in the Letter of Intent and the presale agreement, were not included in the final deed of sale.

Thus, there was no condition attached as to the use of the land that was being sold. Furthermore, the title deed clearly mentions in the *acte de vente* that the land under reference is a residential land by virtue of a land conversion permit issued by the Ministry of Agro-Industry in 2004. Therefore, the land which was sold to the Indian Consortium Ltd was a residential land for all intents and purposes.

As it was a freehold land with a land conversion permit for residential purposes, the company had all the right to develop the land for residential *morcellement*. In fact, the company applied for the *morcellement* permit, which was issued on 05 January of this year. The Rose Belle Sugar Estate does not have any right nor *locus standi* to object, inasmuch as the sale was free of any conditions whatsoever.

I wish to point out that the Rose Belle Sugar Estate has never applied to the *Morcellement* Board for a *morcellement* permit. Referring to the PNQ of 18 October 2011, the first meeting of the House for this session, it is factually incorrect to say that there was a *morcellement* permit issued to RBSE in 2004 and same *morcellement* permit is being used by a private promoter, as claimed by the Leader of the Opposition.

Furthermore, I wish to enlighten the House on the following departures and shortcomings related to this issue -

- The land was converted in year 2004 for residential purposes under the SIE Act, in order to recoup costs for VRS 1, and the permit is not time barred under the 12th Schedule of the SIE Act. The proposal received from the promoter was for hotel and commercial purposes. Hence, Rose Belle Sugar Estate Board should not have approved this site for the project of a commercial nature.

- The sale, which was effected after the expiry of the presale agreement, was made without including (in the deed of sale) any of the conditions mentioned in the presale agreement and the Letter of Intent.
- The deed of sale was signed by one Mauritian shareholder, who was the only remaining shareholder at the date of signature, clearly indicating that there would be no FDI as there were no Indian shareholders on the day of signature, as originally indicated in the proposal.
- There was no condition in the deed of sale to restrict the use of the land.
- Unlike the presale agreement, which was vetted by an independent legal advisor - a public notary different from the one who signed, who made the presale agreement - the sale agreement itself was never vetted by any independent notary.
- The area sold at the end of the day, according to the title deed, is 28.01A. In fact, it higher than what was applied for. The promoter applied for *27 arpents*, and the area sold is *28.01 arpents*.

In light of above irregularities, the following measures have been taken -

- The contract of the General Manager was terminated.
- The Chairman of the Board was dismissed.
- The Board membership was reviewed.
- The Finance Controller Cum Corporate Secretary was interdicted and, following disciplinary committee, his contract of employment was terminated in July of this year.
- The procedures regarding approval for sale of land have been reviewed. (Letter of Intent to be henceforth issued after approval of the Minister as required by the law, and no unsolicited request to be entertained).

Mr Speaker Sir, in order to clear all doubts and confusions, I am tabling the following documents pertaining to the sale of land by Rose Belle Sugar Estate Board to Indian Consortium Ltd -

1. Letter of Intent
2. Government Valuation Report

3. Presale Agreement
4. Deed of Sale

I am at the disposal of any Member of this House, and if they require any other document, any other information, I am going to lay it on the Table of the Assembly.

Mr Bérenger: Can I know from the hon. Minister whether it is not a fact that this Rose Belle saga went on and on for years, for months? The Board of Rose Belle Sugar Estate is appointed by government. The Ministry of Agriculture has a representative on that Board. Can he explain to the nation how nothing was pointed out? It is as if when everything is done, *on découvre l'Amérique!* Why did not his representatives raise objections, briefing him on the saga going on?

Mr Faugoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, we should look at things in the context. I am Minister of Agro-Industry; I am not the General Manager or the Chairman of Rose Belle Sugar Estate, Mr Speaker, Sir!

(Interruptions)

Again, Mr Speaker, Sir, when I said that the Board...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Don't raise voices.

Mr Faugoo: When I say that the Board has faulted, when I say that they have done things in a manner in which they should not have done, I am saying the Board, and it includes the representative of the Ministry. There is an enquiry which is going on. I am going to tell the representative of the Ministry to go and explain just like any other member, Mr Speaker, Sir. I cannot speak for the representative of the Ministry. What happened at the Rose Belle Board, I don't know, Mr Speaker, Sir! This is something that pertains to 2006, and I have said it so many times. It is not my doing. There is nothing wrong as far as the Ministry is concerned, as far as the Minister is concerned. There is something wrong which has been done by the Board; they have to take their responsibility. It is no good to come every week, be it in a press conference, in a PNQ, and raise issues when you don't know the facts!

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: No!

Mr Faugoo: I challenge any Member from that side...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: What do you have to do with this matter? I am asking you! What have you to do with this matter? Nothing! So, keep quiet!

Mr Faugoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, three months before the resumption of this Parliament, I have challenged the Leader of the Opposition to come with a PNQ, but not even a PQ has been asked by the MMM. If anybody, be it the Leader of the Opposition has any qualm, he can go to the ICAC or the CID.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: A question was put by the Leader of the Opposition that the Minister had a representative on the Board, and whether the Minister was briefed up by his representative. The Minister has stated that he has nothing to do with it, and that the Ministry was not responsible. The Board has to shoulder its own responsibility. Those people who sit on Boards have to do their work.

(Interruptions)

Mr Bérenger: Mr Speaker, Sir, there has been complete failure of the Board, which is appointed by government and by the Ministry, which has a representative there. Apart from these officials, General Manager and so on, have the members of the Board been changed, and has the representative of the Ministry of Agriculture, who was there during the whole saga, been replaced?

Mr Faugoo: I said, Mr Speaker, Sir, it is the first time in the history of this country that we have done away with a General Manager, with a Chairman, with a Financial Manager, and more or less all the members of the Board. This is the first time.

Mr Bérenger: I want to know the members of the Board who were replaced, who was the Board member representing Agriculture, and by whom he was replaced.

Mr Faugoo: I will deposit, as soon as I can, the list of members who were on the Board before, and the list of the new members.

Mr Bérenger: The hon. Minister said that I had stated that a *morcellement* permit had been issued. But this is wrong. It makes matters worse! From what I understand, therefore, the Board has gone by the 2004 decision to allow Rose Belle to sell land to finance its VRS. So, am I given to understand that there has been no *morcellement* certificate issued to the private operator, and he has been allowed to use this 2004 decision to allow Rose Belle to sell land to finance the VRS? And this is acceptable!

Mr Faugoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, once again, he is wrong. He is completely wrong. I don't know what issue he is making out of this. He said, and I'll read again...

Mr Speaker: Don't get excited, please!

Mr Faugoo: Alright. I quote hon. Bérenger, Mr Speaker, Sir. I didn't say whether he agrees. I said that what has taken place is totally illegal insofar as the private operator concerned used a *morcellement* permit delivered in 2004 Rose Belle Sugar Estate to finance the Voluntary Retirement Scheme. I'm not saying that he is misleading. He does not know!

Mr Speaker: He has not said that.

Mr Faugoo: He does not know!

(Interruptions)

Mr Faugoo: It's not *morcellement* permit! The land was converted.

Mr Bérenger: That is worse.

Mr Faugoo: What is worse?

Mr Bérenger: There is no *morcellement* permit at all.

Mr Faugoo: Why should there be a *morcellement* permit? They converted the land to recoup cost. If they intend to do a *morcellement*, they should go to the *Morcellement* Board, but they never went to the *Morcellement* Board. They sold the converted land for others to develop the land. They are recouping cost. Is this illegal?

(Interruptions)

Mr Faugoo: No, I am not finished yet, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Speaker: The hon. Member has not finished yet?

Mr Faugoo: The hon. Member says: ‘This year a private operator dares to use that to go ahead with a private *morcellement*, but there was no *morcellement* permit issued in 2004, Mr Speaker, Sir’. The *morcellement* permit was given to the promoter this year, that is, in 2011 for land bought from Rose Belle S.E. which was converted in 2004, which conversion is valid, there is no time bar, unlike for other conversions which are valid for five years which have now been changed in the new law which were bought this year, Mr Speaker, Sir. This is a legal issue. There is a notary public sitting there. There are so many lawyers. They can countercheck, but don’t come and say things which are not true and which are not correct.

Mr Bérenger: Mr Speaker, Sir, the precise notary public had sent me a note in 2004. A land conversion permit was issued to Rose Belle for VRS purposes. No *morcellement* permit! And it is now that we hear that a *morcellement* permit has been issued recently, supposedly, because legally you cannot do this, you cannot do that. This is legal rubbish, Mr Speaker, Sir.

I repeat: in 2004 it is only a land conversion permit that was issued and it is only recently that the land conversion permit had been issued.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order! Order!

Mr Faugoo: Mr Speaker, Sir....

Mr Speaker: Let me say, this is precisely what the Minister is saying, that in 2004, there was a conversion and that the Rose Belle Sugar Estate did not apply for the *morcellement* permit, it is the new purchaser who applied.

Mr Faugoo: It is so simple.

Mr Seeruttun: M. le président, le ministre a bien dit qu’il ne se mêle pas des activités de Rose Belle *Sugar Estate*. Il y a un GM, il y a un *Chairman*. Il y a eu une décision du *Board* : ils objectent à ce que le *morcellement* aille de l’avant. En quelle capacité le ministre a-t-il téléphoné au *General Manager* pour demander à ce qu’on arrête l’objection, on va de l’avant...

Mr Speaker: Non ! Est-ce que le ministre avait téléphoné. La question doit être : est-ce que le ministre avait téléphoné ?

Mr Seeruttun: C'est écrit noir sur blanc aux *Minutes* du Rose Belle Sugar Estate, et malgré....

Mr Speaker: Non, il ne faut pas dire ce qui est écrit, il faut demander au ministre...

(Interruptions)

Excusez-moi ! Attendez ! La question doit être bien posée. Est-ce que le ministre avait téléphoné ? C'est cela la question.

(Interruptions)

Mr Seeruttun: Est-ce que le ministre avait téléphoné au *General Manager* pour demander de ne pas aller de l'avant avec l'objection malgré que le *legal adviser* de Rose Belle Sugar Estate avait demandé d'aller de l'avant avec l'objection, et même de mettre une injonction contre cette vente?

Mr Faugoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, let's see the facts as they are on record. The promoter is the legal owner. He has bought a piece of land which is a converted land. I don't know in what circumstances, but the title deed is clear; he is the owner of a land. He has applied for a morcellement permit.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order! Let the Minister answer the question!

Mr Faugoo: He has applied for a *morcellement* permit which was issued this year. Rose Belle Sugar Estate was the vendor. They have no *locus standi* in the absence of any condition as to use of the land in the title deed. Rose Belle Sugar Estate has no *locus standi* to object to anything, unless they had reserved that right in the title deed.

(Interruptions)

I am coming to this! I have done the work I should be doing as a Minister. There was representation made, Mr Speaker, Sir, to Rose Belle, copied to me. Rose Belle was aware that the promoter had to raise capital to go ahead with the second phase of the project. Rose Belle was aware that there was no condition and the promoter even threatened to sue Rose Belle for damages. I am a Minister responsible for Rose Belle, do I sit back and watch! They have committed one blunder how could I allow Rose Belle to commit another blunder.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order! Order!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Baloomoody, you have been provoking him. He was answering the question. Order!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Baloomoody! Hon. Bhagwan!

(Interruptions)

He provoked him. I had heard him.

(Interruptions)

I heard him. I am asking everybody to keep quiet and I don't want you to use any provocative words. No remark from a sitting position! There is only three minutes left for this question.

Mr Faugoo: I have never ever given instructions to withdraw any objection. I have asked, as a Minister, for Rose Belle Sugar Estate to look into it because it would appear that they have no *locus standi*, Mr Speaker.

(Interruptions)

Mr Bhagwan: That Mauritian promoter was, until recently, and during the period the dealing was done, a senior adviser in a Ministry in Government and also a close agent of the Labour Party in Constituency No. 5, residing at Trou aux Biches, and also a Chairperson of a *société culturelle*. Can the Minister inform the House about all this? This is why he was given all these *tapis rouges*.

(Interruptions)

Mr Faugoo: He is neither my brother, nor my cousin, nor my brother in law! He could be a relative of yours! He is a Mauritian national like any other national, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Speaker: Order, now! Hon. Seeruttun!

(Interruptions)

Order! Order! Hon. Bhagwan you have put the question, keep quiet now.

Mr Seeruttun: Mr Speaker, Sir, I have got a copy of the Board Minutes of the Rose Belle Sugar Estate dated 10 October 2009 where it is stated black on white that the Minister phoned the General Manager and asked him to intervene and to cancel the objection, to go ahead with the sale.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Hon. Jugnauth, last question!

(Interruptions)

The Minister has already answered.

(Interruptions)

No, no! Wait! He is laying a copy of the Board papers. The Minister has said: He has never intervened and the House has

(Interruptions)

Mr Faugoo: I want to answer, Mr Speaker, Sir. I am tabling a copy of the Minutes of proceedings from Rose Belle Sugar Estate Board which says the Board opined that legally Rose Belle Sugar Estate Board could not prevent Indian Consortium from disposing of any portion of the land as same was not mentioned in the deed of sale, though all transactions were effected for the Little India project with the Board of Investment. I table it.

Mr Speaker: A last question, hon. Jugnauth!

(Interruptions)

Mr Faugoo: Which is which? I table this.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Jugnauth, last question!

Mr Jugnauth: Will the hon. Minister state that whenever there is a Board meeting - in this case, we are talking about Rose Belle Sugar Estate - the officer, who represents the Ministry, who attends the Board, has a duty and it is normal practice that he does give a report after every Board meeting to the Minister concerned for him to look at it and to take whatever appropriate actions should be taken. Is it not a fact?

Mr Faugoo: The hon. Member was Minister before 2005....

(Interruptions)

Let me answer!

Mr Speaker: Hon. Members, let the Minister answer!

(Interruptions)

Let the Minister answer!

(Interruptions)

Let him answer the way he wants to answer so long as it is within the framework of the Standing Orders.

Mr Faugoo: These two hon. Members were Ministers of Agriculture before 2005, why didn't they tell the Leader of the Opposition that there was no morcellement permit given then in 2004...

Mr Speaker: No, I am sorry.

Mr Faugoo: If they are aware of all the facts....

(Interruptions)

If they are aware of all the facts, I am saying there was conversion given in 2004 and *morcellement* permit in 2011.

(Interruptions)

I was not there! I was not there in 2004, Mr Speaker, Sir.

(Interruptions)

I was not there in 2006.

Mr Speaker: Time is over! The Table has been advised that PQ Nos. B/897 and B/898 have been withdrawn.

(Interruptions)

I don't want to hear any noise in the House now.

MOTION

SUSPENSION OF S.O.10 (2)

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

The vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Minister of Economic Development (Mr X. L. Duval) rose and seconded.

Question put and agreed to.

Mr Speaker: Members must understand the difficult situation in which the Chair finds itself sometimes to conduct the business of the House.

PUBLIC BILLS

First Reading

On motion made and seconded, the Bail (Amendment) Bill (No. XXVII of 2011) was read a first time.

At 4.00 p.m. the sitting was suspended.

On resuming at 4.32 p.m. with the Deputy Speaker in the Chair.

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).

The Minister of Tourism and Leisure (Mr M. Yeung Sik Yuen): M. le président, tout d'abord, permettez-moi de féliciter le vice-Premier ministre et ministre des Finances, l'honorable Xavier-Luc Duval pour ce budget qui va certainement créer l'histoire. Un budget où toutes les composantes de la société se retrouvent. Un budget qui va non seulement donner un véritable souffle à notre économie en cette période de crise financière, mais qui va créer un *boost*.

M. le président, il est tout aussi important aujourd'hui de maintenir un juste équilibre entre les enjeux économiques. Notre gouvernement a réussi là où beaucoup ont échoué.

Le vice-Premier ministre et ministre des Finances l'a dit dans son discours, je cite –

“We have prepared for the worst and hope for the best.”

M. le président, un vieil adage affirme que si nous ne tirons pas de leçon du passé, nous sommes condamnés à répéter l'histoire. C'est pourquoi notre gouvernement adopte une approche systématique, équilibrée et réfléchie envers la planification dans divers secteurs.

M. le président, aujourd'hui les gens de mauvaise foi viennent dire que le vice-Premier et ministre des Finances est en train de protéger le secteur privé. Faut-il les faire rappeler que le secteur privé reste indéniablement un partenaire stratégique de notre économie et emploie de nombreux Mauriciens.

M. le président, en 2005, lorsque nous sommes arrivés au pouvoir, Maurice était plongée dans une récession économique. Il a fallu un homme de vision pour redresser la barre et le Premier ministre, le Dr. Navin Ramgoolam comme bon capitaine, a su amener le bateau à bon port. C'est dans la tempête qu'on reconnaît un véritable capitaine. La situation économique pendant la période 2000 à 2005 peut être résumée à dire : c'est le jour et la nuit. Un héritage catastrophique que nous a laissé le gouvernement MMM/MSM qui a été au pouvoir.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, our country has successfully managed several crisis over the last six years. Other than the fall in demand and depressed market situations, we have had to deal with the Dengue fever and Chikungunya episodes which could have immensely affected the tourism industry.

Each time, this Government has managed to remedy the situation by taking bold measures.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we can see that this is a great team work.

C'est un budget responsable pour la relance de l'économie.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, strong emphasis is put on: education, health, training for employment, sports, business facilitation, SMEs, sustainable development, and upgrading of conditions of living and housing.

M. le président, le budget 2012 marque aussi la détermination à protéger et venir en aide aux classes vulnérables de notre société, la portée sociale du budget est reconnue par tous. Le

passage du vice-Premier ministre au ministère de l'intégration sociale a eu un impact positif sur le budget.

M. le président, nous le savons, la nation mauricienne a toujours défié les prévisions statistiques et économiques.

Notre capacité nationale à encaisser les coups durs, notre capacité à résister ont fait de notre développement économique un exemple à suivre et aujourd'hui plusieurs institutions internationales saluent notre résilience dans le contexte international des plus défavorables.

M. le président, nous sommes en droit de croire, plus que jamais à notre avenir, c'est ça l'Alliance de l'Avenir.

Le présent budget a rencontré, M. le président, nombre de commentaires favorables notamment dans la presse, au sein de la communauté des affaires, des firmes comptables, des ONGs et de la société.

Nombre d'analystes ont aussi salué un budget qui adresse les enjeux actuels et donne de l'oxygène à l'industrie, moteur du développement, tout en assurant le déploiement d'une solidarité nationale. L'honorable vice-Premier ministre et ministre des Finances s'est acquitté avec brio d'une tâche complexe, empreinte de paradoxes : encourager la croissance, assurer la croissance, et répartir le gâteau national dans une vision socialement équitable.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, statistical data shows that the tourism industry in the global scenario makes up 11% of GDP. Tourism industry trends also suggest that as many as 200 million people are engaged worldwide in the tourism industry.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, forecasts for the coming years indicate that outbound tourism will originate mostly from Asia and the Pacific growing at a rate of 5% a year and generating an average of 17 million additional international arrivals every year. Europe is forecast to follow with an average 16 million extra arrivals a year, resulting from a much more moderate growth rate (+2.5% a year).

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, at a time when many economies worldwide struggle to consolidate recovery and create employment, tourism maintains its position as a sector which can play a key role in terms of socio-economic growth and development.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the tourism industry in Mauritius is among the key industries and pillar of the economy. It has contributed about 13.2% to GDP and gross earnings have reached Rs39 billion while the tourist arrivals have attained 934,827 in 2010. It is also a major source for FDI.

This year gross earnings are expected to reach Rs42.5 billion whilst the number of tourist arrivals is estimated at 980,000. As at 31 October 2011, we have already reached 764,999 tourists.

The tourism industry employs around 75,000 people representing 14.2% of total employment.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, Budget 2012 advocates the preservation and consolidation of the industry so that it can maintain its position as one of the main engines of growth.

M. le président, l'île Maurice en tant que destination touristique, doit perpétuellement se réinventer afin de demeurer attractive. Le monde change à grande vitesse et le monde de la technologie a aussi changé le comportement des touristes.

De plus en plus, la stratégie qui s'imposait hier est parfois dépassée aujourd'hui. Savez-vous que notre destination n'est pas assez connue dans plusieurs pays ?

Par exemple, durant mes rencontres avec les étrangers à l'extérieur, quelquefois ils confondent Maurice et Mauritanie. Ils étaient perplexes et s'ensuivaient alors de longues explications.

M. le président, c'est pourquoi la MTPA est appelée à mettre sur pied un département *e-marketing* pour promouvoir la visibilité de la destination. Et en plus, il y a beaucoup plus de choix comme destination qu'auparavant. Certes, la situation globale dans le secteur du voyage reste fragile, mais nous voulons vous rassurer sur la ligne directrice de notre politique. Elle reste axée sur la qualité du produit, sur le niveau de service de l'hébergement. La *Tourism Authority* sévie et sévira contre les opérateurs nuisibles à l'image de la destination Mauricienne. On va devoir innover, on va devoir changer continuellement pour s'adapter à ce monde. Il ne s'agit pas uniquement de *branding* et de positionnement international, de segmentation et de promotion sur des marchés traditionnels et émergents, mais aussi bien d'un *lifting* national du produit de la destination Mauricienne. En cela, je remercie le vice-Premier ministre et ministre des Finances

pour son appui car il comprend parfaitement les enjeux majeurs et nous donne à travers le budget, les moyens de rectifier le tir sur plusieurs points. Et c'est pour cela qu'on parle de *back to basics*.

M. le président, la *Tourism Authority* travaille sur un programme de formation pour les entrepreneurs qui travaillent avec les touristes, notamment les *beach hawkers*, les *pleasure craft operators*, les taxis, etc. Nous voulons créer un encadrement favorable pour que ces entrepreneurs comprennent qu'ils sont aussi nos ambassadeurs. On cherche le tourisme long terme.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Code of Ethics will reinforce the bond with visitors and establish confidence in the destination. It will project the island as a society with strong moral principles promoting responsible tourism.

M. le président, l'école hôtelière Sir Gaëtan Duval donne l'opportunité aux jeunes de faire carrière dans l'industrie touristique. Grâce à ces formations, ils peuvent obtenir un travail bien rémunéré sur les bateaux de croisière. Et cela consolidera l'expérience de ces jeunes. Il ne faut pas oublier que 36% des chômeurs de notre pays sont des jeunes. Il nous faudra renforcer la formation de nos jeunes dans le domaine de l'hôtellerie car c'est un des corps de métier les plus porteurs en terme d'emplois.

M. le président, aujourd'hui, nous pouvons raisonnablement parler d'un ensemble de mesures visant à améliorer le *customer experience*. Avec le développement des nouvelles technologies, chacun a la possibilité de se construire son *package* à l'avance, les agences et les opérateurs touristiques ne s'y trompent plus, les portails de réservation et de sélection des activités se multiplient en ligne et adossé à ce nouveau système se trouve une condition *sine qua non* de classification et de référence sérieuse.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in order to ensure that tourists have a transparent way of benchmarking the levels of service offered by different tourist enterprises, a voluntary grading system is being introduced. This means that no stakeholders will be allowed to autograde themselves. However, the classification exercise will be monitored by the Tourism Authority.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Tourism Authority will provide the guidelines to meet the minimum requirements and the grading. M. le président, le tourisme médical est parmi une des attractions qu'offre notre île. Le tourisme médical gagne du terrain à Maurice avec une arrivée

de 11,000 personnes en 2010. Les patients viennent des îles de l'océan Indien, des pays d'Afrique, de l'Inde, et de l'Europe. Ils sont attirés chez nous car les prix sont compétitifs.

Pour encourager ce secteur, le grand argentier stimule la demande en enlevant la taxe.

M. le président, en *marketing*, il n'y a rien de pire qu'un écart négatif entre les *expectations* et l'*actual customer experience*, cet écueil est un des pires dangers qui guettent notre *branding*, quel qu'il soit, il s'agit ici de *consistency* et donc de *customer satisfaction*, les bases du *marketing* et des activités commerciales en général.

M. le président, l'éco-tourisme prend de l'ampleur dans le monde. Il est grand temps de sensibiliser notre population et de le préparer au changement. Mon ministère compte reprendre et accentuer différentes campagnes de sensibilisation telle que la campagne «déchollé pas collé» de 2008-2009. Il faudrait que l'écologie forme partie de notre culture et en ayant une île Maurice plus propre, elle sera beaucoup plus attrayante.

Afin d'encourager l'éco-tourisme, la *Tourism Authority* introduit bientôt un *Green Certificate* et les hôteliers pourront accéder volontairement à la certification de leur établissement.

Suite à l'intervention de l'honorable Mahen Jhugroo sur le fait que le pays est sale et peuplé de chiens errants, moi, je voudrais lui demander : qui était mon prédécesseur ? Qui a cessé de financer le *Cleaning Unit* de la *Tourism Authority* ? Qui a arrêté le financement de la MSPCA pour la capture des chiens errants ? Nous savons tous le travail formidable accompli par les hommes en verts de la *Tourism Authority* sous la tutelle de l'honorable Xavier- Luc Duval.

M. le président, durant le dernier budget présenté en 2010, il y a eu une réduction considérable dans le budget de la majorité des ministères. Comment peut-on venir dire aujourd'hui que le présent ministre des Finances a une très grande marge de manœuvre ?

Mais quand il était le ministre des Finances, il n'y avait pas d'argent pour la CDU, pour le *Cleaning Unit* de la *Tourism Authority*, pour la création des *District Councils*, entre autres.

M. le président, la somme des mesures budgétaires annoncée vise notamment à créer une échelle de valeurs fiables et vérifiables pour l'ensemble de notre industrie et à améliorer notre environnement. On vante l'hospitalité mauricienne depuis des décennies, mais il faut se rendre à l'évidence, les touristes sont autant d'invités que nous souhaitons accueillir dans une demeure propre, sous peine de ne jamais les revoir se pointer chez nous. Une rigueur au niveau de notre environnement, le respect de certaines règles, le *cleaning up of the destination*, une nécessité

aujourd'hui et le budget 2012 répond à ce besoin avec une somme de R 25 millions additionnelles.

Nos objectifs sont clairs, il existe un rêve mauricien, un produit touristique mais nous, en tant que gestionnaires, décideurs et opérateurs, nous nous parons d'un objectif réalisable et mesurable. Nous vendons le rêve mais nous ne pouvons pas nous permettre de rêver à ces objectifs, l'ensemble de l'industrie se retrouse les manches, chacun y va de sa stratégie pour contrer le gaspillage, améliorer l'efficience et la productivité. Le gouvernement souhaite accompagner ces efforts, prendre le relais là où c'est nécessaire.

M. le président, pour que les employés soient plus productifs et indépendants, le *Tourism Employees Welfare Fund* met à leur disposition des facilités d'emprunt pour l'achat des motocyclettes jusqu'à R 50,000 à 8.5% comme intérêt et payable en 5 ans. Et en plus de cela, les taxes douanières ont été enlevées sur les motocyclettes de moins de 125cc.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the review of the MTPA was long overdue and is welcome. Meanwhile some 13 Technical Advisory Committees have been set up to advise the MTPA on promotion strategies and activities in specific markets.

The main objectives of the Technical Advisory Committees are to -

- (1) provide a public/private sector platform for creating the necessary synergies for policy, strategy and project implementation, monitoring and evaluation;
- (2) achieve a commonality of purpose based on consensus and chart out a common strategic direction for the industry;
- (3) monitor the industry and market evolution, and
- (4) ensure better coordination between the MTPA and the industry.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, airfares to Rodrigues are being subsidised until the end of December 2012. This will definitely continue to sustain growth to the Rodriguans tourist arrivals.

M. le président, j'accueille favorablement le *scheme* visant à soutenir la production des films à Maurice. La visibilité qu'obtiendra Maurice sur le marché international sera bénéfique pour la destination car c'est une autre façon de promouvoir le pays.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, regarding remarks made by the hon. Leader of the Opposition during his intervention where he expressed his worries for the tourism sector, I quote –

« L'année 2012 sera l'année de tous les risques pour l'industrie du tourisme.

Malheureusement, mes informations, mes analyses me disent qu'en 2012 il y aura licenciement, il y aura dépôts de bilans, il y aura mise en faillite par les banques de certaines unités ».

M. le président, de 1999 à 2000, le taux de croissance d'arrivée touristique était de 13.5% sous le gouvernement PTR/PMXD mais de 2000 à 2005, le taux de croissance d'arrivée touristique, M. le président était en –

2001 0.5%

2002 3.2%

2003 2.9%

2004 2.4%

2005 5.8%

Mais quand l'Alliance sociale reprend en 2005, le taux d'arrivée touristique a basculé de 0.5%. L'héritage laissé par le gouvernement MMM/MSM est passé jusqu'à 15.06% et aujourd'hui, malgré la crise financière, M. le président, nous sommes à 4.2% et non pas à 0.5% comme à l'époque de l'ancien gouvernement. Je vous rappelle qu'il n'y avait même pas de crise financière à cette époque là. Et j'espère que le MMM et le MSM étaient déjà tracassés à cette époque.

M. le président, il y a eu un manque de visibilité de la destination depuis le début de l'année sur les marchés européens. On va devoir consolider les marchés traditionnels – essentiellement en Europe – et le développement de nouveaux marchés émergents comme l'Inde, la Russie et la Chine. Mr Speaker, Sir, if we do what we have always been doing, we shall obtain what we have always been obtaining, if not less.

Le gouvernement va investir sur la visibilité, l'attractivité et l'accessibilité de la destination Mauricienne. Notre année, l'année 2011, se terminera certainement sur une note positive. Mon ministère, M. le président, c'est aussi le ministère des loisirs, domaine où trop souvent on l'associe à l'amusement. Mais il ne faut pas oublier que ces Mauriciens qui bossent dur - et c'est de notre devoir en tant que *caring Government* de donner aussi des loisirs à notre

peuple et c'est dans ce contexte que mon ministère a organisé beaucoup d'activités ces derniers mois telles que loisirs sur la plage, *Family Fun Day*, *Water Sports and Leisure Activities*, entre autres. Et nous venons l'année prochaine avec d'autres activités bien ciblées dans le but de toucher le maximum de Mauriciens. On se fera un devoir de faire les Mauriciens à travers le ministère des Loisirs découvrir davantage le pays et aussi des activités pratiquées par les touristes qui sont tellement étrangères aux Mauriciens. Les loisirs seront aussi des moments de partage interculturel, des moments où des Mauriciens de tous bords, de toutes classes vont se croiser et de ce fait, renforcer l'unité du pays.

M. le président, la responsabilité sociale est le maître mot du gouvernement. Nous ne pouvons qu'être fiers que ce budget nous mène vers l'amélioration du niveau de vie de la population.

M. le président, même Vishnu Lutchmeenaraidoo, qui est le président de la commission des Finances au MMM, a, lui-même, dit dans son dernier interview en date du 12 novembre, je cite –

« Le budget comporte de bonnes mesures sociales ».

Il va même plus loin en parlant également « d'éclat » des mesures sociales du budget.

M. le président, nous serons fidèles à nos engagements. Je suis convaincu que le secteur du tourisme jouera un rôle encore plus important, car ce budget nous donne le moyen de créer l'envie chez les étrangers de venir visiter notre beau pays.

M. le président, l'île Maurice doit devenir le *hub* de l'Afrique car nous avons tout ce qu'il faut pour que ce rêve se réalise. M. le président, je n'ai aucun doute car le moyen nous a été donné par le vice-Premier ministre et ministre des Finances pour aller vers cet objectif.

Le secteur du tourisme, M. le président, jouera aussi un rôle déterminant dans la contribution active du P.I.B. avec un objectif précis d'augmenter l'arrivée des touristes et de les faire dépenser plus. Sur ce, je remercie le Premier ministre et le vice-Premier ministre et ministre des Finances pour tout le soutien accordé au ministère du Tourisme et des Loisirs.

Merci.

(4.54 p.m.)

Mrs J. Radegonde (Fourth Member for Savanne & Black River): Mr Speaker, Sir, what I have been hearing from this Budget Speech 2012 from the other side of the House is just figures and words!

For example, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, hon. Ms Deerpalsing...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Please, order now!

Mrs Radegonde: Hon. Ms Deerpalsing points to the period 2000 to 2005 as the worst GDP growth because the country was under the administration of the MMM and MSM. Hon. Shakeel Mohamed speaks about the job losses during the period 2000-2005. Hon. Faugoo mentions the decrease in FDI. But, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it is a shame that I have not heard a word about the World Trade Organisation policy review in 2001; Reform in Sugar Protocol; the EU Common Market preferences granted to the ACP countries under the Sugar Protocol, I quote

—

“Under this regime, EU sugar production, importation, and exportation remained subject to a complex and costly supply management scheme, involving high levels of domestic price support, export subsidisation, and high tariff barriers.”

The phasing out of the preferential treatment for Mauritius in its main export product that is sugar, and to its textile and apparel industry.

This decision, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, has had an adverse impact on the economy of the country, on our nation, on the lives of our friends and families, not just figures. Nearly 74 enterprises have closed down, and 28,642 workers have been laid off. These do not only represent figures on paper as the hon. Ministers pretend. But, it is about the sufferings of our fathers, mothers, sisters and brothers who have contributed their share of the wealth to this nation, and this, since the creation of the EPZ in 1970s.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, what has happened, is happening and will happen to our country, to our nation and our fathers, mothers, brothers and sisters of this country? Very few

indeed of these workers who were mostly female workers have been redeployed or compensated according to their due and this situation has exacerbated social inequalities and inequities in the country, has reduced the GDP growth, and has decreased the FDI.

Having said this, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, once again, it is a shame that as a caring Government the hon. Ministers who have spoken before me, have painted a nice picture of impressive growth figures in a view to glorify and celebrate these growth figures. But, they have not come with the appropriate measures to address the day-to-day problems and difficulties that the most vulnerable of our sisters and brothers are facing in their quest for a decent livelihood.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am not an economist, I am a sociologist by training , but I can count with my fingers and toes enough to count the many times growth and efficiency have appeared in this Budget Speech 2012. At a point, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would start to believe that the new religion of today is efficiency and growth. This is not serious because growth, as we can create it, is causing more social inequality than prosperity if adequate measures are not taken for our less fortunate fellow citizens. For instance, M. Deputy Speaker, Sir, at every corner of our country what can we see is a proliferation of global supermarkets that has moved in the country with big capital and commitment to greater efficiency? Look at a few distance away, in each and every constituency, what can we see? The small farmers, planters, and fishermen are trying to sell their products by the side of the road. In fact, I heard hon. Faugoo say that the private sector benefits more from this Budget 2012 because they are those who create wealth.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, is it that wealth is nothing that accumulated income can be converted into business ownership, education, and real estate or other capitalist assets. So, I see no logic in what the hon. Minister has said except, a mere paradox to the Equal Opportunity Bill, Investment Opportunities, inclusive of the poor, and fairness, when we know that the measures that have been introduced will widen the gap between the rich and the poor.

Of course, this Government is a caring, not to say scaring one, when it is a question of distributing wealth unevenly among the people of this country. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we are all taxpayers, but who is going to be hurt the most from the tax policy and who is going to accumulate more wealth and become richer? And, it is a shame that this same Government calls

this Budget as inclusive of the poor. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, there is a long time to go before we can achieve that level playing field under the leadership of the present Government, '*Alliance de l'Avenir*'.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as hon. Ameer Meea, I join our hon. Leader of Opposition in his firm request to remove the tax on the SMS and MMS. It is not only because it is an insult to our youth and democracy, but also, we have to think that it is an important tool for our elderly. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, how many of our elderly are rearing their grand children because their son or daughter cannot find a job today. Many of these elderly with a pension of - as my colleague Hon. Mrs Ribot mentioned - Rs3,204, to which Rs126 has been stolen from them cannot afford to pay a telephone bill, but rely on their grandchildren to stay connected to other relatives or friends. How many of our fishermen and planters rely on a cell phone to keep in touch with their families when they are out in the fields or camping at the beach over week for the survival of their families. How many of our children living in the rural areas, who cannot afford to pay a phone call and use the SMS as a means to stay connected to their families while they are at work or at school? It is, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in this reality that the MMM lives and experiences with people in their day-to-day life.

This said, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would like to reiterate that this Budget does not meet the real need of our small planters, fishermen, artists and farmers. Most of them are struggling to live and feed their family. It is not by removing taxes on equipment that we would remove pressures on this group of low income earning. In regard to fishermen, I would like to ask the Government to subsidise fuel, outboard and inboard motors, provide a grant scheme of 75% and free life jacket as it was under the case of the MMM, provide them with radio, review the scholarship of the fishermen's children and not to discourage them to continue their fishing activities in the lagoon. Finally, as the Government proposes to invest Rs10 m. for replenishing the lagoon; I suggest that there should also be strict surveillance of the lagoon.

In regard to the small farmers, most of them lack access to assets and capital, and face high transaction cost, which make it difficult for them to modernise their activities. As a result, they cannot compete on equal footing with their competitors on the local, regional or global market. I would like to ask Government to subsidise the prices of inputs wherever appropriate

and facilitate access of their products to hotel or supermarket, in order, to enable these farmers to participate fully in the local, regional and global economy.

In regard to planters, I would like to ask Government to subsidise pesticides, technologies and to provide them with necessary technical assistance in order to enable them to improve their product and to respond to the demands of the market.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would like now to talk about Art and Culture. As I mentioned in my maiden speech, Government contains a long list of wishful and prestigious projects including the National Symphonic Orchestra, national awards for excellence in arts, etc. But, what has been done concretely to reposition Art and Culture and heritage sector as a major contributor to the economy emancipation of this country. This position has indeed been reiterated by the hon. Prime Minister on the Mauritian newspaper dated 21 August 2010 and I quote –

“ (...) Mo pas compran couma ena dimoune pas compran limportans lar et la kiltir. Peut être ces gens-là ne réalisent pas que les artistes ont contribué à la construction du pays.”

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this is only word. In reality, what is being done to enhance the status of artists in recognition of their great contribution in our country and elsewhere? The artists involved with paints and craft do not even register as an entrepreneur with SEDHA, so that they can obtain the necessary support for their products. With exception to our embassy in England, which has an “*attaché culturel*”, in no other embassy our culture is being represented. I would like to ask Government to adopt the same arrangement as in other embassies to increase our participation in the world market economy.

Another point, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, is the Copyright Bill. The Copyright protection is a *sine qua non* condition for the implementation of many effective measures to combat piracy. Many times questions have been raised by my colleagues in the MMM and myself, with regard to the Copyright Bill. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, evidence from 2000 to 2007 from Police Department; antipiracy unit has shown that in 2006 the seizure was six times more than in the other years 2002-2004. And, 2007 was most impressive catch of 1.2 million seized at one place. Taken together, it was noted that this catch was about nine times more than the year preceding 2002-2006 altogether. Let me provide the House with some figures –

- 2002 – 53,725;
- 2003 – 7,819;
- 2004 – 9,600;
- 2005 – 12,340;
- 2006 – 414,820, and
- 2007 – there has been a decrease, it was 87,756.

According to recent information on the press, it is indicated that 600,000 pirated CDs and DVDs was seized for Rs18 m. So, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the question is: how much our share of the cultural industry is lost in the GDP growth and of course, downsizing the sale of our legitimate author. Having said this, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would like to reiterate my request for the early implementation of the Copyright Act as it is the wish of the local artists, and also ask the Government to provide taxes on blank CDs and DVDs, to discourage piracy and encourage the legitimate author. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we all know that there is no president at the Head of the MASA actually. This is an important issue that the Government should look into to fill the post with the right person.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, our country is endowed with beautiful landscape, pristine seascape and blue lagoons. We have talented artists and actors. We have all the necessary basic ingredients for a film industry to thrive on. However, everybody in this House will agree with me that practically nothing has achieved in this field as at now. The absence of concrete results is because we do not have dedicated personnel at the Mauritius Film Development Corporation. We do not have the appropriate framework Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, there is practically no visibility on the international scene on how Mauritius could be an interesting film-making destination.

The development of a dynamic Film Industry has the potential to bring substantial economic and cultural benefits to our country. Not only will our tourist industry benefit from increased visibility on the international scene, but it will generate revenue as well as employment opportunities. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with regard to the setting up of the Film Industry, as mentioned in the present Budget, the amount earmarked in my opinion will not be sufficient for the film industry to take off. Today, the Film Industry, whether it is from the west or east, has become a big industry. Because of the lack of vision of this government in that sector for the

past years, they have preferred to go to our neighbours to shoot films. That is why I say that we need an aggressive campaign with sufficient budget to attract them back again. Otherwise, it will remain a mere '*effet d'annonce*', as all the ongoing '*effet d'annonce*' like amendment of the Copyright Bill, National Symphony Orchestra, *École de Cinéma*, virtual museum, etc. I would request the Minister of Arts and Culture to look seriously at this sector. We are foregoing numerous opportunities, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

Before I conclude, I would like to talk about the impact of this Budget on my Constituency, Black River/Savanne. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, my Constituency has remained dominated mainly by agricultural, fishing and farming activities - the poultry, cattle rearing and vegetables. Most of the people living in this rural area are low income earners. I would like to draw the attention of the House to the following points.

Le Morne is viewed as the most underprivileged rural area of Mauritius. However, nothing is being done to uplift Le Morne from its absolute poverty. There is a huge water problem in that region. The drainage and sewerage system *laissent à désirer*. During the rainy season, you can see solid waste floating on the road and elsewhere. There is a serious problem of stray dogs. Another point is that the government school is facing a serious problem of land slide, with the foundation starting to crumble and, because of this problem, the rooms assigned for the library, computer and science labs are not being utilised. The last point about the school is that there has been a lack of teachers for the first grade pupils.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we also spoke about connectivity in this Budget, in order to grow the economy rapidly, sustainably and inclusively. In Chamarel, the buses operate from Chamarel to Rivière Noire and, thereafter, the bus users, most importantly the school children and the workers have to catch another bus to their destination, which adds lots of pressures on them. I would like to ask the government to extend the bus route from Chamarel to Cascavelle/Bambous. This will ease the stress of the inhabitants of Chamarel and, at the same time, allow them to be connected to the new development of the region.

There is also an acute water problem in this region. The reservoir constructed under the MMM/MSM, which feeds the region, is practically empty.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, education is very important to fight poverty. The poor early school children in Chamarel are attending school in the village hall, free of charge to the

Manager of the school by the Black River District Council. However, these children have to pay a fee of Rs600 on a monthly basis. How many of them will attend the pre-primary school, and how many cannot afford it? Again, the government is still launching bids for a new school, which was proposed to be evaluated, and work was expected to start in May 2011 and completed in January 2012, as per the reply to a PQ dated 29 March 2011. In the PQ of today, 15 November 2011, on the same issue, the hon. Minister replied that work has been delayed because there were no successful bidders. I would like to make an appeal to the government to give priority to the construction of this pre-primary school, so as to respond to the educational need of children of this region.

In the Local Government Bill, the government mentioned the split of three district councils into six district councils. In the budget, it is announced that the billboards will be increased from Rs30,000 to Rs70,000 per annum, and this sum will be entrusted to the MRA. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the fees from the concert at Domaine les Pailles has also been removed from the Bambous District Council. There is a shortage of staff; only one inspector for four cemeteries, three inspectors for the division of planning, and four inspectors are responsible to ensure a proper sanitation for all the catchment area via Pailles to Bel Ombre. Five vacant clerical posts have not yet been filled. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, there is apparently a budget deficit of Rs60 m over.

In Rivière Noire, there is an ongoing construction in the vicinity of the St Esprit RCA School. There is no sign to reduce the speed limit, no speed breaker, which represents a great danger for our children. The manager of the school has sent representations to the District Council, the Road Safety Unit, the NDU, and the matter has been on the press, but no action has been taken so far.

There is an ongoing problem of flooding in the region of Bel Ombre. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, during heavy rainfall, the village of Bel Ombre flooded, and the inhabitants lost all their furniture and food. My colleague and I have raised the question in this House. There has been no action which has been taken to prevent recurrence. I would like to make an appeal to the government to look into this matter.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, at the CDU in Bambous, there is a problem of staff. Yesterday, I have listened to my colleague, hon. Mrs Ribot; I have listened to her concern about our children

and the inadequate preventive measures. I would like to make an appeal to the government to recruit trained social worker and psychologist to the CDU of Bambous. With a catchment area via Richelieu to Bel Ombre, with maybe 75,000 inhabitants, there are only five staffs occupying the CDU of Bambous. I would also like to request the government to add to all Police Stations in this region of Savanne, and where needed, a Department for Women and Child Protection Unit.

I can see in the Budget that the government is recruiting 800 policemen. My question is: after how many years, how many of them are retiring, have left or are leaving the country? If my mathematics may prove right, I am sure the figure may be over 800. As usual, it is a government of rebalancing numbers to redistribute growth.

There is the problem of asbestos in the Constituency - Riviere des Galets, Bel Ombre, Case Noyale, Rivière Noire. What concrete measures are being taken in response to the voice of these poor people? And we talk about inclusive of the poor!

The taxi drivers of Bel Ombre, Baie du Cap, St Martin and Choisy were not allowed to apply to operate at the Tamassa Hotel. These taxi drivers are now working temporarily at the Sofitel Hotel. Hon. Ganoo brought questions to the National Assembly. Yet, no remedial measures were taken. I would like to make an appeal to the Government that, when the time comes to employ taxi drivers on a permanent basis at Sofitel Hotel, these drivers have to be given or must be given priority.

Pension for disabled persons is another issue in my Constituency, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. The Social Aid Act indicates that if a salary exceeds Rs250,000 yearly, the disabled child is not eligible for a pension. At no time have I heard about reviewing the scheme for pension for our disabled children. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with the increasing standard of living, a family with a child having multiple disabilities and three other children, it makes it hard for the family to cope with all this burden. So, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I urge the Government to review this scheme.

To conclude, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, what I have heard so far about this Budget, growth has always been the final answer to all problems and its logic keeps inequality growing. But, in practice this Budget is not inclusive of the poor, - as we have heard about all these examples, as there are millions and thousands, lots of examples that can I give over and over, as it does not

provide opportunity for investment to all. The day-to-day problems confronting the common man have remained unaddressed. The most vulnerable sections of our population will see their sufferings increasing every day. The inequality gap will widen.

Second, this Budget fails to see the real need and problem of our global economy like water, energy and food security. This Budget does not mention at all, the billions of people on this earth. How many people can our earth contain and feed today? Years have gone by and this Government has still not found concrete and long-term solution to the water problem, energy and food security. For instance, we have the water right, but what is being done to ensure that every citizen of this country have equal access to water. Rather, we heard that water tariff will increase by 35%. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, is this caring Government aware of the many poor who will have to choose between their basic priorities like food, health, children education and water?

Why don't we do like South Africa? I am sure that the Government is well aware that South Africa provided water for free before it started to pay for the water. I may lay this copy down so that it can work as an example for us, in Mauritius, to adopt the same measure that South Africa has adopted. In 2000, President Thabo Mbeki announced that all poor South Africans should receive a minimum amount of water for free. I can lay that document on the Table.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, also for energy, we can have like America, Canada, and other countries which have adopted the windmills - we have lots of mountains - and it is cheaper than using ethanol or any other biomass.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, to end, let me say this: It is a Government with no vision and a *lourdeur* bureaucracy. The answer to problems has always been: Soon, we are doing it.

(Interruptions)

But, nothing gets done properly and no long-term solution! Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I feel, there is an urgent need for this Government to go and be replaced by the MMM Government, with people who want to work, people with vision, people with commitment and leadership.

Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

(5.24 p.m.)

Mr D. Khamajeet (Second Member for Flacq & Bon Accueil): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, first of all, I would like to congratulate and applaud the hon. vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development for the excellent measures announced in the Budget 2012. Following consultations with people on the street, vegetable sellers, taxi drivers, '*marchand dhol-puri*', bankers, traders, and the population at large, have widely accepted the Budget presented. The common people are receptive, especially to the various social measures announced in this Budget.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, to confirm whatever I'm saying, a pie chart in the 'Business Magazine' of last week is very reflective, where 75% of analyst are satisfied with this Budget.

In my opinion, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, hon. Duval being former Minister of Social Integration, Minister of Tourism and Leisure, and was also Minister of Industry at a given time, is the right person to sense the needs of economic sectors and Ministries and give a modern approach and orientation in the context of this Budget. He has also been able to successfully send the right signal to the key players of our economy and also to the Small and Medium Enterprises gearing them to contribute effectively to the economic growth of the Republic of Mauritius.

This Budget, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, has a strong focus for growth and creation of wealth for the coming years and paving the way for a brighter Mauritius. It caters for the people *au bas de l'échelle*, as well as stimulating and encouraging industries to prosper.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, these budgetary measures are in line with the policies and vision of our hon. Prime Minister, Dr. Navinchandra Ramgoolam, and aim at consolidating and strengthening further the foundations of our Welfare State. In short, I would say that it is a Budget for the people. The hon. Minister of Finance had a very important mission that of preparing the future of Mauritius at a time when the world is plunged into an economical turmoil. And let me tell you Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that this has been done with great finesse.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the USA banking crisis tore into Europe with shocking ferocity and the European economy is actually in its deepest recession since the 1930's. The current

global economic crisis is creating desperation in Europe and the latter is facing a series of economic shocks -

- In the USA, Lehman Brothers, holding over 600 billion dollars in assets fell in September 2008. This remains the largest bankruptcy in filing in US history.
- Mortgage leader Bradford & Bingley in UK, came crashing down.
- Iceland's three largest banks plunged the Nordic nation into bankruptcy negotiations.
- Fortis, the 300-year old bastion of Flemish finance, narrowly avoided crumbling into oblivion by a Dutch and Belgian nationalisation in September.
- In Switzerland, banking giants UBS and *Credit Suisse* are teetering on the edge.
- Ireland issued a 'radical bank bailout' in terms of a blanket guarantee covering its entire banking sector.
- This means the Irish taxpayers are now responsible for 400 billion dollars, twice the nation's GDP.

However, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, while so many countries all around the globe are faced with such financial crisis, which led to an economic downturn and consequently to a debt crisis and in certain cases even to social and political instability. In Mauritius, under this Government, and under the leadership of our Prime Minister, we have been fortunate enough to come out of this worldwide crisis, almost unscratched.

The whole world is applauding our Government for performing so well and for sustaining a healthy economic system in Mauritius even during such times! It is a well-known fact, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that during his visit to Mauritius, Professor Joseph Stiglitz, who is a Nobel Prize winner in Economics and also the former vice-President and Chief Economist of the World Bank, praised Mauritius so much and even went further to say that other countries, including the USA should learn from Mauritius!

Even the IMF, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, has concurred in its 2010 Mission Report that in the short span of the past three years, the Government of Mauritius has made significant progress in the implementation of the PBB system. It was further added that the performance orientation and the transparency of the Budget have significantly improved.

More recently, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the 2010 Mo Ibrahim Index of African Governance, ranked Mauritius first in Africa from 88 indicators for the second time with 83 points from a maximum of 100. These undisputed facts clearly show that Mauritius is going in the right direction and is progressing day by day under this Government. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it is clear-cut that the style of management of the economic affairs of the country has a sharp difference *des années lumière* when comparing the Labour Party/PMSD Government to that of the MMM/MSM Government. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the writings are on the wall in terms of achievements of the Labour Party/PMSD team where we work for the prosperity of the economy and create wealth whereas the MMM/MSM brought the economy to the ICU '*l'état d'urgence économique*'.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, during the period 2000 to 2005, they realised the worst Foreign Direct Investment, a mere Rs1 billion per year. It hit so low that they didn't know what was the way forward.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Silence, please! Hon. Ameer Meea, please!

Mr Khamajeet: We had massive loss of jobs during the same period, and Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we are still traumatised and shocked by the brutal repression against textile workers island-wide. Who has forgotten words like '*SSU pas donne biberons*' ?

We had unprecedented closure of industries. This situation of '*l'état d'urgence économique*' led to instability in the business climate and bad economic mood in different sectors and among investors.

Job creation was at a lull. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, all these resulted in no confidence on the then MSM/MMM Government which led them to successive electoral defeats in the by-election 2003 and most significantly in the general election 2005.

Mr Speaker, Sir, we have to bear in mind that all these catastrophic results happened in spite of MSM/MMM increasing the TVA not once, but twice! First time from 10% to 12%, and the second time from 12% to 15%, meaning imposing a harsh increase of 50% to the bleeding population during their mandate 2000 to 2005. History will bear testimony that there was no world economic crisis during that time. *Voilà le style de gérer l'économie par le MSM/MMM.*

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, when our Government took power in 2005, despite unfavourable economic climate, the vision of the hon. Prime Minister was immediately put into action.

Free transport was extended to students and senior citizens at large. Even the economic climate deteriorated, the Government maintained this facility because our hon. Prime Minister is a man of *'parole donnée, parole sacrée'*. There was a significant drop in unemployment to 7.02% during 2005 to 2010.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order!

Mr Khamajeet: During 2005-2010, 40,000 jobs were created, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order!

Mr Khamajeet: Le taux de croissance de notre économie avait atteint une moyenne de 4.7% entre 2006 à 2010.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Seetaram, please! I know we all like our hon. friend; let him intervene in serenity, please!

Mr Khamajeet: M. le président, le taux de croissance de notre économie avait atteint une moyenne de 4.7% entre 2006 à 2010. Le taux d'inflation a été ramené à 2.1%, M. le président. Le niveau de réserve a connu une hausse massive de 66%, assurant le pays une couverture de 48% semaine d'importation en 2010 contre 32 semaines en 2005.

The income *per capita* increased by 56% reaching an encouraging 7,500 dollars compared to the meagre 4,800 dollars left by the MSM/MMM Government in 2005.

Mr Speaker, Sir, many important measures were taken at that time for the comfort of all Mauritians. We transformed doubts into reality! Can anyone say that the Government didn't perform? Can anyone accuse us of not being a caring Government? Can anyone accuse us of not working for the common people?

(Interruptions)

No, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this Government has worked very hard, is working very hard and will continue to work even much harder for the population for the years to come and our Prime Minister, hon. Navinchandra Ramgoolam, will continue to lead by example.

(Interruptions)

M. le président, ce présent budget jette la base pour une économie forte, saine et résiliente qui pourra faire face aux conditions externes négatives, et résistera aux chocs générés par les crises internationales.

To, again, show the difference between us and the Opposition, another sector that has made significant progress, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, from negative to positive, is the agricultural sector and food production. But first, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we cannot forget the carnage done in this sector during 2000 and 2005. Let me mention a few figures from the mandate 2000-2005 of the then Government to support my argument.

Mr Speaker, Sir, food production, in general, declined from 140,000 tonnes in 2000 to 97,000 tonnes. Potato production went down from 16,000 tonnes in 2001 to 11,000 in 2004, representing a decrease of 31% in production. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, onion production fell drastically from 11,000 tonnes to 4,000 tonnes representing a 62% decrease. Milk production reduced by 40%, from 5 million litres to 3 million litres. Cattle production fell from 12,000 heads to 6,900 in 2005 – a 43% decline, Mr Deputy Speaker Sir. At the same time total import on milk products reached Rs2 billion from Rs1.3 billion, representing a loss of Rs700 m. for the country, Mr Speaker, Sir.

More so, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir - and that is alarming - total food import increased to Rs12.9 billion, almost Rs13 billion, from Rs7.6 billion - an increase of 70%, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. It is crystal clear; they were working for food scarcity, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

This Government, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, under the strong leadership of the Prime Minister, was working for food security for our population. No one can come and point fingers at us or challenge us on this issue, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as figures speak for themselves.

After the traumatic legacy left in 2005, what we did, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, from 2005 to 2010? We have attained 90% of our self-sufficiency as regard to potato production and this year 2011, we expect 100 % self-sufficiency for this commodity.

The cattle head size increased with some 1,650 additional heads, increasing by 30%. Local fresh milk production increased from 2.5% in 2005, to some 10% this year. This year, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, pig farmers with their hard work have brought the pig population from 18,000 heads to 24,000 heads, as explained earlier by the hon. Minister. Meat production, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, rose by 37% from 34,000 tonnes in 2005 to 47,000 tonnes in 2010.

Can the opposition accuse us of not doing enough in terms of food production? Can they explain how they manage to get into this mess during their mandate, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir?

(Interruptions)

Again, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Opposition Members are the last one to teach us lessons in terms of security.

Had these measures not been taken in 2005, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, under the guidance of the Prime Minister, this country would have continued to lose billions and billions year in year out in terms of food import.

And rightly so, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, on the basis of encouraging performance by the Minister of Agriculture, the Minister of Finance, hon. Duval, has increased the Budget by Rs700 m. for the current year.

Coming from a Constituency where we have a good population of small planters, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am very much thankful to the Prime Minister, the Minister of Finance and the Minister of Agro industry, for the special effort and positive measures taken for this sector.

There is an average savings of Rs700 per tonne of sugar for each planter. Cess will further be reduced thus enabling a higher savings for the planters. Government is providing for a 70% discount in sugar insurance premium for the 2011 crop. Further savings to the tune of Rs750 per tonne of sugar and Rs2,150 per *arpent* for the 23,000 small planters through new policies from the SIFB. A sum of Rs310 m. has been provided to continue the FORIP project, de-rocking their lands and providing irrigation over an area of 1,300 hectares.

On top of all these positive measures, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we have to open our eyes and see what is happening in the Eau-Bleue region and for which project, even to his credit, the

Leader of the Opposition was impressed, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that is the production of some 1000 tonnes of hybrid rice seeds.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we believe in our capacity to produce; we believe in the capability of this Government to continue to encourage such projects; we continue to believe that rice production will continue to progress positively. In order to encourage new farmers to start cultivation, vegetable and food production more lands have been put at their disposal and other facilities extended to them.

The Prime Minister personally negotiated with the MSPA for lands and actually 250 *arpents* are already being occupied and cultivated by planters; 100 *arpents* of land belonging to Rose Belle Sugar Estate have been put at the disposal of planters; 100 *arpents* belonging to SIT have been put to the disposal of vegetables and fruit growers. This shows, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the seriousness with which this Ministry is performing. Some people tend to give the impression that not enough is being done but, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, all the measures enumerated, give a clear indication that the food security program is well under way, thanks to Minister Faugoo, thanks to Minister Duval, and above all, thanks to the Prime Minister for his vision regarding the Food Security Programme.

Mr Speaker, Sir, another sector which has made considerable progress and which has got the right consideration in the Budget, which is worth mentioning, is the ICT sector. This sector has become one of the major driving forces of our economic growth. Fifteen months ago, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the ICT sector stood as the fifth pillar of our economy after Textile, Sugar, Tourism and Financial Services Sector.

Now, it has positioned itself as the third pillar of our economy. It is growing very fast and contributing to the tune of 6.4% to our GDP. Employment in the sector is more than 15,000 people. It is contributing above Rs30 billion in our national economy. Indeed, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we have made significant progress in this sector.

In 2005, internet connection over the island was only a bare figure of 4% at the beginning of our mandate. This year, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it has reached a very significant figure of 29%. A real leap forward, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir! This appreciable rate of 29% is well above the African average and more so it is predicted that in 2014, it will more than double, reaching 60%, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

Let me here congratulate Minister Pillay Chedumbrum for the most welcoming initiative fibre to the home which will allow each household in Mauritius to benefit from very high speed internet connections at an affordable cost. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, during the mandate 1995-2000, the hon. Prime Minister came forward with the setting up of the new Ministry of Information Technology led at that time by Mr Sarat Lallah. That was the time when the Prime Minister negotiated with Mother India for the construction of a cyber tower during his State visit to India. The Prime Minister already had, since that time, the firm conviction and intention to boost an ICT sector in Mauritius. We all bear testimony, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, to this present Government for the implementation of the project optic fibre to the home where connection will start as from 10 MB per second as compared to the ADSL which is at only 256 KB per second.

As from next year, the information highway will be a reality and Mauritius will be able to have the privilege of this highway which is still not available in the UK. To this end, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, a second underwater optical cable the Lion II will be operational by mid-2012. In regard to all these developments, it will now be possible to integrate new modern services and also development of SMS-based services. In doing so, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the ICT sector will open new opportunities in terms of job creation. Therefore, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the ICT sector is destined to be an industry driven sector offering thousands of jobs for our people and standing as a future giant sector in the region attracting business to Mauritius.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, history has shown to us that, in very difficult times, the SMEs have significantly contributed to the economic success of successful countries. After World War II, SMEs contributed to the emergence of modern Japan. The same pattern could be applied to South Korea. South East Asian countries such as Malaysia, Thailand and Singapore depend on this sector for job creation and contribution to their GDP. In India, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, small entrepreneurs have contributed significantly to the economic outlook over centuries.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, here in Mauritius, in this Budget, the Minister of Finance has rightly put his confidence in the sector and for the first time, so much is being done to help the SMEs to become a major partner in contributing to the economy of Mauritius. It was mentioned the other day more than 50% of our labour workforce are in the SME sector. The Government, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, has taken bold decisions to boost this sector. All these measures mentioned regarding SMEs, do they not show that this Government wants to create the right

conditions for *plein emploi*? Are we not creating a generation of new entrepreneurs giving them the assistance to explore new opportunities?

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it is clear that this Government wants to empower men and women of this country to become high calibre entrepreneurs through the measures mentioned in the 2012 Budget and we don't have any doubt, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that Mauritius will produce *les entrepreneurs de demain* and we shall fully support them in their endeavours. The vision of the Labour Party and PMSD is to pave the way for a fairer society where every single person gets the opportunity to achieve their aims regardless of his background, religion, community and status.

Our hon. Prime Minister always mentions in his speech: before Independence two eminent Nobel Prize winners had predicted that Mauritius was bound to fail. However, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, our Government proved them wrong by paving the way for a better Mauritius. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, 43 years later, another nobel laureate in economics came to Mauritius and said that Mauritius has achieved a miracle and that the United States of America should follow our example.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, our Government was determined and strong at that time to prove those two eminent personalities that they were wrong and, in fact, today our Government and our Prime Minister, the one and only Dr. Navinchandra Ramgoolam, with his team, is stronger than ever and is much determined to work for a better tomorrow.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, if today I would say that Mauritius is the greatest country on earth then it would not be considered a paradox this is because Mauritius is today indeed among the greatest countries on earth. I am not saying this, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir – the two leading internet search engines are saying this. It will be a very surprising fact to many of you present here to know that when you go either on Google or Yahoo and search, I quote: 'the greatest country on earth', the first result you will get is Mauritius miracle and the miracle we owe it to our Prime Minister, hon. Dr. Navinchandra Ramgoolam.

Thank you Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

(5.57 p.m.)

Mr J. C. Barbier (Second Member for GRNW and Port Louis West): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, just to react to some points which the hon. Member put forward. The speaker who just talked before me makes as if the Government MMM/MSM did nothing for this country. It is as if only the Labour Party is caring for development in this country.

Let me remind a few things very important which were done by the Government MSM/MMM. First of all, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this is the only Government which had constructed more than 30 colleges in one mandate, more than the number of colleges that we have altogether in this country. In only one mandate, the MMM/MSM Government constructed around 35 colleges.

The hon. Member is talking of cyber city, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. Some people are quarrelling for the paternity of this project, but let me remind the House that in my Constituency while the Labour Party was campaigning, do you know what they said – I won't tell you who is that person, he is no more now. He said: '*ki cyber cité MMM pe kozer, zenfan cite pena manzer u vinn koz cyber cité*'. This is what was said. Today, this same cyber city is giving jobs to thousands of young in this country, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

We constructed thousands of social houses, but the Labour Party keeps announcing 10,000, 15,000, 20,000, we are now one and a half year. If they were to construct 10,000 within this mandate, they would have constructed by now, at least, 3000. Not even 30 have been constructed up to now - so *effet d'annonce*, but we constructed social houses for the poor.

Talking about TVA, it is a threat on the people. Simple, you have to withdraw it. Why don't you ask your Government to see to it if you can reduce, at least, the TVA? If it is not good for the population just reduce it then we'll know if really you are against the TVA, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

Let me remind the House also on the democracy side that we introduced les *radios privées*, Mr Speaker, Sir. If there were not these private radios today, we won't have heard the voice of our citizens as we are witnessing every day. This is our doing, Mr Speaker, Sir, that is, consolidating the democracy.

Today you are in power and we are still waiting for *la television privée*.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Please, do not disturb! Let the hon. Member speak!

Mr Barbier: Où est cette télévision privée qui a été promise à la population ? *Niet !* Et par-dessus tout, vous renvoyez les élections municipales et là cela va être renvoyé de nouveau ! Laissez-moi rappeler à la Chambre, M. le président, que le mandat des conseillers MMM à la mairie a été écourté d'un an. En 2005, ce gouvernement du parti Travailleiste avait écourté le mandat des conseillers municipaux dans les cinq villes d'un an. Au lieu de cinq ans, il avait dissout les conseillers municipaux un an avant pour organiser les élections municipales – '*100 jours mo change to la vie*'. Have you forgotten that ? Avez-vous oublié ? *Alors, 100 jours mo change to la vie, zordi*, un an, deux ans, trois ans, quatre ans, cinq ans, six ans, toujours pas d'élection municipale. Et c'est cela aujourd'hui les démocrates qui sont devenus le Parti Travailleiste, pas de respect pour la démocratie. En sus de cela, l'orateur qui m'a précédé est réputé pour être quelqu'un qui *tamper with the PSC!* Quel démocrate ! Merci, M. le président ! Je continue quand même après avoir réagi sur ces quelques points soulevés par le précédent orateur.

M. le président, comme je vous disais, les grands mots de pseudo-démocrates aujourd'hui, c'est l'intégration sociale, démocratisation de l'économie. Allons voir dans ce budget comment ce gouvernement s'adresse à ce problème de pauvreté, de misère absolue ? Que fait ce gouvernement pour soulager les capitalistes de Karo Kalyptis ? Le gouvernement ne les a pas oubliés ! Le gouvernement n'a pas trouvé mieux que d'enlever la taxe sur les dividendes. Ils vont être contents. C'est cela l'intégration sociale. Nos chers capitalistes de Karo Kalyptis vont être contents. Donc, le gouvernement a aussi aboli le *Capital Gains Tax*. A qui profite le crime, M. le président ? Encore une fois, à tous ces capitalistes de Karo Kalyptis, il faut vendre au moins avec des profits de R 20 millions, c'est à ce moment là qu'on paie leur *Capital Gains Tax*. A qui cela va-t-il profiter ? Alors, plus démocrate que ça, tu meurs, M. le président ! A qui va profiter toutes ces mesures qui ont été prises par ce gouvernement ? Sûrement pas ces pauvres gens ! Et pourtant, on parle et on reparle de l'intégration sociale, M. le président. Beaucoup est dit, M. le président. Il y a beaucoup effets d'annonce comme d'habitude, mais par rapport aux mesures qui sont concrétisées immédiatement juste après le budget, ce sont surtout les augmentations sur l'alcool, la cigarette et le rabatement des taxes comme je viens de mentionner. Alors, M. le président, cette même clientèle de Karo Kalyptis n'est pas épargnée parce que leur bière, leur vin – ils ne disent pas leur vin - leur *divin* – parce que là-bas ce n'est pas le vin que vous connaissez, c'est Eureka, Malaga, *divin* La Cloche, Bordeau-fin.

(Interruptions)

Ils vont les payer tout de suite, immédiatement, là ils vont les payer dès que le budget est approuvé, ils vont commencer à payer encore leur taxe. Heureux, mes chers capitalistes de Karo Kalyptis! Ils ont vraiment été pris en considération dans ce budget, M. le président. Quand il s'agit vraiment de soulager les plus faibles, c'est autre chose. Entre annoncer et concrétiser, des fois cela prend dix ans, vingt ans, des fois même cela reste au stade d'annonce, *ad eternum*, et c'est comme cela que fonctionnent les pseudo-démocrates aujourd'hui au pouvoir.

Pour donner quelques exemples, M. le président, je vais prendre le secteur de la pêche. Prenons, par exemple, M. le président, ce qui a été dit dans le budget concernant les pêcheurs à la page 21. I quote –

“(...) replenish our lagoons by releasing at least 300,000 fish fingerlings, and thousands of sea cucumbers in various areas, including Bambous Virieux, Grand Gaube, Albion and Pointe aux Sables, and create coral farms and reef sanctuaries.”

Alors, ce sont quand même des mesures qui pourraient aider le secteur de la pêche. Mais juste après, que dit le ministre?

“But, Mr Speaker, Sir, this will only be possible if we have the total support of the local communities and importantly if lagoon supervision can be enhanced to a reasonable level.”

C'est comme-ci la clause qui vient juste après, c'est pour vous dire que vous pouvez toujours attendre encore dix/quinze ans avant que cela ne prenne effet. Voilà comment on prend des décisions pour aider les pêcheurs qui souffrent énormément dans ce pays. Un petit point - je dirais positif - c'est quand tout juste après, le ministre annonce quand même qu'ils vont *refund VAT* pour ceux qui vont acheter des moteurs de *up to 25 horsepower*. Les pêcheurs achètent des moteurs peut-être tous les dix ans. Que vont-ils recevoir pour R2,000/R3,000 de remboursement pour la TVA sur dix ans ? Cela représente quoi pour la communauté des pêcheurs ? Encore une fois, M. le président, on n'est pas dupe, ce sont quand même des attrape-nigauds, cela ne coûte presque rien à l'Etat. S'ils vont le faire, ils vont bénéficier très peu en tout cas.

M. le président, laissez-moi vous rappeler ce qui a été dit auparavant dans le budget de 2008/2009 pour confirmer les effets d'annonce que ce gouvernement a présentés à cette Chambre. Budget 2008/2009 au paragraphe 185 -

“(...) fish and other marine products are also an important part of our diet. Our aim is to build both local and regional self- sufficiency in that area as well. An Aquaculture Master Plan has been prepared to increase fish production up to 40,000 tonnes.”

Where are these 40,000 *tonnes*? Where are those 40,000 *tonnes*? Since 2008, this was in the Budget Speech of the then Minister of Finance for the Labour Government. And he continues –

“We will also leverage our relationship with development partners and friendly countries to optimise aquatic production and develop the fishing industry.”

Niet. Je sais c'est comme cela. Mais l'augmentation sur le vin des *ti dimounes* est vite fait. Donc, pour vous dire comment le gouvernement peut annoncer des choses depuis des années, des années avant, mais on ne voit rarement arriver - après des années, on attend toujours, M. le président.

C'est le *Budget Speech* de 2009, paragraphe 89 -

“Rs28 million will be provided to finance appropriate fibre-glass boats for off-lagoon fishing for some 35 fishers.”

M. le président, cela a été annoncé dans le budget de 2009, et nous sommes maintenant en 2011. Absolument rien n'a été fait; effet d'annonce encore une fois.

Au paragraphe 90 -

“Rs45 million is earmarked for a scheme to be developed by the Mauritius Post and Cooperative Bank to finance various medium sized projects such as fish processing, purchase of fishing boats (...)”

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Seeruttun, please!

Mr Barbier: Nous attendons, encore une fois, les facilités de crédit de la Banque Coopérative afin d'aider ces pêcheurs à se procurer des bateaux pour pouvoir aller pêcher en haute mer. On attend toujours, M. le président.

Dans le même budget de 2009, M. le président, aux paragraphes 92 et 93, le ministre avait dit ceci -

“Investment Trust will now finance activities which were previously too ambitious for artisanal fishermen. These activities include fish farming in cage culture in collaboration with the Ferme Marine de Mahebourg, Integrated Fish Culture Projects in barachois at Bassin Humbert in Poudre d’Or and purchase of 5 fishing boats suitable for use around 20 fish aggregating devices outside the lagoon in Mauritius and 10 in Rodrigues.”

Effet d’annonce encore une fois ! Ce sont des mesures annoncées supposément pour aider les petites gens, les gens vulnérables, mais malheureusement c’est resté encore au stade d’effet d’annonce.

Suite à une PNQ adressée par le *Leader* de l’opposition, l’honorable Bérenger, à la Chambre, le ministre avait répondu ceci -

“The FIT has teamed up with the private sector, represented by MEXA, for the development of a fishing project to promote outer lagoon and fish aggregating devices fishery. In this context, MEXA has already ordered one fishing boat, whereas the FIT has already invited bids for the construction, supply, commissioning and testing for four fishing boats.”

Where are these four fishing boats of the FIT today? Nothing, Mr Speaker, Sir! I learn that only one fishing boat has been delivered through the MEXA, but there is still nothing about those fishing boats which were supposed to be constructed by the FIT. This is how they treat the vulnerable groups in this country. That is why I say they are the pseudo-democrats *qui prennent des mesures pour aider les capitalistes à travers les rabattements fiscaux, des effets d’annonce pour les gens qui souffrent, pour les pêcheurs en particulier, M. le président.*

Le dernier volet sur la pêche concerne les équipements de sauvetage. Toujours à une question qu’on avait posée à l’Assemblée, j’ai compris que depuis 2004 à ce jour, il n’y a pas eu de distribution d’équipements de sauvetage pour les pêcheurs de Rodrigues et de Maurice. *Is this a caring Government?* Est-ce cela la démocratisation de l’économie ? Je ne vois que des pseudo-démocrates.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the Minister proposed Rs6.5 m. for the procurement of safety equipment. J'espère que le ministre a fait provision de ces R 6.5 millions qui vont être servies pour les équipements de sauvetage pour les pêcheurs. Quand il s'agit de projets pour soulager les pauvres, *there is no rush, Mr Speaker, Sir. There is no rush to implement such projects.* Ces pêcheurs sont totalement découragés. S'ajoute à cela le coût des carburants, le manque des poissons dans nos lagons; bref, c'est un sentiment de rejet et d'abandon qui gagne la communauté des pêcheurs. Ils sont fatigués de descendre dans la rue. Malheureusement, il y a très peu de considération à leur égard de la part de ce gouvernement, M. le président.

M. le président, maintenant je vais dire quelques mots concernant la MASA spécifiquement. Ma collègue a si bien défendu ce dossier tout à l'heure; je ne vais prendre que des questions concernant la MASA. Récemment, j'avais posé beaucoup de questions à cet effet au niveau de la Chambre. L'honorable Choonee avait lui-même accepté le fait qu'il y a vraiment un problème d'*overstaffing* à la MASA. Entretemps, M. le président, il y a eu les élections à la MASA, j'étais parmi les candidats, et j'ai été élu comme membre de ce *Board*. *I will refrain to put questions concerning the internal aspect of the administration of the MASA.* En gros, je voudrais quand même remercier le ministre, parce que pendant cette période de crise le ministre et son représentant sur le *Board* ont beaucoup aidé pour pouvoir organiser les élections, afin qu'il y ait un nouveau *Board* et qu'on puisse sortir de cette situation difficile. *I thank the Minister.*

Concerning arts and culture, may I remind my friend, hon. Choonee, Minister of Arts and Culture, that we are still waiting the White Paper he promised us. That was to be issued since September last. I don't know why, until now, we are still awaiting this White Paper. Maybe, the hon. Minister could give us some clarification when he will make his speech just after me.

As I said, Mr Speaker, Sir, I will talk more specifically about the problem at the MASA. I have put so many questions, even when I was not yet a member of the Board. Until now, I must say, Mr Speaker, Sir, that the administration and financial situation at the MASA is still not clear to us. I am still having problem to understand how the distribution has been done in the past years to the artists, and I am still working on it with the corresponding officers at the MASA to clarify the situation. But one thing is clear. The administration cost of the MASA is today around Rs15 m. per year. It includes the staff cost also. MASA, being a parastatal body,

receives funds from government amounting to only Rs950,000 per year - not even Rs1 m. - out of a budget of operating cost of Rs15 m. per year.

Mr Speaker, Sir, as you know, we have 36 employees at the MASA. One of the IT officers on the Board told me that they have fewer employees at the IT Ministry than at the MASA. Recently, I read in the press that the Minister was a bit angry. I don't know whether it is true, because I remember that the Minister himself, in this House, said that he agreed that there is a problem of overstaffing at the MASA. We are not proposing to lay off the surplus of labour we have there. We have set a committee, which is being chaired by the representatives of the Ministry of Arts and Culture. This Human Resource Assessment committee is going to give its report very soon and out of it we will know how many people we have in excess, in which grade, and we are going to propose that the Minister see to it if Government can redeploy these people in other posts in other parastatal bodies or other Ministries. This is what we are asking for. Maybe, this could bring down the administration cost of the MASA. But, the more so, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, since 2008, MASA is also paying Rs3 m. more to the staff as per the PRB Report. The first year, when the PRB Report was being paid, only then the Minister gave this grant of Rs3 m. to pay the salary for these people. But, nothing for the following years! That is why, today, it is money which is coming in, the royalties of the artists which are being used to pay the salary. This is a very, very difficult financial situation for the artists. That is why also in the past years they had received much less as royalties than they were receiving some years before.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, why this *politique deux poids deux mesures*? All other parastatal bodies are receiving additional grant since the PRB Report They are receiving additional grant equivalent to what they are supposed to pay, more due to the PRB Report but, unfortunately, why not for the MASA? Why for other parastatal bodies it is yes, and not for the MASA?

M. le président, je ne comprends pas cette politique de deux poids deux mesures dont les artistes ont à payer les frais aujourd'hui. C'est pour cela que je vais, encore une fois, demander au ministre d'essayer de trouver une solution. On m'a dit que le ministère allait trouver une solution depuis des mois et des mois mais, malheureusement, on attend toujours. Si on ne reçoit rien dans cette direction d'ici la fin de décembre, encore une fois, on va devoir payer des revenus des artistes, leurs salaires et le PRB, et il ne resterait que des miettes pour être payées aux

artistes à la fin de décembre. Donc, M. le président, permettez-moi, encore une fois, de réitérer ma demande au ministre pour qu'au moins le ministère donne un *grant* équivalent à tout ce qui a été payé aux employés pour les compensations dues au rapport du PRB.

Concernant la piraterie, M. le président, il faut reconnaître que la piraterie est en train de tuer tous les artistes de ce monde, pas juste à Maurice mais partout ailleurs. C'est difficile de nos jours de contrôler parce qu'il n'y a pas que les CDs pirates, il y a tout ce qui est *download*, *upload*, à travers le *bluetooth*, l'Internet et tout. On a tout ce qu'on veut aujourd'hui sur l'Internet. Il suffit d'aller sur *You Tube* ou autres sites similaires pour pouvoir *download* toutes les chansons que vous voulez. Tous les jeunes le font - ce qui explique cette chute dramatique, je dirais, de la vente des CDs un peu partout dans le monde, pas seulement ici à Maurice. Aujourd'hui, c'est un manque à gagner énorme en sus des problèmes qu'on a déjà. Finalement, il y a un manque à gagner énorme pour les artistes par rapport à la vente des CDs à cause de l'évolution de l'informatique, etc. On ne pourra pas remettre tout cela en question. Ce que moi je propose au gouvernement c'est de mettre un *levy* sur tous ces supports médiatiques et informatiques ; ainsi on pourrait le verser dans la caisse de la MASA. Par exemple, un *levy* sur tous les CDs vierges, les DVDs, la clé USB, ordinateurs, portables, iPods, *Ip hones* et j'en passe. Tout ce qui est utilisé pour pouvoir copier, *download* et *whatever*, tous les travaux artistiques, pas que des chansons mais aussi des livres. A mon avis, il faut mettre un *levy* dessus et payer cela directement à la MASA pour qu'on puisse compenser ce manque à gagner énorme par rapport aux opérations qui sont aujourd'hui faites sur Internet.

M. le président, j'espère que ces propositions vont quand même être retenues. Malheureusement, le budget est déjà fait mais rien n'est impossible au gouvernement si on veut vraiment aider ces artistes à trouver une solution. La MASA a essayé d'être proactive à ce problème. On a proposé des augmentations de tarif pour essayer de rester viable mais, malheureusement, comme vous le savez bien, M. le président, - le ministre le sait aussi - ces tarifs proposés par la MASA pour pouvoir combler ce manque à gagner ont été refusés par la plupart des opérateurs économiques de *music users* à Maurice. Il y a même une radio privée dont je ne vais pas citer le nom, qui ne paye presque rien à la MASA et elle veut négocier pour ne payer que R25,000 par an. Je ne vais pas dire le nom ici mais un de ces jours je vais y revenir. Je souhaite que cette radio privée en question revienne à de meilleurs sentiments parce qu'elle est

en train de se servir, 24 heures sur 24, de la musique de ces artistes mais, malheureusement, elle ne veut rien payer ou ne payer que des miettes. Donc, je reviendrais là-dessus probablement s'il le faut si rien n'est avancé dans cette direction.

Pour terminer, M. le président, je vais dire quelques mots sur ma circonscription. Je voudrais attirer l'attention du ministre Bachoo, encore une fois, concernant le trafic dans la région de GRNW. C'est une aberration. Je sais que lui-même il s'y est rendu, et le *Deputy Prime Minister* avait fait une descente quelques années de cela mais, jusqu'à maintenant, il n'y a eu aucune amélioration. On a bougé le *bus stop* pour venir dans l'autre sens, mais c'était une catastrophe et on a dû arrêter tout ce qui a été fait, et perdre des millions et des millions pour finalement retourner *back to square one*, au point zéro. C'est le même problème à la Cité Vallijee et à Grand Rivière. On en a marre ! C'est un calvaire, surtout pour les gens qui quittent Pointe aux Sables le matin pour aller travailler en voiture. C'est vraiment infernal. Je fais un pressant appel, encore une fois, au ministre pour qu'il jette un coup d'œil sur ce dossier et active les choses pour trouver des solutions.

Autre chose que je voudrais soulever en ce qui concerne ma circonscription – je vais faire que deux points – c'est la fourniture d'eau dans la région de Mgr Leen. Ceux qui sont au versant de la montagne, M. le président, malheureusement même quand ce n'est pas en période de sécheresse, ils ont pas mal de problèmes pour avoir l'eau. Maintenant en cette période difficile, c'est pire. Cela fait deux semaines au moins qu'il n'y a pas eu l'eau dans leur robinet dans la région de Mgr Leen - comme le ministre concerné vient d'arriver, je vais répéter. M. le ministre, dans la région de Mgr Leen, surtout ceux qui habitent dans le versant des montagnes, depuis deux semaines ils n'ont pas d'eau. Je me souviens que pas longtemps de cela j'avais pris la question en Chambre et le ministre avait réglé le problème. Malheureusement, en cette période difficile, où la fourniture d'eau est encore une fois au plus bas, je fais encore un appel au ministre pour voir s'il peut faire quelque chose encore pour les habitants de cette région.

M. le président, le ministre des Finances est arrivé entretemps. Je voulais quand même le féliciter pour la présentation de ce budget, parce que je pense que cela marque son passage et sa carrière en tant que politicien. C'est son premier budget.

(Interruptions)

La MBC va passer cela. Tant mieux ! Je pense que pour lui et sa famille c'est une grande fierté. Mais en ce qu'il s'agit du contenu, on n'est pas trop content, M. le président, ...

(Interruptions)

Je viens d'en parler. Mais, j'espère qu'à l'avenir il va prendre quand même tout ce qui est de l'aspect intégration sociale au sérieux. Tel que le budget est, croyez-moi, ce n'est que des effets d'annonce. Tout ce que les petites gens vont payer sont des taxes sur leurs cigarettes, bières, leur '*di vin la cloche*'.

The Deputy Speaker: Vous allez recommencer votre discours?

Mr Barbier: Non, je ne vais pas recommencer le discours. Quoique si l'honorable ministre fût là, je n'aurais pas eu à reprendre ces quelques mots. Juste pour lui rappeler que l'intégration sociale ne se fait pas uniquement en enlevant les taxes sur le *capital gains tax* ou sur les *dividends*.

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

(6.30 p.m.)

The Minister of Arts and Culture (Mr M. Choonee): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, let me focus on the appreciations and remarks made by the hon. Members in the Opposition. You will find it strange, I will start by congratulating hon. Barbier - and not the hon. Minister of Finance right now - for his election as an artist and as a member of MASA. He is an elected member of MASA. We have seven members elected and he is one of them. I have the impression that he may even have some privileged information that I will get after some time because he is in there.

(Interruptions)

In here and in there! So, he is one of the lucky ones. I agree fully with him and his remarks. We had many meetings with different artists and in some of the fora, we were together. You will agree with me, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that whenever questions were asked about MASA, whatever information I could share with the House, I shared, without any restriction and I could only share information that I had. I cannot share information that I don't have. This is where, I

am sure that the hon. Member is satisfied with my sharing of information. Now that he is in MASA, he knows exactly what are the problems there.

As Minister, I have said it so many times that I don't have power in MASA. There is no section that says 'powers of the Minister'. You went through the Bill, you went through the Act. Nowhere it says so. So, the MASA, as a totally independent organisation, has been performing, and we have to agree, they have been doing a good job as well. They came up with the new building; they came up with a new Pension Scheme, which is again a Pension Scheme for all artists. Whosoever is an artist, when he gets 60 years old, MASA gives him a pension. These are new things, which means we have an appreciation and, of course, we have other things that we have to discuss and put order in MASA. The fact that we have a very strong Board with many officers, including representatives of the Prime Minister's Office, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Information and Communication Technology, Ministry of Arts and Culture and so many others. Me, as Minister responsible, who come to answer questions here, I appoint only the Chairman and one member and the remaining are seven elected artists and seven representatives of different Ministries. However, we have succeeded and we have reached far as far as MASA is concerned, but let me focus on something very important.

MASA is an institution that falls under the Copyright Act. The Copyright Act, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, has been there for many, many years. It started in 1997, amendments were brought in 2003 and now, we are reviewing almost every aspect of the Copyright Act. The reason is very simple. Technology has progressed so much with all the things that we have today: caller tunes, uploading and downloading, Internet CDs and DVDs, etc. So, there are so many ways and means for people to communicate that it becomes very difficult to have direct information and to control the transfer of information and to declare property rights.

I am pleased to announce to this House, ultimately, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we have come with the final version of the Copyright Act. I have always told this House how complex it was. Complex in the sense that it did not only have to deal with artists, but also patents, Agro-Industry, tissue culture, because all these things come within purview of Copyright Act and Intellectual Property Rights. It was so complex, but we worked and we had a series of consultations. It was all done last year - of course, the beginning of this year. When I talk of last year, it means the last financial year, just before this new financial year, which is 2012. The final

version is ready. We will be discussing with all the stakeholders – hon. Barbier will be aware - in the first week of December. Now, what is ready? We have had consultations with WIPO, the World Intellectual Property Organisation, the US Patent and Trademark Office and the views of the US Patent and Trademark Office were received early this month. So, the delay in finalising is mainly attributed to something new, to the complexity of the issue with the incorporation of the two internet treaties in the Bill. Those two internet treaties in the Bill, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, are incorporated in the new Copyright Act definitely and they will help us solve the problem of piracy by people in Mauritius and, of course, around the world.

Further to that, I would also say that the implementation of the Copyright Act shall become more accountable in the spirit of good governance. Furthermore, the House needs to understand that when we refer to officers of the MASA, whatever sum that comes from PRB is separated from the emoluments, I'll simply say that the PRB implications have to be integrated in the personal emoluments of the personnel there and that will definitely help to solve the problem. Further, we shall not forget that if Government gives to MASA only Rs950,000, it is because that is the seed money. Believe me! MASA is a revenue generating organisation. If there has been mismanagement, if there has been some problem, we have to find ways and means of solving the problem. But MASA is a revenue generating organisation and we do hope MASA plenty of success with the new team! I have a problem, I don't have a Chairman there, that's very true and I don't have a Director-General there, that's also very true. We know the incident we had with the Director-General who had to be interdicted and we cannot take any action until his case is over. Mr Gerard Telot, who was the Chairman to whom we assigned to help us as Officer in Charge due to heavy schedule and lot of work, he ultimately declined to continue and he stopped being there. Now, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I will definitely replace the Chairman. We are looking for the rare bird. It is not easy because in the papers we have seen; what are the qualities the artists are expecting from the Chairman to be and the Director-General to be. So, we have to be very careful. I don't appoint the Director-General, I appoint the Chairman. It is the Board which appoints the Director-General. So, let's start with the Chairman. I am having consultations and in the meanwhile an officer in charge will be there from within the MASA's organigram and the Acting Chairman would be somebody from the Ministry, who is on the Board. So, we are working, but, more importantly, the Copyright Act is ready and it will be made official. We'll ventilate it and we'll give it to everybody to have a look,

to give their views and we will have a consultative meeting with people from CISAC, that is, the *Confédération Internationale des Sociétés d'Auteurs et Compositeurs*. We will have a three-day workshop in the first week of December where, with the new Board members, and the new management, we will find ways and means of getting hurdles removed for us to be able to work properly. That is about MASA and Copyright.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, mention was also made by hon. Mrs Radegonde concerning other issues relating to arts and culture, namely the National Symphonic Orchestra. I am having a proposal from the Conservatoire François Mitterrand on the National Symphonic Orchestra. We are working with the Prime Minister's Office, the department of *Culture et Avenir*, to find out ways and means of getting the framework done for us to come forward with the Symphonic Orchestra.

As far as the Artist Welfare Fund is concerned, again, a draft legislation for the setting-up of the Artist Welfare Fund has been proposed by my Ministry. Consultations will soon be held with all stakeholders before finalising a draft for submission to the SLO. There, we will consider artists, association of artists, MASA definitely, and individual artists who are from different artforms.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, having talked about some of the issues that were raised, I would also like to reply to one issue raised by the Leader of the Opposition concerning the Archives. The Archives in Mauritius - I am sorry to say that - have been housed in an industrial site in Coromandel since 1983. I cannot be the only one. Since 1983, various Governments have come and gone and we have not found yet a solution as far as a dedicated building of the Archives is concerned. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Leader of the Opposition was in doubt, as to whether we have a plot of land earmarked for the National Archives and the Library. It is clear that a plot of land equivalent to four acres has been earmarked in the Ebène triangle. Hon. Dr. Bunwaree approves it, because he was there, prior to me is aware. Four acres of land have been earmarked for a dedicated building for the Archives and the National Library in the Ebène triangle, just behind Apollo Hospital. But the estimated cost is quite high, Rs500 m. A dedicated building means that we have to take into consideration so many issues such as humidity, temperature, dust, etc. I am not a technical person in that matter. It is not easy and expression of interest has been launched to carry out a feasibility study of the proposed construction.

Further, at the Ministry's end, we have thrown the idea of having some support from friendly countries, both India and China have been contacted and it seems that if we are ready with the project, they will be there to support us. It means, ultimately, that we will have the building for the Archives. But it is also good for me to confirm, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the archival materials of Mauritius are documents which we cannot afford to take away from that building right now. Do you know how they are? They are as crispy as biscuits. Once you hold the sheets of paper, they are so old that they just fall apart, they are so delicate. We have to be very careful. I, for once, will not favour moving those documents from that building, to any other building unless we go to the final building which should be the dedicated building wherever it is built, and I know we will come up very fast with the building in Ebène.

Meanwhile, it is not that we will leave the papers like that. We are having digitization. Previously we were having photographs and all but the new technology is digitization for long lasting. We have moved a bit. I am sorry to say, though we expect people to work, but because of the delicate nature of the papers, they can't go faster. They were supposed to complete a certain number of pages - 300,000 pages - up to end of 2012. I am sure they will tell me that they are getting late. But that does not mean that we will stop working. We will continue, because we have to preserve this heritage of our history. These are historical documents, we don't have the right; we can't afford, to lose what all we have in this country, because this Archives of Mauritius happens to be the oldest in this part of the world. So, we are doing our best to preserve that.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, one more remark is about something I heard this morning; I have a lot of respect for hon. Bhagwan. *Il le dit lui-même qu'il est le doyen de cette Chambre. J'ai beaucoup de respect pour lui, mais ce matin, quand le Premier ministre était en train de répondre à une question, il a fait une remarque pas trop intéressante.*

(Interruptions)

Enfin désobligeante est un peu trop fort, mais pas trop intéressante. Let's us call it, not very interesting. Somebody can't just say that he does not trust the Ministry. What happens to my officers? What would be the mood of our people? He just made a comment when we were talking about the stele of Sir Harilall Vaghjee. He said that he does not trust the Ministry. It is the Prime Minister's Office that has to take the lead. But please remember, we have worked a lot there. We have reached a stage where we can't go back. We have worked with your office,

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Clerk of the National Assembly, the representatives of the Ministry of Public Infrastructure, the Ministry of Arts and Culture, members of the family of Sir Harilall Vaghjee, all of us sat together and we have finally launched the tender for the supply of the stele, the bust, on 11 November, and we expect to close the tender on 25 November which means, early January, we will be ready. Site visit have been organized, we will be ready with the stele, and this is something good that the Ministry and all other stakeholders have done. To say in this House that he does not trust the Ministry, he does not trust people in that Ministry is not fair. I just wanted to make that comment before I move on to more important things concerning the Budget.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am one of those, along with all my colleagues here, and with the MSM Members, we were all together, who was elected in May 2010 by citizens of our beloved Republic, who used their supreme power to elect a Government. We were elected by the people of Mauritius ...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Please don't interrupt!

Mr Choonee: ...and the electorate put its trust on the Labour Party...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Please!

Mr Choonee: ...and its allies to steer our boat in these testing times. At the same time, the people of the country elected Members of the MMM, which happens to be in minority, compared to what we had for the last six years and they were elected to be the Opposition, and I congratulate them. They have, as an Opposition, not betrayed the trust of their people. They are doing their work...

The Deputy Speaker: Address the Chair!

Mr Choonee: ...as a real Opposition Party keeping with the Westminsterian principles and traditions. The citizens consider this House, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as a temple of democracy, where learned men and women debate fundamental issues that affect their lives. The people of the country gave us power to protect their fundamental rights, interests and welfare. But, when they have entrusted us with a mandate to protect their rights then those who cross the floor - we are good friends, I am friend with everybody on the MMM side, as well as on the

other side, and here I am part of the family - what happens? People trusted us, people voted for us, people said: 'Okay, go in Government and govern! Go and govern! We have placed our trust in you, go and govern!' They expect...

(Interruptions)

Talère mo dire toi! Mo pou dire toi la!

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order!

Mr Choonee: They expect us to intervene on a wide range of issues ranging from poverty alleviation, gender equality, right to education, social security provisions, and freedom from discrimination. *Bref*, they expect us to work for their common good.

They want us to stick to the principles of democracy. But, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, to my mind, Government has not failed anywhere.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Seetaram, please don't disturb!

Mr Choonee: To my mind, Government has not betrayed its mandate anywhere and Government has not gone wrong anywhere. But, what happens? Government has done its job, Government has not failed, Government has not gone wrong, but some of our friends who were elected along with us, for reasons known to them, left Government. Instead of being players, they left us to become the spectators. Instead of being leaders, they left us to become the dealers.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it's very strange that when people are supposed to govern, they prefer not to govern. The issue, everybody knows it, the whole world knows it, the country, the media, everybody has blown everything out of proportion, at times, but the news is there. People left because of one hon. Member who had a provisional charge on her. Everybody in the MSM - first, all the Ministers - resigned because one Minister had a provisional charge on her. One Minister! I am telling you openly that I am close to them! I told them, I was also in MSM, In 2003, I went through similar things - worse than that - as a Minister of MSM. I had a provisional

charge and, in my case, I understand, the Leader there at a point in time, said - “Oh, the Minister was treated very badly by ICAC.” But, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir,....

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Please, let the hon. Minister make his point! I don’t want other hon. Members to join in! Hon. Ms Deerpalsing, please!

Mr Choonee: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, what I went through, I never - maybe because I have another heart, a strong heart - told it and I never challenged my Party to say...

(Interruptions)

I never challenged them! I never said to my Party that - “See, if you don’t side with me I will disclose everything!” *“Kan mo pou aller nous tous bizin aller!”* I never said that!

(Interruptions)

I never said that!

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order!

Mr Choonee: I went, you won’t believe it, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it was a Thursday...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Ms Deerpalsing, please!

Mr Choonee: It was a Thursday; being Minister then, every morning, you know, the public comes to our place and we meet them, and then we come to office and work the whole day. I went for a function in one of the schools that we are opening in Phoenix and there, the whole history changed. Choonee’s history! Choonee’s case! Oh, my God! I was asked not to go to any other functions, not even to my home and not even to meet my wife and my two children. I was told - “You go to ICAC!” I went to ICAC. It was an old building, not the same building, of course. I don’t know what the comfort is like right now. I haven’t been there and I don’t want to be.

(Interruptions)

I was there the whole day up to 12.30 the next morning, the whole night; being interrogated and being asked questions. I could not understand why and I was a Minister. My lawyer is here. He, himself, and his father - he is now a colleague and he sits next to me - we know what we went through! And, past midnight - "*Bé to pas pou alle lacaz!*" "*Kifer pas bizin alle lacaz?*" My colleague, the Attorney General, I said it the next day, then, to everybody, to the media, that if ever in my dream also, I never wish anybody in this country to go through what I went. I don't wish anybody goes through that and I do hope it does not happen!

If laws have to be changed or modified – see, as a Minister, we are already in a RM car. It's a public, Police car. We have two bodyguards who are Police Officers and at my place there was a sentry and there is also a Police Officer. '*Ki crime mo ti pou alle faire sa l'heure là? Minuit et demi, zot dire moi pa ale lacaz! Ou bizin al Station la Police!*' I went! My wife and my two kids were at home, for the first time in their life, and the media - Congrats! They just blew everything out of proportion, just created sensation! Is this the role of media in this country?

I was walking out of that ICAC building to go to the Police Station and my hands were like this - '*facon ine mette photo la, comment dire ti fini mette menotte are moi!* Is this how you want to protect a Minister who is sitting in Government? But then, '*manze are li!*' Okay, I went there and sat there. People said that Choonee is jailed, Choonee is in prison, Choonee resigned and the language was, to my lawyer - "Now it's time for your client to resign!" Oh, my God! I became the client and my lawyer and I am no more a Minister. I did it, but then again, there must be some authority somewhere. So, what I mean is - then, nobody resigned and nobody followed Choonee. I was also MSM! So, what happened?

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Please, I don't want to hear remarks! Let the hon. Minister make his point! And, we all know that he has got his attitude.

Mr Choonee: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, me only, I resigned and, you know, how hard it is even to walk in the streets -

“Choonee kine arrive toi! Tone coquin! To volère!”

In Parliament, *‘comment dire ou senti pi et personne pas rode guète ou!’* Anyway, I resigned. *‘Mais si moi mo tou sel mone resign mo ti senti pi, mais aster la, guète combien ine aller! Zot pas senti pi!’*

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the other thing - you know, at a point in time, hon. Jim Seetaram is here, when I was elected as First Member for Grand River South East/Montagne Blanche. *‘Après l’incident fini envoie en lot dimoune pour travaille dans mo place dans mo circonscription’*. They had already sent somebody to work; that was – he was not honourable those days - Jim Seetaram who was sent to my Constituency to work.

The Deputy Speaker: Order!

Mr Choonee: He is not wrong. I will tell you why. He is not wrong. What happens, when somebody else is working I went to the leader and said ...

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Jhugroo, please!

Mr Choonee: ...come on dit, *quelle théorie ça!* Tu comprends la politique aussi bien que moi ! Jim Seetaram rentre sur le terrain dans la circonscription No. 10 à la place de Choonee ça!

The Deputy Speaker: We are still on the Budget!

Mr Choonee: Coming back to the Budget. So, what happened? They even said that – ‘Choonee is not even ticketable because he has the stigma on him’. Choonee alone has the stigma, what are we? Say this in front us now, today! If Choonee was not ticketable what about our front bench there - almost, everybody has the stigma, almost. What about our front bench there, with that stigma? How will the MMM negotiate 30-30? 2% *ça!* How?

The Deputy Speaker: Please, hon. Jhugroo!

Mr Choonee: I am telling you to go outside! Go to the Constituency!

The Deputy Speaker: Order! hon. Jhugroo, please!

Mr Choonee: Hon. Lormus Bundhoo is not here, even hon. Ashit Gungah is not here. We go to Constituency No. 6 – I am sorry to say that - all are with us. They have all joined us.

Previously, when we were in Government in 1991 - 1991 can be said when we were elected, I find only two Members of those days in MSM right now. One is hon. Soodhun and the other one is Mr Koonjoo. Only two! All others have left. Hon. Sheila Bappoo, Rama Sithanen, Ramduth Jaddoo, Madun Dulloo, Anil Bachoo, Dharam Gokhool, Dharmanand Fokeer were there. It was MSM/MMM.

The Deputy Speaker: Address the Chair!

Mr Choonee: Dr. Nababsing, Dr. Swaley Kasenally, Mr Jean Claude de l'Estrac – everybody - Kailash Ruhee, so many. What I mean is - those were the days when MSM was good and in all elections MSM could only form the Government. I was there; I have no shame in saying that. We could only form Government by being in an alliance. On its own, MSM can never form a Government! I am sorry to say that, after all that has happened and after all that we are witnessing. I am so sorry, I was there. But when we reached 2005, I left based on one principle and I said it myself, five Members of the MSM left and some people even said – ‘*ça bannes garçons là, pas ti bizin laisse zotte aller*’. Five of us left and we made history with the Labour Party. We made history with the team that won in 2005. I was not even given a ticket, at the last moment, though I was supposed to. Again, gossips! Again, gossips on me! Then, in 2005 we campaigned, we are happy. We are happy that today we have a Government ...

The Deputy Speaker: Please!

Mr Choonee: ...headed by Dr. Navin Ramgoolam, the hon. Prime Minister. He will continue, Mr Deputy Speaker. We have had, of course, PMSD is part. *Zot pas ti dire* with small parties! Okay. But then MSM also was a small party in that case, *bleu-blanc-rouge*. We are all parties, we are together. We started in 2010 together. But, today we are proud that we have a strong Government for the first time in the history of this country, Mr Deputy Speaker, we have an accountant, a senior accountant as Chartered Accountant as a Minister of Finance. First time in the history of the country!

(Interruptions)

See the difference!

(Interruptions)

Regarder l'approche, c'est différent! 100% différent! His style, his way of looking at things, his way of presenting and he even said ..

The Deputy Speaker: Order! Order!

Mr Choonee: ... his knowledge, his capacity and his experience of having been the Minister responsible for Social Integration. '*Pas vine coze Karo Kalyptis ek capitalist*'.

The Deputy Speaker: Please!

Mr Choonee: He knows what it means to be poor and he knows how to alleviate property. This is why the Budget has been made, that is, to help those who were downtrodden to come up the social ladder and it is true also, that yes, people who have, people who can bring in development, those who have the means, we have to help them bringing development and thus they can employ, capacity building will be there, they can employ people. We are very happy that he did it and for the first time again; a Budget comes to the public with an implementation schedule. It was never there. There were never consultations. You won't believe it; we already had one working session when it comes to the film industry. We said we will start in January and we will all be ready. You are all actors, very good ones. We will find roles for everybody.

I will now shift on again to my Ministry to talk about the film industry.

The Deputy Speaker: Please! Order!

Mr Choonee: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, previously the film industry, here, did not exist. I will tell you why. What existed was that some Mauritians who, out of emotions, wanted to produce some movies, small ones - whether they were for 7 minutes, 25 minutes, 30 minutes, they made some production, but they produced some movies. Very good! They made their efforts and what happened next is that people from India mainly and from other countries used to come to Mauritius just for shooting purposes, used all our venues, our panorama, the beautiful beaches and everything that Mauritius has to offer. Shoot and go. Some people were even not honest at times. I have seen many Indian movies; they don't even mention that the shots are from Mauritius. They say it is Goa and I told them: 'Please, don't do that'. This is a Mauritian scene, I am a Mauritian and I know what I am telling you. These are things that happened, they have gone and that's over. What we want now is to put up in the country a new pillar of the

Mauritian economy that we will call the creative art industry and film will be the main art form that will be given its due to make of Mauritius a centre for film production.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, at least three potential film producers, those who want to put up a studio have already shown their intention and interest to come to Mauritius to put up studios. *On parle de 'l'école du cinéma, il y aura tout, les studios, l'école du cinéma, tout.* And believe me...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Members behind the hon. Minister, order, please!

Mr Choonee: ..sur 'l'écran on regarde l'acteur, l'actrice et les autres, les bandits. C'est ça qu'on voit sur l'écran. Mais derrière tout cela, M. le président, il y a plus d'une centaine de personnes qui travaillent dans différents niveaux. '*Jusqu'à so tea maker ena, hairdresser ena*', metteur en scène.

(Interruptions)

Mr Choonee: Call it by any name - technicians, costumes, make-up artist. So, we are very happy, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. For the first time in Mauritius, to really make of film an industry that will survive, strive, exist, get promoted and that will help in tourism, in marketing Mauritius offshore, together with tourism, MTPA, with the Board of Investment and with the full support of our colleague, the vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, we have come up with a scheme.

It is the first time in Mauritius. It never happened. Giving a refund to all film producers - whether they are foreigners or Mauritians for that matter - of 25% of qualifying expenditure to those who are coming to make films in this country. This was never there. This will, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, give us the edge for film production in this part of the world. Then, I am sure it won't be a dream; it will be film production. Mauritius as a film city will be a reality.

Thank you very much vice-Prime Minister, for this initiative; thank you so much. I am sure that after the film framework that we have prepared, we will soon have the Film Commission which will absorb the Mauritius Film Development Company, and together will get the industry moving.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Jhugroo, please! It's not the time for cross-talking.

Mr Choonee: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, reference was made at a point in time that artists don't get enough support. Again, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we have introduced since last year a new scheme – we call it assistance to artist - and we call that International Grant Scheme. You won't believe it, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, whether it is one artist or a group of artists, if they want to participate in a competition in any part of the world, government gives a grant of up to Rs300,000 to the artist! It was never there! It never existed! So, these are things which are new. Artists, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, can't complain in this country now.

Just imagine, we have within one financial year helped more than 500 artists to the tune of around Rs6 m. They have participated in international festivals, where they have shined. They have been to exhibitions in such countries like France, People's Republic of China, India, Belgium, Malaysia, Vietnam, Monaco, Zanzibar, Mexico, Switzerland, Norway, USA, South Africa, Australia, Madagascar and Reunion Island. So many of us have not even been to so many countries, but our artists have been. That is the clear sign that art and culture are being given their due, the share they deserve.

Further, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I won't be too elaborate on all that happens. Another part of our art promotion, our art creativity, is what we call as 'Slam'. Dr. Bunwaree is so fond; it is not only hon. Keechong who slams; Dr. Bunwaree and I slam. We are also slammers, because we deal with students. Just imagine students; you have seen our programmes, lots of improvement. When those children slam, it is a poem that is recited to the audience with the participation of the audience while they act. Children have been doing so well. You won't believe it. *Rodrigues est premier. Ils ont eu l'occasion d'aller en France pour participer, d'avoir le premier prix quoi.* A l'époque, on disait que ce sont des enfants des écoles ZEP. No, it's *le talent*, creativity, and they are perfect at it. Recently, a boy from Palma SSS went to France, and he got the first prize, gold medal. *Premier dans le monde.* So, we are doing well, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. Dr. Bunwaree will help me, and we will try to use that boy for other functions around.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, often people tend to believe that arts and culture is *harmonium, tabla*. Very far from that, Sir; very, very far from that! Don't do that mistake. If harmonium, tabla are one of, we have more than 100 other such responsibilities. Just imagine that at François

Mitterrand, we have seven branches and 2,500 students; just imagine our CLACs - *Centres de Lecture et d'Animation Culturelle* - now renamed CELPAC - *Centres de Lecture Publique et d'Animation Culturelle* - where we have 17 of them; three in Rodrigues; just imagine our *Centre de Formation Artistique*. We train and get children to learn and develop, and get a talent in their lives, capacity building so that tomorrow we can use them in the Film Industry. Why not?

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, on the linguistic front, there are 11 - I repeat 11 - Speaking Unions, and here again I have to thank the vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Finance for having given me the funds to run the 11 speaking unions. At least, the money is there, we start functioning. There was an anomaly - Dr. Bunwaree knows it better - where the English-Speaking Union was getting one-third of what the other Unions were getting. Let me not put forward the figures straightaway there, but it was getting only one-third. That anomaly has been redressed, and even the English-Speaking Union is getting the sum that it deserves for it to be more functional.

Next year, definitely we will come with another Bill for the French-Speaking Union. Right now, we are happy with all that we have got, and definitely we will together work and see to it that we proceed into what we call as the creation of an arts and culture industry. It is one of government's ambitions to make it the next pillar of the Mauritian economy.

This Budget, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, has set the tone for that. To crown it all, as I mentioned earlier, I am coming up with a White Paper. It is very true. The zero draft is in my possession. But I can't deal with only zero draft. We have had some delay, and instead of September it is November. But I am sure that once we are satisfied with the draft, we will go to Cabinet and then, of course, ventilate it. For the New Year, I want everybody who has a drink - whichever drink - to talk about the creative art industry - hon. Barbier was mentioning it - how they can perform, because everybody in Mauritius is an actor, and how the White Paper, which has a minimum of 60 new items, prepared something for the first time again for this country. The White Paper on arts and culture draws the contour for up to the year 2025.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have a dream; everybody has dreams. I have a dream that Mauritius will, with the support of this government, the Minister of Finance and all, our Prime Minister more importantly, become a cultural city island very soon, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

Thank you for your attention.

(7.20 p.m.)

Mr B. Hookoom (Second Member for Piton & Rivière du Rempart): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, allow me, at the outset, to congratulate the vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development. He deserves our appreciation for the marvellous job he has done, in consultation with the hon. Prime Minister, Dr. Navinchandra Ramgoolam. He succeeded in striking the right balance between economic development and social development. He has proved to the Prime Minister to have been right in his decision to have assigned the unprecedented Minister of Social Integration to him before the present assignment as Minister of Finance and Economic Development. Today, we stand proud on this side of the House. The Government is doing what no other country in sub-Saharan Africa has done to address the challenges of the millennium development goals. We have engaged in a frontal war against poverty and deprivation. We are doing what others in the same august Assembly have failed to do even under a clearer sky when the sun was shining, when the global economy was prospering and no external shock in sight between 2000 and 2005.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, my friend, hon. Barbier, talked about capital gains tax has been abolished. Let me remind my hon. friend that during the Illovo deal between 2000 and 2005, the capital gains tax was waived; the decision of the Solicitor General was disregarded.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Ameer Meea, please!

Dr. Hookoom: Why was the capital gains tax waived? It is because five families benefited a jackpot of Rs6.5 billion!

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, unemployment rate rose to around 11%. VAT increased by 50% between 2000 and 2002. The gross domestic product was 2.3%. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, when *l'Alliance Sociale* took power there was external shock. The price of sugar declined by 36%; the Multi Fibre Agreement was lost and the prices of petrol rose. Global recession and financial turmoil, but still the gross rate was between 4% and 5.6%, except in 2009 which was 3.1%.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I understand the plight of our friends on the other side, especially those who were with us and who have chosen to go back where they deserve to be. The abolition of the capital gains tax is, in fact, a major decision that will prevent people to speculate *pour quelques millions de roupies de plus*. Public officers will no longer have to rush to certain counters on the eve of the New Year. We know all what happened in December last in

Med Point transaction. The House is aware how they made public officers rushed to complete transactions within six days to avoid paying millions of rupees as capital gains tax into Government coffers. Capital gains tax has been abolished by this Government to harmonise the tax system, but it will also demotivate some people to speculate.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we have a mandate to serve and we are serving this country. We are instilling a spirit of solidarity within our countrymen. People in distress and needing money to go abroad for the treatment of dear ones will understand what this Government is doing to extend a major helping hand in such cases. The majority of cases needing medical treatment abroad will find solace with this provision in the budget. I would like here to request the Minister of Finance to give effect to this measure immediately so that patients in need now can benefit. Hon. Xavier Duval will go in history as the *expert comptable qui a fait de bons comptes et le peuple peut compter sur lui. Le peuple peut compter sur le Premier ministre et ce gouvernement.*

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Mrs Labelle, please!

Dr. Hookom: I would also say: *Dieu merci, on a l'internet et la télé 24hrs sur 24 et aussi bien qu'une presse libre* to know what is happening in the developed world. The population knows what is happening in the developed world. We have adequate exposure on happenings across the world in real time. The people of this country are certainly aware of the real story in Greece, in Italy, in France, in UK and the US. The economy in all these countries is struggling against odds resulting from their mismanagement. We are comparing ourselves with countries like Greece and Italy - the European market. We should compare ourselves with these countries as they are our main markets. 70% of our products are exported to European countries. The Leader of the Opposition was wrong to say that we cannot compare with European countries because they are our main market. Greece is bankrupt. Euro is burning. Now Italy, the third biggest economy in Europe, is on the verge of going bankrupt. Even the President of Italy has resigned. Italy's public debt has reached 120% of its output. Greece and Italy are threatening to bring down the European Union.

On the one end, the Leader of the Opposition has rightly said so. He has rung the alarm bell to say that next year will be a difficult year for our country because of the catastrophic situation of our main trading partners. On the other end, the Leader of the Opposition says that Government should have given more. Which is which, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir?

In France, the President has recently stated that, in order to avoid bankruptcy like what happened in Greece and Italy, he is going to reduce public expenditure by Euro 800 billion. No need for me to talk about UK; everybody knows what the UK Government is doing: squeezing the middle class, the poor people in order to reduce public debt. God forbid, but we have to be careful! In a small country like ours where our main trading partners are in extreme difficulty, we are able to further consolidate the Welfare State. We are providing support to the poorer and most needy segment of the population. In fact, the hon. Prime Minister has set up a Ministry to look into how we can address the problems of this category of the population.

Here, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we are still paying our civil servants, we are developing the country, we are constructing roads, bridges, drains, hospitals and extending the airport infrastructure which is already taking the shape of a masterpiece. Still, a few see nothing positive in this country. We are creating jobs at a sustained rate year in year out. Still, some people fail to see the truth. We let them do the talk while, on this side, we are set to do the walk. *Le gouvernement est en train de développer le pays à une vitesse qui donne le vertige aux autres.* This Government set to *redresse l'économie* when others found it fit for the ICU of the IMF between 2000 and 2005. We have not reduced our efforts since 2005. We are consistent all the way. The Prime Minister said, at the very outset, in 2005 that he would put people first and we are doing just that. The Minister of Finance and Economic Development is further consolidating welfare. He understands human resource accounting and one doesn't need to be a university graduate in economics to understand the basics of the Budget with regard to the vision of this Government. Our main resource is the human resource. Many policy orientations and decisions in the 2012 Budget aim at enhancing the employability of the human resource.

We are ensuring that –

- the youth have access to training so that they become employable. And we have made provisions so that they may earn a stipend of Rs6,000 per month;
- young athletes are employed and given facilitation for combining employment and sports;
- we are also providing *crèches* facilities to enable young women to join the labour market.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the country has to tap its full human potential. Providing child-minding services after school hours and some form of summer schools for children needing close attention will certainly generate better outcomes in years to come in terms of an increasing literate population. Providing access to pre-primary education by meeting schooling expenses of some 16,000 children is for sure a great effort, a very compassionate one in the interest of many poor families and in the best interests of the children of this country.

Through this budget, this Government is investing in the future of this country. Whoever will sit on this side of the House in fifteen years, and I am convinced they will be from the same parties, will certainly have a sense of gratitude towards this Government for leaving the necessary legacy of a pool of young persons who have not been left on the side road but rather on the highway of development.

I am sure they will say: *“Merci, Dr. Navin Ramgoolam pour toutes ces mesures innovatrices pour le développement des enfants de ce pays!”* Just as we say: *“Merci, Chacha pour l’éducation gratis!”*

The associated benefit of this budgetary provision is that children will be provided with a safer and decent environment to spend their time while their parents are at work.

Furthermore, this Government is strategising to make optimal use of the school compounds. Infrastructure will not remain underutilised.

Of course, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, blindness is an unfortunate handicap, but refusing to see the truth turns out to be a tragedy. It has happened in the history of this country when the then Labour Government introduced free access to secondary and tertiary education.

Many among our friends, on the other side, blamed Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam for having dared to provide such access in difficult times. They were young and inexperienced...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Please, please! Let the hon. Member make his point. Don’t disturb!

Dr. Hookoom: *Laisse mo causer. Ou pou gagne ou le temps.* And could not see further ahead. Unfortunately, *l'histoire se répète* and there are still a few who fail to see the investment this Government wants to make for the future of this country. We, on this side, we have a vision.

They fought over long years to be on this side and we created some space for them, the '*opposition loyale.*' Despite all our wisdom, we somehow, made a mistake by creating such space. They could not adjust in the driving seat and are today installed in their right place.

This Government, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, started creating space for small entrepreneurs in 2005. Since then we have sustained our effort. We trusted the entrepreneurial potential of people in this country. We are continuing to broaden the circle of opportunities for small entrepreneurs by providing access to industrial space, training, capital and market for their products, because we trust the potential of SMEs in creating jobs.

Already, the SME sector provides employment to some 250,000 persons representing 54% of the labour force.

With our support through this budget and with their own will, to take advantage of these facilities, they can go up the value chain. High value-added products, quality products will enable them to compete with others in the regional and international markets.

This budget is providing to handhold them in the face of competition, in the face of uncertainties in our main markets across Europe and the US.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the small entrepreneurs, small planters, the fishermen community and many other economic operators reckon that this budget is attempting to give them a fair share of the national cake.

Smallness can be an advantage, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. It will take just one day for hon. Members to travel across the country and to take cognizance of the expanse of development underway in all parts of the country.

I meet people of my constituency every day with my friend, hon. Devanand Virahsawmy, I have not encountered the least complaint after the budget. In fact, since the time we are in Government, people no longer dread the budget presentation.

They trust this Government and we are not disappointing them. We are actually fulfilling our commitment and we have succeeded over the years to instill the spirit of social responsibility

amongst the business community. The majority of the country agrees that unless wealth is produced, there can be no redistribution. People are working hard in both the formal and informal sectors. The relentless effort made by this Government to boost the informal sector is generating outcomes.

Our SMEs are certainly going up-market and again in this budget we are further broadening the circle of opportunities by easing access to capital through the transformation of the DBM. This budget is setting the foundation for our economy for some fifteen years ahead.

We are providing a series of opportunities to children and youth from poorer families to come out of the poverty trap, while we are maintaining the expansive welfare provisions dispensed by the Ministry of Social Security, the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Housing and Lands, just to name a few.

We are further increasing the scope of provisions.

The people will judge on their own, especially the senior citizens who experienced serious trauma a few years ago when our friends on the other side introduced targeting of pensions to save a few millions. So much hardship caused to our deserving senior citizens by the same people who have done good business within six months in power!

Today, from the other side, they claim to be the advocates of the poor! Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we have not only restored the BRP, we have also provided free bus transport to them. On top of that, we have extended free bus transport to students. We have gone that far in our effort to support the vulnerable segment of our population when they were saying that the country was facing '*un état d'urgence économique*'. We did not curtail the provisions even at the time of the global financial crisis. We have navigated over the turbulent waters with Dr. Ramgoolam as captain of the ship. We have worked hard and the population is aware of the efforts we have put in '*pour redresser la barre*'.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the people of this country no longer dread the Budget exercise. They know the context. They know how far we can go and they understand the efforts we are putting in. Otherwise, there would have been deadlocks, the economy would have stopped.

We have succeeded in removing the fear people used to have when Budget had to be presented. There is no uproar among the population. The country is back to business and it is unfortunate that our friends on the other side see nothing positive in the whole budget.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, other countries, and even the World Bank, have expressed amazement at our success. Today, Mauritius serves as an example for economic modeling. A number of leaders of other countries, who have come here, have been struck by the phenomenal progress we have made. It cannot be denied that our country is not rich in natural resources. We owe our success to our people. This Budget is dedicated to the very same people on whom we can always rely for wealth creation.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, socio-economic management has been the key factor in our nation's transformation. We started as an agrarian economy. Today the country has advanced so far that we not only derive our income from agriculture, but from diversified sources like the Information and Communication Technologies sector. Business Process Outsourcing has emerged as a strong economic pillar together with the services sector.

Today, everything has changed. Few countries can provide the congenial environment to their people the way Mauritius has managed to do. Not many countries are successful in fostering rapid economic development in only a few decades.

This Budget, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, advocates to those who are willing to work hard for a decent livelihood. Opportunities are there for the taking.

We are a country where thousands of expatriate workers are not only earning a living, but they also manage to send part of their earnings back home. We are paying for the welfare of the families of those workers.

If we were a weak country with a limping economy nobody would be attracted to our shores. These are things we tend to take for granted, but they are there for anyone who wishes to take a break and give some serious reflection.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the remarkable success of the country in various fields can be attributed to the cohesion and unity of our people. Hon. Dr. Navin Ramgoolam has succeeded in breeding a sense of social cohesion. Let us not undervalue this fact.

Our success has been achieved because this compassionate Government is sensitive to the problems of the people. The policies and programmes implemented by this Government have made their marks.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Finance and Economic Development is right; we cannot afford to be complacent. Running is not enough we have to leap now to keep pace with the competitive world that is riding on a technological revolution.

Unless there are bold initiatives based on sound judgment of leaders with vision, Mauritius will be like a ship lost in the open sea with no set course to steer.

The country needs leaders of vision to take it into the club of the developed world. There is no development when the people are not taken on board because there is no sustainable development without the participation of the people.

We should also not underrate the potential threat to our political and economic stability. We cannot proceed by trial and error with regard to choices for our future by choosing those who lack the ability to administer the country or those who have conflicting ideologies and, the least, those who look for personal gains. The stability and prosperity we cherish would be at stake.

We need to defend and entrench this peaceful environment with the greatest of care because only sound economic policies can ensure continued economic growth. The vision of our leaders is to see Mauritius as a nation of people who are respected, a country whose economy is strong because, when an economy grows there will be more jobs for our people and income will rise.

The strengthened economy so painfully carved out of the global economic slowdown and crisis should be sustained so that Mauritius can achieve even greater heights. When our economy is strong, we can achieve more and compete with the world. We have the ability and leadership to do so.

Our achievements prove beyond doubts that our leaders can continue to lead us into the second decade of the 3rd millennium with serenity and confidence.

Stiglitz, the Economics Nobel Prize winner, who held a conference in Mauritius and the US Secretary of State, Hilary Clinton have said it all. We remain helpless if our friends on the other side fail to understand.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I will now turn to my constituency, the works under way and the projects that are being implemented. I feel proud to be part of this Government. This Government is investing massively in the development of towns and villages.

Recently, the Schoenfeld bypass has been inaugurated and it has certainly eased the life of road users travelling through Rivière du Rempart. The pressure on the narrow old Schoenfeld Road has been eased. Link with Cottage, Poudre d'Or Hamlet, l'Espérance Trebuchet, Piton and other parts of the north is no longer a headache; people are saving time and fuel.

Many land drainage networks have been initiated across the whole constituency. People living in Petite Julie, Ville Bague, Amaury, Amitié, Mapou, Plaine des Papayes will no longer have to suffer because of flooding. The works are progressing.

We have added facilities for children at the green space at Rivière du Rempart and installation of lighting works is in progress.

The dual carriage way between Beau Plan and Forbach is reducing hardship for the people of my constituency. Land acquisition procedures are under way for construction of Forbach-Bel Air East Coast Trunk Road.

I should give the credit to the good work of my colleague, hon. Anil Bachoo, vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping who is undertaking all the major development works *avec brio*.

Before ending, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I again wish to congratulate the hon. vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Finance and Economic Development for the good work he is doing for the country.

I also express my gratitude to the Prime Minister, hon. Dr. Navin Ramgoolam, for having given me the opportunity to serve the country and the people of my constituency who have always given their unconditional support.

Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

Dr. Kasenally: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I move that the debate be now adjourned.

Mrs Bappoo rose and seconded.

Question put and agreed to.

Debate adjourned accordingly.

ADJOURNMENT

The Deputy Prime Minister: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that this Assembly do now adjourn to Wednesday 16 November 2011 at 11.30 a.m.

The vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development (Mr X. L. Duval) rose and seconded.

The Deputy Speaker: The House stands adjourned.

At 7.48 p.m. the Assembly was, on its rising, adjourned to Wednesday 16 November 2011 at 11.30 a.m.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

POLICE WELFARE ASSOCIATION – ILLEGAL ADMINISTRATION

(No. B/867) Mr R. Uteem (Second Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in regard to the Police Welfare Association, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to if a case of allegation of illegal administration thereat has recently been reported and, if so, if an inquiry has been carried out thereinto, indicating the outcome thereof.

Reply: I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that on 24 October 2011, Police Sergeant R.B., who is also Secretary of the Police Welfare Association (PWA) reported at the Fanfaron Police Station that since 02 June 2010, an officer of the Ministry of Finance working at the Financial Operations Section of the Police Department and who is not a member of the Association, has been posted to the PWA by the Commissioner of Police. According to the complaint, this officer is administering and controlling the PWA; and causing prejudice by refusing to abide by the instructions of the Managing Committee. The complaint made by Police Sergeant R.B. has been referred to the CCID for enquiry.

I should like to state that in reply to a question on the same subject at the sitting of 22 June 2010, I informed the House that the Director of the Office of Public Sector Governance (OPSG) was requested to carry out an internal audit and verification of -

- (a) all accounting records and systems;
- (b) the processing and granting of loans;
- (c) the reconciliation of accounts, payments and deductions;
- (d) the verification of minutes of proceedings, and
- (e) the bank statements and financial statements.

On 20 May 2011, the OPSG informed the Commissioner of Police that the PWA has not demonstrated any interest in OPSG conducting the assignment, and has not thus submitted these required documents despite several reminders to, and meetings with office bearers of the PWA.

The Commissioner of Police, considering that it would be in the best interest of members of the PWA, and in order to ensure sound financial management of the Association, decided to post an Accountant at the PWA.

Since the Secretary of the PWA has formally called for the services of the Accountant to be dispensed with, I have asked the Commissioner of Police to meet the office bearers of the PWA to amicably sort out the matter, as well as to facilitate the assignment of the OPSG.

The Commissioner of Police intends to do so.

FORENSIC SCIENCE LABORATORY – MRS J.M. - DIRECTOR

(No. B/868) Mr A. Ganoo (First Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in regard to Mrs J. M., former Director of the Forensic Science Laboratory, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to -

- (a) the terms and conditions on which she was employed;
- (b) the reasons as to why she left office, and
- (c) if the post has been advertised and, if so, when.

Reply: In regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed that Mrs J. M. was employed as Director, Forensic Science Laboratory, on a contract basis for a period of one year with effect from 25 October 2010 as she was seconded on duty from Staffordshire University, UK.

She was paid a salary of Rs66,000 a month and a monthly allowance of Rs134,000. The other terms and conditions of her employment were in accordance with the Pay Research Bureau Report 2008.

Regarding part (b) of the question, I am advised that on 28 September 2011 Mrs J. M. indicated that she will not ask for the renewal of her contract which was expiring on 24 October 2011.

In regard to part (c) of the question, I am informed that the post of Director, Forensic Science Laboratory was advertised by the Public Service Commission on 07 October 2011 for both Mauritians and non-Mauritians to apply. The closing date for submission of applications was 27 October 2011.

Pending the filling of the vacancy, the Public Service Commission has approved the assignment of duties of Director, on ground of administrative convenience, to the Deputy Director, Forensic Science Laboratory with effect from 25 October 2011.

**RELIGIOUS FUNCTIONS & CEREMONIES – POLITICAL PERSONALITIES -
SPEECHES**

(No. B/869) Mr S. Obeegadoo (Third Member for Curepipe & Midlands) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in regard to speeches made by political personalities at religious functions and ceremonies, he will state if he will introduce legislation as appropriate for the prohibition thereof

(Withdrawn)

PoCA & DECLARATION OF ASSETS ACTS - AMENDMENTS

(No. B/870) Mr S. Obeegadoo (Third Member for Curepipe & Midlands) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in regard to the fight against corruption, he will state where matters stand concerning suggested amendments to be brought to the –

- (a) Prevention of Corruption Act to enhance the effectiveness thereof, and
- (b) Declaration of Assets Act to -
 - (i) redefine the ambit thereof, and
 - (ii) make provision for the declarations to be submitted to Mr Speaker.

(Withdrawn)

**CLOSED CIRCUIT TELEVISION SURVEILLANCE SYSTEM – CAMERAS -
NUMBER**

(No. B/871) Mr N. Bodha (First Member for Vacoas & Floreal) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in regard to the Closed Circuit Television Surveillance System, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to the number of cameras installed as at to-date, indicating the -

- (a) sites thereof, and
- (b) future projects in relation thereto.

Reply: In regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that as at to-date, a total of 459 CCTV cameras have been installed at strategic positions in the following regions –

Region	No. of Camera
Flic en Flac	83
Quatre Bornes	39
Port Louis	269
Grand Baie	68

It is also proposed to extend the CCTV Surveillance System to other regions of the island, while giving priority of consideration to those areas where there are high concentration of commercial activities and tourist resorts and where there is heavy traffic.

Regarding part (b) of the question, as announced in the Budget Speech 2012, it is proposed to install some 300 additional CCTV cameras to cover the regions of Beau Bassin, Rose Hill, Curepipe and part of Quatre Bornes during the course of next year.

SEXUAL OFFENCES – LEGISLATION - AMENDMENTS

(No. B/872) Mr N. Bodha (First Member for Vacoas & Floreal) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in regard to sexual offences, he will state if Government proposes to introduce amendments to the law in relation thereto and, if so, when.

Reply: As the House is aware, the Government introduced the Sexual Offences Bill into the National Assembly in April 2007. However, following the controversy provoked by the issue of depenalisation of sodomy, the Bill was referred to a Select Committee for re-examination. The Select Committee held several meetings under the chairmanship of late Dr. the hon. James Burty David and subsequently of hon. Etienne Sinatambou. But, as the House is aware, Parliament was dissolved in March 2010.

Nevertheless, in May 2010, the Attorney General consulted all Ministries in relation to the Bill for their views and comments.

In the meantime, as the House is aware, Mauritius supported the Resolution on “Human rights, sexual orientation and gender identity” which was adopted on 17 June of this year by the

17th Session of the UN Human Rights Council. In my reply to a Private Notice Question of the hon. Leader of the Opposition on 28 June of this year, I explained clearly and lengthily the reasons why Mauritius had voted in favour of this Resolution. I also informed the House that the Resolution had equally requested the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights to commission a study in order to document discriminatory laws and practices and acts of violence against individual based on their sexual orientation and gender identity in all regions of the world and how international human rights law can be used to end violence and related human rights violations based on sexual orientation and gender identity. In view thereof I stated that it was premature at this point in time to decide on which domestic laws would need to be amended and that in the light of the outcome of the study, Government would consider the desirability of having a Select Committee to obtain the views of all interested parties on the legislative changes.

The House will recall that in June last, the hon. Leader of the Opposition observed that, I quote –

“The Sexual Offences Bill, 90% was very good, protecting children, women against gang rape and so on and because of the sodomy polemic, the whole thing has died. Will the hon. Prime Minister agree with me that we should come forward with a revised Sexual Offences Bill containing all that was positive and is positive in the Bill and not wait for this long process in Geneva, then the setting up of another select committee in the meantime that we should vote the 90% of the Sexual Offences Bill that was positive?”.

In my reply to the observations of the Leader of the Opposition, I concurred that the Bill was positive and added that I had an open mind as to whether we should proceed with it and then amend it later in the light of the outcome of the UN study.

The Attorney General’s Office is now finalising a revised version of the Bill which will be re-introduced in the National Assembly.

ROADS – SPEEDING

(No. B/873) Mr N. Bodha (First Member for Vacoas & Floreal) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in regard to speeding, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to the number of reported cases thereof, since the installation of speed cameras, indicating the amount of money collected as fine in relation thereto.

Reply: As the House is aware, the Road Traffic (Photographic Enforcement Device) Regulations came into force on 29 December 2008 and the Photographic Enforcement Unit was set up by the Police to carry out speed checks around the island.

Additionally, Police is using four mobile speed cameras around the island. Two fixed speed cameras are operational along the Motorway at Camp Chapelon and Guibies as from 06 December 2010.

I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that since December 2008, a total of 125,426 contraventions for speeding have been established by the Police, of which 33,149 were detected by fixed speed cameras.

I am further informed by the Commissioner of Police that so far, a sum of Rs183,422,000 has been paid as fine for 91,711 contraventions.

PRIMARY SCHOOLS – SECURITY

(No. B/874) Mr V. Baloomoody (Third Member for Grand River North West & Port Louis West) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in regard to the primary schools, he will state if he will consider liaising with the Commissioner of Police to reinforce security thereat following the recent dangerous and violent incident which took place in the presence of the students of a primary school in Vacoas.

Reply: I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that on 07 September 2011, at Vacoas Police station, a child attending a primary school in Vacoas, reported in the presence of his father, that during the second semester, on a date unknown to him, his teacher called him in front of the class and asked all other pupils to come forward to beat him.

I am informed that the Ministry of Education and Human Resources on being apprised of the case by the Police, carried out an internal inquiry into the matter which revealed that no such incident was reported to the Head Master of the primary school. The mother of the pupil subsequently applied for the transfer of the child to another school in the same catchment area and the request was acceded to by the Ministry of Education and Human Resources.

Police enquiry is ongoing.

It is normal practice for Police officers to be posted in the vicinity of the schools in the morning between 07.30 hours and 09.30 hours and in the afternoon between 14.30 hours and

16.30 hours to regulate traffic, ensure the safety and security of students and help children/parents/teachers crossing the road outside the school premises.

I am also informed that the Police and the Ministry of Education and Human Resources have taken a series of measures to address security in schools as follows –

- (i) regular sensitisation programme for pupils are carried out by the Police on crime prevention issues. Focused working sessions have also been held with Head of schools;
- (ii) the Ministry of Education and Human Resources has established close networking and collaboration with the Police and the *Brigade pour la Protection des Mineurs*. Such networking is being reinforced by exchange of information and communication;
- (iii) Heads of schools are called upon to have regular interactions with the Police in their region, and
- (iv) pupils are sensitised about the need to show disciplined behaviour.

MOTORCYCLES – MODIFIED SILENCERS

(No. B/875) Mr P. Jhugroo (First Member for Mahebourg and Plaine Magnien) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in regard to the autocycles and/or motorcycles equipped with modified silencers and emitting loud noises, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to if an increase in the number thereof has been noted in the Metropolitan (North) Division and, if so, indicate –

- (a) the number of Police checks carried out over the past year by each Police Station, indicating the number of contraventions and fixed penalty notices booked;
- (b) if additional steps will be taken, and
- (c) when it is proposed to introduce sound level meters.

Reply: Emissions of loud noises by vehicles are regulated under Regulation 83(3) of the Road Traffic (Construction and Use of Vehicles) Regulations 2010.

Furthermore, the Road Traffic (Control of Vehicle Emissions) Regulations 2002 provide that the maximum permissible noise level is 79 decibels in respect of new motorcycles and

autocycles and 83 decibels for motorcycles and autocycles in use. Exceeding this level of noise is an offence and a person contravening this provision is liable to a fine not exceeding Rs10,000.

In regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that for the period October 2010 to 09 November 2011, 1,2407 autocycles and motorcycles were checked by the Police in the regions falling under the responsibility of the Metropolitan (North) Division. 231 contraventions were established for modified silencers of which two persons opted for fixed penalty.

I am tabling the number of Police checks carried out and the number of contraventions established by each Police station in the Metropolitan (North) Division for the abovementioned period.

In regard to part (b) of the question, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that in addition to the routine checks carried out on motor vehicles, checks on autocycles and motorcycles are also conducted on the basis of complaints and information obtained from the community through Community Policing Fora. Coordinated operations are launched on a regular basis islandwide to track down those riders of autocycles and motorcycles with modified silencers and emitting loud noise.

In regard to part (c) of the question, I am informed that the Police had initiated the procedures to acquire 10 Sound Level Meters in March 2011 and they have been received on 12 November 2011.

A training programme has been planned for officers of the Police Department, the National Transport Authority, the Legal Metrology Division of the Ministry of Industry and Commerce and the Mauritius Standards Bureau on the use of the Sound Level Meters from 14 to 18 November 2011.

POLICE OFFICERS – FOREIGN VIP – CONVEYANCE -ALLOWANCE

(No. B/876) Mr P. Jhugroo (First Member for Mahebourg and Plaine Magnien) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in regard to the Police officers who are involved in the conveyance of foreign Very Important Persons, whilst on official missions in Mauritius, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to if consideration will be given for the

payment of an additional allowance thereto, in view of the fact that they work continuously for very long hours.

Reply: I am informed that Police drivers who work for long and at odd hours during the visits of VIPs or during the holding of international conferences in Mauritius are currently being compensated by the grant of days off.

Proposals have already been made to the Pay Research Bureau for the payment of an appropriate allowance in the context of its next report.

WATER TANK GRANT SCHEME - CRITERIA

(No. B/896) Mr S. Soodhun (Second Member for La Caverne and Phoenix) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to the Water Tank Grant Scheme, he will state the –

- (a) eligibility criteria therefor
- (b) time taken for the processing of an application therefor ,and
- (c) number of applications received as at to-date, indicating if all the applications have been processed and if so, the number of grants allocated and if not, the reasons therefor.

Reply: In last year's Budget, it was announced that the Water Tank Grant will be introduced to give a cash grant of Rs 3,000 to families with income not exceeding Rs 10,000 per month. This is the main eligibility criteria. I am tabling the criteria for eligibility of households, the criteria for the water tank and for the eligibility of suppliers.

As regards part (b), applicants have been informed that they should allow a minimum of three weeks for the processing of applications. However, the processing time may be longer in cases, where applications are incomplete or incorrect.

With regard to part (c), as at November 2011, a total of 5,977 applications have been received, out of which 4,505 have been approved. Out of these, 783 applicants have purchased the water tanks and the grants have been paid.

When the scheme was introduced, it was intended to make an assessment after three months. The assessment has revealed that the eligibility criteria may be a restricting factor for low income families and the procedures need to be further simplified. I am proposing to review the criteria and procedures in order to allow a larger number of deserving households to benefit from the grant scheme.

MEDICAL PRACTITIONERS (FOREIGN) – RESIDENCE PERMIT

(No. B/897) Dr S. Boolell (Second Member for Curepipe and Midlands) asked the vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to the foreign medical practitioners, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Board of Investment, information as to the eligibility criteria for the issue of a permanent or temporary residence permit thereto, indicating the number thereof issued over the past five years.

(Withdrawn)

MEDICAL COUNCIL ACT - AMENDMENT

(No. B/898) Dr S. Boolell (Second Member for Curepipe and Midlands) asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether, in regard to the Medical Council Act, he will state if Government proposes to bring amendments thereto with a view to making provisions for derogations to the conditions for the registration of foreign medical practitioners with the Medical Council of Mauritius and, if so, the reasons therefor.

(Withdrawn)

SMEs - CLOSURE

(No. B/900) Mr N. Bodha (First Member for Vacoas & Floreal) asked the Minister of Business, Enterprise and Cooperatives whether, in regard to the small and medium enterprises, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Small and Medium Enterprise Development Authority, information as to the number thereof which have closed down in 2010 and 2011, indicating the number of jobs lost as a result thereof.

Reply: I am advised by Statistics Mauritius that such figures are not compiled and, therefore, not available. However, the figures available are in respect of the number of licences issued by Local Authorities and the licences cancelled. These figures comprise SMEs as well. Thus, from July 2009 to June 2010, 9,798 licences had been issued and 2,710 had been

cancelled. Similarly, from July 2010 to June 2011, 7,600 licences have been issued and 2,900 have been cancelled.

Employment in the SME sector is a dynamic process. As such it is difficult for the Small and Medium Enterprises Development Authority to indicate the number of jobs lost, as a result of closure of enterprises. However, I must point out for the information of the House, that in my reply to PQ/B833, I informed that there has been a NET increase in the number of jobs in the SME sector for both 2010 and 2011.

In 2010 the net increase was 9000 representing 75 % of the total jobs created and in 2011 it was 4000 representing 80 % of the total created.

MOTORCYCLES/MOTOR VEHICLES - RALLIES

(No. B/901) Mr V. Baloomoody (Third Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to the motorcycles/motor vehicles, he will state if Government proposes to bring amendments to the Road Traffic Act with a view to making it an offence for the unauthorized holding of rallies thereof along the public roads and motorways.

Reply: I wish to inform the House that provision to deter unauthorised holding of rallies already exists in Section 125 of the Road Traffic Act which stipulates that -

“Any person who, except with the consent of and in accordance with any conditions imposed by the Commissioner of Police –

- (a) promotes; or
- (b) takes part in,

any race or trial of speed between motor vehicles on a road shall commit an offence and shall, on conviction, be liable to a fine not exceeding 1000 rupees”.

I have been advised by the Commissioner of Police that the Police proposes to amend the above section of the Act to -

- (a) increase the penalty from Rs 1000 to Rs50,000, and
- (b) cater for the forfeiture of vehicles involved in such activities.

QUATRE BORNES - NEW MARKET - CONSTRUCTION

(No. B/902) Mr K. Ramano (Second Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes) asked the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the construction of a new market in Quatre Bornes, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Municipal Council of Quatre Bornes, information as to the amount of money budgeted therefor and where matters stand.

Reply: I wish to refer the hon. Member to the reply I made on 28 June 2011 to Parliamentary Question A/219 on this issue. As already stated an amount of Rs 21M has been earmarked by the Municipal Council of Quatre Bornes for the construction of a new market in Quatre Bornes.

I am informed that specifications are under preparation at the level of the Council.

However, no provision has been made in Estimates 2012 for this project.

BATS - SURVEY

(No. B/903) Mr D. Nagalingum (Second Member for Stanley & Rose Hill) asked the Minister of Agro-Industry and Food Security whether, in regard to bats, he will state if the survey to assess the present number thereof has already been conducted by the National Parks and Conservation Service and, if so, indicate –

- (a) the outcome thereof, and
- (b) where matters stand in relation to the proposed review of the Wild Life and National Parks Act in relation thereto.

Reply: I take this opportunity to clarify the Hon Members on certain issues on bats which were also recently raised by Hon. Jhugroo during the session of the National Assembly on 18 October 2011. The National Parks and Conservation Service and Forestry Service of my Ministry conducted a survey of the bat population during the last fruit season. The results of the survey revealed that there were 50 important roosting sites for bats around Mauritius with an estimated population of around 56,000 which represent a 139% increase in the bat population compared to 2006

Following this latest survey which was a pre-requisite for the reviewing of the classification of bats by the International Union of Conservation of Nature (IUCN) to which we are a member, the latter was requested to downgrade the current classification of the Mauritian

Fruit bats from its Red List. The Hon Member may wish to note that as per this Red List, the Mauritian Fruit bat is presently classified as endangered and is a protected species.

Concurrently, we have already reviewed the Wildlife and National Parks Act of 1993 which is at the Attorney- General's Office for final vetting. In fact in this new Legislation provisions have been made to better protect, conserve and manage our native terrestrial biodiversity and to give effect to the biodiversity related Conventions to which we are a party to.

Provision has also been made in this new legal framework for the control of wildlife population through culling when it has been found that any species of wildlife has attained pest status level and it is in the national interest to reduce its population. The Mauritian fruit bat is one such species whose population may be controlled under this new legal framework. We have also taken mitigating measures which are being implemented by the AREU and include -

- (a) A Bird Net Scheme;
- (b) Demonstrations on the use of the bird nets;
- (c) Sensitisation campaigns on pruning of fruit trees and tree management, and
- (d) A Research and Development Programme to identify and recommend alternative preventive measures.

QUATRE BORNES FIRE STATION - RELOCATION

(No. B/904) Mr K. Ramano (Second Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes) asked the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the Quatre Bornes Fire Station, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Government Fire Services, information as to if it will be relocated and, if so, indicate if land has already been earmarked therefor, indicating the location and extent thereof.

Reply: I am informed by the Fire Services Department that it intends to relocate the Quatre Bornes Fire Station.

However, it has not been possible to identify an appropriate plot of land. The Ministry of Housing and Lands has informed that no state land is available within the region of Ebène, Trianon and Phoenix and as such, either the possibility for acquisition of private property be looked into or alternative sites be identified.

CWA – WATER SUPPLY

(No. A/350) Mrs J. Radegonde (Fourth Member for Savanne & Black River) asked Dr Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to water, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Central Water Authority, information as to the medium and long term projects which are being envisaged for an adequate supply thereof for industrial and domestic purposes, especially to the inhabitants living along the coastal region in Constituency No.14, Savanne and Black River.

Reply: The coastal regions of Black River from Tamarin towards Le Morne are fed from the Yemen borehole, the yield of which has decreased from 8,000 m³ daily to 3,000 m³ daily. To compensate for the shortfall, CWA has already taken the following measures:-

- (i) the tapping of a volume of about 1,000 m³ daily from Black River at Bois Noir since 5th November 2011, and
- (ii) the tapping of a volume of about 1,000 m³ daily of irrigation water from Magenta pipeline. The CWA has completed the laying of 5 kms of pipeline from Magenta towards Yemen La Coupée service reservoir. Civil and electrification works and installation of a pressure filter of capacity 1,200 m³ daily started in August 2011 and are expected to be completed by the end of the month.

As regards Savanne district, the regions of Chemin Grenier, Chamouny, Surinam and Souillac are supplied from Mont Blanc Treatment Works. The yield from the sources feeding the filter plant (Rivière Patate, Rivière des Galets, Fowdar Springs) has decreased, and production at Mont Blanc filters is now about 6,000 m³/day against 11,000 m³/day during the normal period. Consequently, the hours of supply have been reduced from 24 hours to 10 hours daily and are between 4.00 am to 9.00 am and 4.00 pm to 9.00 pm.

In order to supplement supply, the CWA has -

- (i) obtained authorisation from Union Ducray Sugar Estate for the tapping of about 500 m³ water from its irrigation network; and
- (ii) tapping of additional resources from Rivière La Fôret towards Mont Blanc Treatment Plant.

As regards the long term improvement of supply the following projects are being implemented -

- (i) the transfer of water from La Marie system to the South West Coast through a 20 km pipeline at an estimated cost of Rs 330 M. The project will be implemented in two

phases. The first phase will involve the laying of a pipeline from Trois Mamelles service reservoir to Bois Puant Service reservoir and the second phase will consist of reinforcement of pipelines from Bois Puant service reservoir towards Le Morne over a distance of 7 kms; and

- (ii) The construction of the Riviere des Anguilles Dam with a storage capacity of 14 Mm³ and an annual yield of 50 Mm³ is scheduled which will be operational as from 2015.

LE MORNE TRUST FUND - ACTIVITIES

(No. A/351) Mrs J. Radegonde (Fourth Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Minister of Arts and Culture whether, in regard to the Le Morne Trust Fund, he will give a list of the activities carried out by the Fund, over the past five years.

Reply: I have been advised by the Le Morne Heritage Trust Fund that the activities carried out by the Trust Fund during the past five years are as follows :-

Year 2007

Date	Activity
01 February	Launching of Draft Management Plan of Le Morne Cultural Landscape. A version in "Creole" was also released.
18 April	International Day for Monuments and Sites – Exhibition of wood sculpture and paintings related to Le Morne Cultural Landscape by the children of Le Morne Village at the office of Le Morne Heritage Trust Fund, Le Morne.
4 August	In view of promoting local economic development in the village of Le Morne, the Le Morne Heritage Trust Fund organized a meeting of local villagers with members of the Empowerment Programme at Le Morne Village Hall.
Date	Activity
23 August	Official opening of the Le Morne Heritage Trust Fund Site Office at Le Morne Village and launching of the Le Morne Heritage Trust Fund official Web Site.

30 August	Cultural Evening (storytelling, <i>sega typik</i> and traditional meals) on the public beach of Le Morne Village organized with the participation of the local community.
30 November	Educational outing for CPE pupils of Le Morne Government School and students of the secondary level (Form I) – visit of some National Heritage Sites and museum of Mahebourg.
07 December	Festival International Kreol – “ <i>Sware Rakont Zistwar</i> ”, organized in collaboration with the Ministry of Tourism, Leisure and External Communications on the public beach of Le Morne Village.

Year 2008

Date	Activity
01 February	Commemoration of the 173th Anniversary of the Abolition of Slavery and laying of foundation stone of the “International Slave Route Monument” at Le Morne.
April	Launching of the Management Plan for the Le Morne Cultural Landscape.
18 April	International Day for Monuments and Sites – Painting and “ <i>Paroles Séga</i> ” competition at Le Morne for students of secondary schools aged between 15 to 20 years old.
23 – 25 May	Wood sculpture exhibition at the Site Office of Le Morne Heritage Trust Fund by the students of School of Sculpture of Mr Lewis Dick.
10 August	Celebration of the Inscription of Le Morne Cultural Landscape on the UNESCO World Heritage List at Le Morne.
Date	Activity
19 August	Cultural Show by “Wadumbah Aboriginal Dance Group” from Australia on the public beach, opposite Le Morne Government School, Le Morne Village.

December	Festival International Kreol – “ <i>Sware Tipik</i> ” with the collaboration of the Ministry of Tourism, Leisure and External Communications on the public beach of Le Morne Village.
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Year 2009

Date	Activity
01 February	Commemoration of the 174th Anniversary of the Abolition of Slavery and Inauguration of the International Slave Route Monument with unveiling of stones sculpted by sculptors from Mauritius, Madagascar and Reunion Island.
17 – 18 April	International Day for Monuments and Sites – Wood sculpture exhibition at Caudan Waterfront by children of Le Morne where they had the opportunity to demonstrate their skills and knowledge and to sell some of their works.
10 July	1 st Anniversary of the Inscription of Le Morne Cultural Landscape on the World Heritage List – Wreath Laying Ceremony at the International Slave Route Monument. Participation of the Senior Citizen Association of Le Morne Village.
11 October	International Day for the Elderly – Acknowledgement for the contribution of old people (Senior Citizen) in the village of Le Morne in Oral History Research for the inscription of Le Morne Cultural Landscape on the UNESCO World Heritage List. Visit of the Air Mauritius Airbus by Senior Citizens of the Le Morne Village at the SSR International Airport and lunch at the National History Museum, Mahebourg.
Date	Activity
04 December	Festival International Kreol - “ <i>Sware tipik</i> ” organised on the public beach of Le Morne Village in collaboration with the Ministry of Tourism, Leisure & External Communications.

17 December	Donation of Equipment and school materials to pupils of Pre-Primary and Primary Government School of Le Morne Village.
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Year 2010

Date	Activity
01 February	Commemoration of the 175 th Anniversary of the Abolition of Slavery, unveiling of the stone sculpted by a sculptor from Mozambique at the International Slave Route Monument and launching of the publications : “Le Morne Cultural Landscape : History, Symbolism and Traditions” and “Report on Oral History and Traditions on Le Morne”.
07 February – 30 April	Display of Le Morne Cultural Landscape panels and Exhibition of wood sculptures made by Mr Lewis Dick and students and paintings related to slavery in colleges and other public places.
18 April	International Day for Monuments and Sites - Treasure Hunt related to cultural heritage for students at the Le Morne Village. Display of exhibition panels of the Le Morne Cultural Landscape.
01 October	United Nations International Day for Older People - Organisation of a lunch for the Senior Citizen of Le Morne at Community Centre, Le Morne Village.
10 December	Festival International Kreol - “ <i>Swaré Tipik</i> ” organised on the public beach of Le Morne Village.

Year 2011

Date	Activity
10 January	Donation of shoes to the pupils of Le Morne Government School.
1 st February	Commemoration of the 176 th Anniversary of the Abolition of Slavery - Unveiling of rock stones sculpted by sculptors from India and China.
06 March	<i>Festival Morisien</i> - The Le Morne Heritage Trust Fund organized an exhibition and sales of handicrafts products made by some artisans of Le Morne at the Municipality of Quatre Bornes.

18 April	International Day for Monuments and Sites - The Le Morne Heritage Trust Fund organised a Talk with Powerpoint Presentation, Heritage Walk, Quiz and Prize Giving Ceremony for the Std VI pupils from the La Gaulette and Le Morne Government Schools.
05 July	World Environment Day - The Le Morne Heritage Trust Fund in collaboration with the Le Morne Government School, the Le Morne Village Council, AREU and Forestry Services organised talks, donation of medicinal plants to senior citizens of Le Morne and quiz competition among the children of Le Morne.
10 July	3 rd Anniversary for the Inscription of the Le Morne Cultural Landscape on the UNESCO World Heritage List – A “maquette” competition on Le Morne Cultural Landscape was launched at the national level.
23 August	International Day for the Remembrance of the Slave Trade and its Abolition – Issue of a circular letter and brief to all primary and secondary schools on the Le Morne Cultural Landscape and International Day for the Remembrance of the Slave Trade and its Abolition to be read in classes or morning assembly.

MUNICIPAL COUNCIL OF PORT LOUIS - STREET NAME PLATES - COST

(No. A/352) Mr A. Ameer Meea (First Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the street name plates placed by the Municipal Council of Port Louis, since 2006 to date he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Council, information as to the number thereof, indicating for each name plate, the -

- (a) cost thereof, and
- (b) name of the contractor.

Reply: The information requested by the hon. Member is being placed in the Library.

TOURIST VILLAGES - COST

(No. A/353) **Mr K. Li Kwong Wing (Second Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière)** asked the vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to the tourist villages built during the period 2005 to 2011, he will give a list thereof, indicating in each case the -

- (a) initial estimated cost of the project compared to the final cost;
- (b) completion date thereof;
- (c) number of small and medium enterprises and jobs created,
- (d) costs of operation, and
- (e) status as at to date, indicating the steps implemented within each project to democratise the tourist industry.

Reply: With regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed that the Tourist Villages Company Ltd, which was mandated to construct and own tourist villages, constructed the first Tourist Village on a pilot basis at Belle Mare. The initial estimated cost of the Village was Rs147.7 m. (excluding VAT) and the final total cost is expected to be Rs163.9 m. (excluding VAT). The practical completion date of the construction of the Village is 15 September 2011.

With such a level of investment and taking into account the minimum monthly operational cost it has been considered that such project would not be viable and sustainable if made exclusively available to small entrepreneurs. It is unlikely that the local small entrepreneurs would be in a position to pay the rental to be charged by the company. It has therefore been decided that Government would not continue with similar projects.

As announced in my Budget Speech 2012, Government is disinvesting from its Commercial and Industrial activities so as to make better use of Government assets and provide more economic space for private initiatives. In this respect, action is being initiated to disinvest from Belle Mare Tourist Village.

Government will however upgrade existing infrastructure for small operators, especially local made handicrafts. In this respect, the Tourist Villages Co. Ltd, in collaboration with SMEDA has already renovated the Handicraft Village in Mahebourg at a total cost of Rs7, 233,251 (including VAT). The shops have been leased to 13 handicraft operators at the cost of Rs350 excluding VAT. SMEDA is being encouraged to undertake similar actions in order to provide opportunities to SME's to display and sell their products to tourists.

In addition, a number of incentives have already been announced in my Budget Speech 2012, including a grant to finance their participation in international fairs up to a maximum of Rs100, 000 per year.

SPECIAL FUNDS - WINDING UP

(No. A/354) Mr K. Li Kwong Wing (Second Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to the Special Funds, he will, for the year 2011, give a list thereof that have been wound up, indicating the -

- (a) date of the winding up;
- (b) amount thereof in each case spent during the year and returned to the Consolidated Fund;
- (c) reasons therefor, and
- (d) impact thereof on -
 - (i) their original objectives, and
 - (ii) the budget deficit.

Reply: I presume the hon. Member is referring to the six Special Funds which were created in 2008 by way of Regulations under the Finance and Audit Act, namely -

- (i) Maurice Ile Durable Fund;
- (ii) Human Resource, Knowledge and Arts Development Fund;
- (iii) Food Security Fund (FSF);
- (iv) Local Infrastructure Fund (LIF);
- (v) Social Housing Development Fund (SHDF), and
- (vi) Manufacturing Adjustment and SME Development Fund (MASMED) later renamed as Savings Job and Recovery (SJR) Fund and Business Growth Fund.

As regards part (a), none of them has been wound up. However, the PBB for 2011 presented last year provided for transfer of the surplus amount of Rs1.1 billion in various off budget Funds to the Consolidated Fund, mostly under the Maurice Ile Durable Fund and the Human Resource, Knowledge and Arts Development Fund.

As regards part (b), the amount spent from January 2011 to October 2011, likely expenditure for the whole year and the amount proposed to be transferred to the Consolidated Fund are given in the table below -

Million			Rs
Funds	Amount spent from 01 January 2011 to 31 October 2011	Likely Expenditure for FY 2011	Expected Amount to be transferred to Consolidated Fund.
Human Resource, Knowledge and Arts Development (HRKAD) Fund.	88	172	603
Food Security Fund	-	-	-
Maurice Ile Durable (MID) Fund	10	11	635
Local Infrastructure Fund	201	502	-
Social Housing Development Fund	-	-	-
Business Growth Fund	602	1,087	-
TOTAL	901	1,772	1,238

As regards part (c), those surplus funds are being transferred back into the Consolidated Fund to ensure greater transparency in fiscal management and impose higher fiscal discipline on

the utilisation of those funds. Another reason is not to undermine the Programme-Based Budgeting approach and its focus on outputs and performance.

As regards part (d) (i), the transfer of funds from the Special Funds to the Consolidated Fund will have no impact on their original objectives since the various approved schemes, projects and investments have been integrated within the Budget and provisions made accordingly in the 2012 PBB.

As regards part (d) (ii), with the transfer of an amount of Rs1.2 billion from Special Funds to the Consolidated Fund during the year 2011 instead of the initial Rs1.1 billion, the budget deficit will be lower by 0.4% of GDP, instead of by 0.3% of GDP.

TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT AND ROAD SAFETY UNIT - VACANCIES

(No. A/355) Dr. R. Sorefan (Fourth Member for La Caverne & Phoenix) asked the vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to the Traffic Management and Road Safety Unit, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Unit, a list of the vacancies that presently exist thereat, indicating in each case –

- (a) the grades thereof, and
- (b) since when the posts are vacant.

Reply: The information concerning the staff position at the Traffic Management and Road Safety Unit showing the list of vacancies that presently exist in respect of each grade, the dates of the vacancies and actions taken thereof is being placed in the Library.

MOTORWAY - STREET LIGHTING

(No. A/356) Dr. R. Sorefan (Fourth Member for La Caverne & Phoenix) asked the vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to the street lighting system found on the motorway, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Road Development Authority, information as to -

- (a) if consideration will be given for the extension thereof from the –
 - (i) Saint Jean roundabout to the Phoenix roundabout;
 - (ii) Quay D roundabout to the Roche Bois roundabout, and

- (iii) Tombeau Bay roundabout to the Terre Rouge roundabout, and
- (b) where matters stand in relation to the extension thereof from;
 - (i) Pailles to Mount Ory, and
 - (ii) Mount Ory to the Réduit roundabout.

- Reply:** (a) (i) In the “Widening of Motorway M1 from St Jean to Pont Fer” project, provision for street lighting has been made for the southbound Pont Fer bypass which starts at the Phoenix (IVTB) roundabout. Street lighting on the stretch from St Jean roundabout to Phoenix (IVTB) roundabout is not included in the ongoing project but will be considered in future projects;
- (ii) street lighting already exists between Quay D roundabout and Roche Bois roundabout, and
 - (iii) there is no street lighting between Tombeau Bay roundabout and Terre Rouge roundabout. This will be considered in future projects.
- (a) (i) the provision of street lighting from Pailles to Mount Ory is included in the project “Widening of Motorway M1 from Colville Deverell to Grewals”. The procurement exercise is ongoing. Works are expected to start by early next year, and
- (ii) the widening of Motorway M1 from St Jean to Colville Deverell is ongoing and will include street lighting. Works are expected to be completed in March 2012.

ST BRANDON – NORWEGIAN PROJECT

(No. A/357) **Mrs F. Labelle (Third Member for Vacoas & Floreal)** asked the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the island of St Brandon, he will state if a project sponsored by the Norwegian Government has been carried out thereat, during the period 27 April to 4 May 2011 and, if so, indicate the

- (a) nature thereof;
- (b) cost thereof, and
- (c) number of Mauritian Officers who formed part of the expedition and the amount paid thereto.

Reply: I am informed by the Ministry of Fisheries and Rodrigues that under the bilateral agreement the Government of Mauritius and Norway, a fishing trial using collapsible fish traps

was carried out from 27 April to 04 May 2011 on board of the Ministry of Fisheries research boat “Shyrna II”.

I am informed that –

- (a) the aims of the fishing trials were to assess the feasibility of a trap fishery on the banks and to train officers of the Ministry in the use of the new designed collapsible fish traps;
- (b) the amount earmarked to carry out the fishing trip is Rs272,000, and
- (c) six Mauritian officers participated in the fishing expedition. The skipper who was contracted for the expedition has been paid an amount of Rs10,000. However, there has been a delay in the payment to the remaining officers due to the fact that this is the first time that such an expedition was undertaken and the mode by which the officers should be remunerated is being worked out in consultation with the Ministry of Civil Service and Administrative Reforms.

CEB – WOODEN POLES

(No. A/358) **Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière)** asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to the wooden poles, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Central Electricity Board, information as to –

- (a) the number thereof in stock;
- (b) the number of orders placed therefor, since May 2011 to-date, and
- (c) if there is a shortage thereof and if so, the reasons therefor.

Reply: I am informed by the Central Electricity Board that, the number of wooden poles in stock as at 10 November 2011 is 2099. A tender has been launched in October 2011 for a new order of 3150 poles. The closing date is 16 November 2011.

There is no shortage of wooden poles at present.

LE DAUGUET AND THE SIGNAL MOUNTAIN HEALTH TRACKS - UPLIFTING

(No. A/359) **Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière)** asked the Minister of Environment and Sustainable Development whether, in regard to the Le Dauguet

and the Signal Mountain health tracks, he will state if consideration will be given for the taking of immediate steps for a complete uplifting thereof.

Reply: My Ministry undertakes regular maintenance of the health tracks at Le Dauguet and Signal Mountain. Rehabilitation works were last undertaken in January 2010.

A new survey is presently being carried out to identify uplifting works which will be implemented subsequently.

CITE LA CURE – EMBELLISHMENT PROJECTS

(No. A/360) Mr G. Lesjongard (Second Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue) asked the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether, in regard to Cité La Cure, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Municipal Council of Port Louis, a list of the embellishment projects to be carried out thereat, indicating the expected completion date thereof, in each case.

Reply: I am informed by the Municipal Council of Port Louis that the following embellishment works have been undertaken in Cité La Cure as at end of October 2011 –

(a) Region of Jhumma Street

- Construction of alley with paving tiles approximately 500 m²
- Fixing of nine decorative luminaries
- Fixing of twelve benches
- Leveling, turfing and planting on an approximate area of 700m²

(b) Region of Jhellum Street

- Construction of alley with paving tiles
- Levelling and turfing
- Fixing of twenty-five lamp posts with decorative lanterns

I am further informed that the Council proposes to carry out embellishment works on the stretch from the football ground up to the junction with Sir Robert Scott Street during the next fiscal year.

DESROCHES STREET, PORT LOUIS - MRS M. A. L. AND MRS J. C. - ASSISTANCE

(No. A/361) Mr R. Uteem (Second Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central) asked the Minister of Social Integration and Economic Empowerment whether he will state if he has been informed of the conditions in which one Mrs M. A. L. and Mrs J. C. have been living since their house in Desroches Street, Port Louis, has been destroyed by fire and, if so, the steps taken, if any, to come to their assistance.

Reply: I am informed that, following the fire which occurred on 22 May 2011 in a leased building, officials of the National Empowerment Foundation (NEF) visited the victims on 25 May to offer any assistance that could be extended in such hardship cases.

It was reported that Mrs A. L. and her daughter, Mrs J. C. had been sharing the rented house with another family. As that family had a plot of land at Vallée Pitot and was eligible for assistance, NEF constructed a concrete house with CIS roof partly funded by CSR funds. Being given that Mrs A. L. and her daughter, Mrs J. C. are not owners of any plot of private or leased land, they had, on the advice of the NEF, made an application to the Ministry of Housing and Lands for a plot of State Land on which consideration would be given for the construction of a concrete house with CIS roof. NEF is pursuing the matter with that Ministry.

In the meantime, Mrs A. L. and her family are renting a house since September 2011 for a period of 2 years. Meanwhile, NEF has provided support and assistance to members of the family as follows –

- (i) School materials to the grandson;
- (ii) Work opportunities offered to Mrs J. C. who is now working and earning a monthly salary;
- (iii) Assistance from the private sector for the provision of a gas cylinder, food and clothing, and
- (iv) The son of Mrs A. L. and Mrs J. C. has been referred to the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life for medical treatment.

TOBACCO PRODUCTS – WATER PIPES

(No. A/362) Mr R. Uteem (Second Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central) asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether, in regard to tobacco products

smoked through water pipes, he will state if he has been informed that same are being sold to the public in some premises and, if so, if steps have been taken for the prosecution of the offenders.

Reply: The Public Health (Restrictions on Tobacco Products) Regulations 2008 came into force partly on 28 November 2008 and fully on 01 March 2009.

Section 6(d) of the Regulations stipulates that “no person shall manufacture, import or sell a tobacco product for use in connection with a waterpipe.”

In the Regulations, waterpipe is defined as a device from which smoke of tobacco product is drawn through water and a long tube known as hose. The definition includes a ‘hookah’ which is a single or a multi-stemmed instrument for smoking in which the smoke is cooled by water.

Information received from the Mauritius Revenue Authority indicates that tobacco products used in connection with water pipes were offered for sale at Pakistan Hotel, Port Louis and Al Shisha Lounges of Flic en Flac and Grand’Baie.

In a recent joint operation carried out by the Police and Officers of the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life at Flic en Flac tobacco smoking was controlled in public places, with particular focus on the use of waterpipes device.

A café operated by a private company was visited and couples of people smoking tobacco using devices known as “hookah” were in an enclosed smoking parlour under dim light within an internal oriental setting. Ten water pipe apparatus were found displayed for use upon the premises. The responsible officer was informed about the illegality of such businesses.

Tobacco products found on the premises and used as active ingredients in the hookahs were secured and three exhibits were taken for analysis by the Forensic Science Laboratory. Results are being awaited.

Initial statements were recorded at the Flic en Flac Police Station from the presumed offenders.

The team also visited another trade premise close to that smoking parlour and four water pipes were identified there. People were also found smoking water pipes. The owner was informed about this illegal activity and a statement was recorded from him at the Flic en Flac Police Station. Enquiry is still on.

Three exhibits presumed to be tobacco products for use in water pipes were secured for analysis.

The Ministry has been informed by the Commissioner of Police that since the coming into force of the Regulations on 01 March 2009, as at 11 November 2011, no case relating to the sale of water pipe has been established by the Police.

PLAZA THEATRE - RENOVATION

(No. A/363) **MRs L. Ribot (Third Member for Stanley & Rose Hill)** asked the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the renovation of the Plaza Theatre, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Municipal Council of Beau Bassin/Rose Hill, information as to the total sum already paid, indicating if payments have been effected to the M.A.B Ltd. on 7 September and 12 October, respectively, and if so, the reasons therefor.

Reply: I am informed by the Municipal Council of Beau Bassin-Rose Hill that the total sum already paid for the renovation of the Plaza Theatre is Rs87,255,874.51.

I am further informed that payments have been effected to the Contractor, Mamode Ally Bros Ltd as follows:

An amount of Rs3,452,785.90 on 12 September 2011 in respect of value of works executed, release of liquidated damages and amount pertaining to snag list.

A final payment of Rs3,760,000.50 on 14 October 2011 upon receipt of a bank guarantee from the Contractor.

PRIMARY SCHOOLS – RENOVATION WORKS

(No. A/364) **Mr P. Jugnauth (First Member for Quartier Militaire & Moka)** asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether, in regard to the primary schools, he will give a list thereof where renovation works have started, since January 2011 to-date, indicating in each case, the amount of money spent in relation thereto.

Reply: I am tabling the information requested by the hon. Member in the library of the National Assembly.

CWA – PIPES - REPLACEMENT

(No. A/365) Mr P. Jugnauth (First Member for Quartier Militaire & Moka) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to the replacement of pipes by the Central Water Authority, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Authority, information as to the -

- (a) localities,
- (b) regions, and
- (c) number of kilometers thereof, since January 2011 to date, indicating the amount of money spent locality wise or region wise.

Reply: With your permission I am tabling the information in the Library of the National Assembly.

NATRESA - VACANCIES

(No. A/366) Dr. S. Boolell (Second Member for Curepipe & Midlands) asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether, in regard to the National Agency for the Treatment and Rehabilitation of Substance Abusers, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Agency, information as to the number of vacancies existing thereat in the grade of -

- (a) substance abuse prevention officer;
- (b) assistant substance abuse prevention officer;
- (c) secretary of the board of the Agency;
- (d) head of the technical units;
- (e) field worker;
- (f) psychologist, indicating in each case -
 - (i) since when the post(s) is/are vacant;
 - (ii) the number of times the posts have been advertised, and
 - (iii) the reasons for the non-filling thereof.

Reply: A restructuring exercise of the NATReSA is currently being worked out in consultation with the PRB and the position as at to-date is as follows -

Sn	Post	Vacancies	Date of Vacancy	No. of times the posts have been advertised	Reasons for non-filling of vacancies
(a)	Head, Substance Abuse Prevention Unit	1	June 2003	1	<p>Post was advertised internally in June 2010. The post has not been filled in view of a proposal for the restructuring of the Agency.</p> <p>In the meantime an officer has been assigned duties at the level of Head Substance Abuse Prevention Unit.</p>
(b)	Psychologist	1	August 2008	2	<p>Post was advertised in 2006 and the selected candidate turned down the offer of employment.</p> <p>Post was re-advertised in 2008. 18 applications were received. Clearance was sought from the National Equivalence Council on the qualifications submitted by the candidates. The Council advised that the matter be referred to the University of Mauritius. The process took a long time and in the meantime it was decided to have recourse to a Psychologist on sessional basis.</p> <p>The scheme of service is being reviewed.</p>

Sn	Post	Vacancies	Date of Vacancy	No. of times the posts have been advertised	Reasons for non-filling of vacancies
(c)	Substance Abuse Prevention Officer	1	March 2007	3	<p>Post was advertised in 2007. One of the pre-requisite was 5 years experience which none of the candidates possessed.</p> <p>Post was re-advertised in September 2007. 45 applications were received. No candidate was retained for interview as none of them possess the required qualifications. Action was taken to review the scheme of service and it was recommended to wait for the publication of the PRB Report 2008</p> <p>Post was advertised for a third time in September 2009 and interviews were carried out in February 2010. A shortlist was drawn. The post has not been filled in view of the proposal for the restructuring of the Agency.</p>
(d)	Secretary	1	August 1994	-	<p>The substantive holder of the post retired in August 1994. The post has not been filled since then. Pending the restructuring exercise, the work is being carried out by the Confidential Secretary.</p> <p>The scheme of service is being reviewed in the restructuring</p>

Sn	Post	Vacancies	Date of Vacancy	No. of times the posts have been advertised	Reasons for non-filling of vacancies
					exercise.
(e)	Assistant Substance Abuse Prevention Officer	1	January 2006 (Post has been declared vacant as substantive holder of post was reported missing since that date)	2	<p>Post was advertised in March 2007. The selected candidate assumed duty on 12 October, 2007 but reverted back to her initial post on 19 October 2007.</p> <p>Post was re-advertised in September 2009 but there was no suitable candidate for the post.</p>
f)	Field Worker	2	Creation of Post in PRB August 2008	1	Applications were invited through a circular letter to the NATReSA funded Centres in May 2007. Two Fields Officers were recruited on a 2-year contract from August 2007 to August 2009. As the post was created in PRB 2008, it was decided that it be filled in after a proper selection exercise to be made through public advertisement after the scheme of service would be finalised.

The above posts will be filled in after the restructuring exercise.

BEAU BASSIN - STREET LIGHTING

(No. A/367) **Mr F. Quirin (Third Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière)** asked the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the street lighting system of the main road at the level of the Petite Rivière junction to the Gamma Civic Company, in Beau Bassin, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Municipal Council of Beau Bassin/Rose Hill, information as to if there is a lack of street lanterns thereat and that existing ones are either damaged or obstructed by overgrown trees and, if so, if remedial steps will be taken.

Reply: I am informed by the Municipal Council of Beau Basin-Rose Hill that its jurisdiction ends at Coromandel industrial zone (near the bus stop) and not at Petite Rivière.

I am informed that six street lanterns have been damaged due to accidents and about 30 street lanterns are presently obstructed by overgrown trees. In this context a letter has been sent on 27 September 2011 by the Council to the Forestry Service seeking authorisation to lop these overgrown trees, following which a site visit was conducted on 21 October 2011 by officers of the Forestry Service in presence of municipal officers.

I am informed that the authorisation of the Forestry Service is still awaited and as soon as same will be received, six new lanterns will be fixed in replacement of the damaged ones after lopping of the trees.

DR. REGIS CHAPERON SSS - REHABILITATION AND EXTENSION WORKS

(No. A/368) **Mr K. Ramano (Second Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes)** asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether, in regard to the Dr. Regis Chaperon State Secondary School, he will state where matters stand in relation to the major rehabilitation and extension works to be carried out thereat.

Reply: The proposed Rehabilitation and Extension works to Dr Regis Chaperon SSS will be carried out in two phases -

Phase I - Extension of works, and

Phase II - Renovation/Rehabilitation works.

Phase I of the project consists of the following -

- (a) a new two storey toilet block;

- (b) a new three storey specialist room block that will accommodate one laboratory each for Biology, Chemistry, Physics and two computer rooms;
- (c) a boundary wall, and
- (d) covering of the canal crossing the school compound.

Tenders in respect of Phase I were launched in February 2011 with closing date 23 March 2011. Upon notification, however, one of the unsuccessful bidders submitted in August 2011 an Application for Review to the Independent Review Panel. Consequently, procurement proceeding has been suspended pending the hearing, scheduled on 30 November 2011.

Phase II of the project consists of -

- Waterproofing works;
- Review of the whole electrical system;
- Conversion of the existing laboratories into classrooms;
- Replacement of damaged naco frames, and
- Renovation works to existing blocks including remedial works to any spalled concrete and cracks.

It is expected that tenders will be floated by February 2012 and works would start in May 2012.