



FIFTH NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

**PARLIAMENTARY
DEBATES
(HANSARD)**

**SECOND SESSION
TUESDAY 08 MAY 2012**

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Dr. the Hon. Navinchandra Ramgoolam, GCSK, FRCP	Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister for Rodrigues
Dr. the Hon. Ahmed Rashid Beebeejaun, GCSK, FRCP	Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities
Hon. Charles Gaëtan Xavier-Luc Duval, GCSK	Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development
Hon. Anil Kumar Bachoo, GOSK	Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping
Dr. the Hon. Arvin Boolell, GOSK	Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade
Dr. the Hon. Abu Twalib Kasenally, GOSK, FRCS	Minister of Housing and Lands
Hon. Mrs Sheilabai Bappoo, GOSK	Minister of Social Security, National Solidarity and Reform Institutions
Dr. the Hon. Vasant Kumar Bunwaree	Minister of Education and Human Resources
Hon. Satya Veyash Faugoo	Minister of Agro-Industry and Food Security
Hon. Devanand Virahsawmy, GOSK	Minister of Environment and Sustainable Development
Dr. the Hon. Rajeshwar Jeetah	Minister of Tertiary Education, Science, Research and Technology
Hon. Tassarajen Pillay Chedumbrum	Minister of Information and Communication Technology
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Hon. Yatindra Nath Varma	Attorney General
Hon. John Michaël Tzoun Sao Yeung Sik Yuen	Minister of Tourism and Leisure
Hon. Lormus Bundhoo	Minister of Health and Quality of Life
Hon. Sayyad Abd-Al-Cader Sayed-Hossen	Minister of Industry, Commerce and Consumer Protection
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Hon. Sutyadeo Moutia	Minister of Civil Service and Administrative Reforms

Members

Members

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Mr Speaker

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Peetumber, Hon. Maneswar

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MAURITIUS

Fifth National Assembly

SECOND SESSION

Debate No. 2 of 2012

Sitting of 08 May 2012

The Assembly met in the Assembly House, Port Louis,

At 11.30 a.m

The National Anthem was played

(Mr Speaker in the Chair)

PAPERS LAID

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

A. Prime Minister's Office –

Certificate of Urgency in respect of the following Bills –

- (a) The Sugar Insurance Fund (Amendment) Bill (No. I of 2012);
- (b) The Sugar Industry Efficiency (Amendment) Bill (No. II of 2012);

- (c) The *Université Des Mascareignes* Bill (No. III of 2012); and
- (d) The Environment and Land Use Appeal Tribunal Bill (No. IV of 2012).

B. Ministry of Finance and Economic Development –

- (a) The Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement (Republic of Zambia) Regulations 2012 (Government Notice No. 52 of 2012).
- (b) The Investment Promotion (Real Estate Development Scheme) (Amendment) Regulations 2012 (Government Notice No. 57 of 2012).
- (c) The Income Tax (Amendment of Schedule) Regulations 2012 (Government Notice No. 58 of 2012).
- (d) The Statutory Bodies Pension Funds (Amendment of Schedule) Regulations 2012 (Government Notice No. 62 of 2012).
- (e) The Digest of International Travel and Tourism Statistics 2010.

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

The Report of the Director of Audit on the Financial Statements of the Seafarer's Welfare Fund for the 18 months period ended 31 December 2010.

D. Ministry of Social Security, National Solidarity and Reforms Institutions

–

The Report of the Director of Audit on the Financial Statements of the National Solidarity Fund for the 18 months period ended 31 December 2010.

E. Ministry of Education and Human Resources –

The Annual Report 2008/2009 of the Mauritius Qualification Authority.

F. Ministry of Local Government and Outer Islands –

- (a) The Municipal Council of Beau Bassin/Rose Hill (Streets Naming) Regulations 2012 (Government Notice No. 60 of 2012).
- (b) The Advertisements Regulation (Amendment of Schedule) Regulations 2012 (Government Notice No. 59 of 2012).

G. Ministry of Industry and Commerce and Consumer Protection –

- (a) The Basmati Rice (Control of Sale) Regulations 2012 (Government Notice No. 53 of 2012).
- (b) The Consumer Protection (Control of Imports) (Amendment No. 2) Regulations 2012 (Government Notice No. 54 of 2012).
- (c) The Rodrigues Consumer Protection (Control of Price of Taxable and Non-Taxable Goods) (Amendment No. 7) Regulations 2012 (Government Notice No. 55 of 2012).
- (d) The Consumer Protection (Control of Imports) (Amendment No. 3) Regulations 2012 (Government Notice No. 56 of 2012).
- (e) The Rodrigues Consumer Protection (Control of Price of Taxable and Non-Taxable Goods) (Amendment No. 8) Regulations 2012 (Government Notice No. 61 of 2012).

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

MED POINT CLINIC – ACQUISITION

The Leader of the Opposition (Mr P. Bérenger) (*By Private Notice*) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External communications, Minister for Rodrigues whether, in regard to the Med Point clinic, he will -

- (a) state if five days prior to the 2010 general election, he authorised the tender for the acquisition of a building for the setting up of a geriatric hospital to be issued;
- (b) for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Independent Commission Against Corruption, information as to the date on which it started an inquiry thereinto, indicating –
 - (i) if it has referred same to the Director of Public Prosecutions, and
 - (ii) the date on which it applied for an attachment order and the date same was granted, and
- (c) state the measures taken, if any, for the maintenance of the building and equipment thereof.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I assume that the hon. Leader of the Opposition, who has previously held office of Prime Minister, is aware that authorisation of tender for the acquisition of any immovable property is not within the ambit of the responsibilities of the Prime Minister. Therefore, the reply to part (a) of the Question is “NO”.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I wish to refer the hon. Leader of the Opposition to the reply I made to his Private Notice Question on 22 March 2011 wherein I stated that the idea of having specialised geriatric services was first evoked as far back as the year 2000, in view of the growing number of people in Mauritius who have reached the age of 65.

This issue was once again raised by the then Chief Medical Officer, late Dr. Sungkur in 2004.

On 26 February 2010, Cabinet was informed that a sum of Rs187 m. available from the National Lotteries would be used for the implementation of 17 projects, including -

- (a) a centre for Specialised Care for Children and Women, and
- (b) a National Geriatric Hospital.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I wish to emphasise that the reference to the National Geriatric Hospital in the list of 17 projects was not, in any manner, I quote -

“in regard to the Med Point clinic”

as implied by the Leader of the Opposition in part (a) of the question.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life that the tender procedures started as from February 2010 with the preparation of the bidding documents for the acquisition of a building for the setting up of a Geriatric Hospital.

The initial bid documents to float tenders for the acquisition of a building for the setting up of a National Geriatric Hospital were sent to the Central Procurement Board on 01 March 2010.

Tenders were accordingly floated through Press Notice on 30 April 2010. In accordance with directives issued by the Procurement Policy Office, the tender documents and the invitation for bids were posted on the public procurement portal hosted and maintained by the Procurement Policy Office.

I should like to highlight the fact that the deadline for submission of bids was 03 June 2010.

Mr Speaker, Sir, it is common knowledge that the circumstances surrounding the acquisition of Med Point clinic are currently the subject of proceedings, both before the Supreme Court, the District Court and also of criminal investigation by the ICAC.

In regard to part (b) (i) of the Question, I wish to refer to the Communiqué issued by the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions on 19 April 2012 which reads as follows -

1. *Le Directeur des Poursuites Publiques souhaite apporter certaines précisions par rapport aux récents commentaires qui ont été faits dans la presse à propos de l'affaire Med Point.*
2. *Jusqu'à ce jour l'Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC) n'a transmis aucun dossier sur cette affaire au Directeur des Poursuites Publiques.*
3. *La décision de poursuivre ou de ne pas poursuivre sera prise selon les critères applicables à toute affaire criminelle, et dans le strict respect des normes constitutionnelles d'impartialité et d'indépendance.*
4. *Selon les dispositions de la section 156 (1) du Code Pénal Mauricien, constitue une infraction pénale: l'outrage fait publiquement à un officier public dans l'exercice de ses fonctions.*

I have also ascertained from the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions that as at today the inquiry has not yet been referred to the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the ICAC has provided the following information -

- (i) on 25 January 2011, the ICAC initiated an investigation on its own initiative on the acquisition of Med Point clinic by the Government for the National Geriatric Hospital project;
- (ii) the enquiry has not yet been completed and is pending the completion of defence of hon. Pravind Kumar Jugnauth;
- (iii) the latter has applied to the Supreme Court on 03 October 2010 to obtain the following documents on the ground that his defence to the charge put to him and preferred against him in court rests entirely on certain cabinet matters –

Information paper or Cabinet Memorandum submitted by the then Minister of Health, hon. Dr. R. Jeetah on 05 March 2010 with regard to the setting up of a National Geriatric Hospital;

Minutes of Proceedings of the Cabinet Meeting dated 18 June 2010 relating to the construction of hospitals, and

All documents and discussion papers relating to the construction of hospital covering period January 2010 to December 2010.

By virtue of section 47(6) of the PoCA (2002), after receipt of the opinion of the ICAC, the Director-General shall submit a Report to the Director of Public Prosecutions.

In regard to part (b) (ii) of the question, ICAC has informed that it has applied for an Attachment Order on 10 November 2011 and same was granted on 11 November 2011.

Mr Speaker, Sir, in regard to part (c) of the question, I am informed by the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life that watch keeping services are being provided on a 24-hour basis as from 29 December 2010, as well as general maintenance of the compound. According to available records, at a meeting held on 07 February 2011, a list of refurbishment works to be undertaken was identified and a survey of existing equipment and additional equipment required was made. Thereafter, on 18 February 2011, the then acting Director, Health Services advised to stay action until further notice.

Mr Bérenger: Mr Speaker, Sir, a tender notice was issued on 30 April 2010. Can I know from the hon. Prime Minister whether it is not a fact that the then Minister of Health came before Cabinet with a Cabinet Memorandum to go forward with the acquisition of a building to set up a geriatric hospital, which was issued therefore five days before the general elections? If that is the case, is the hon. Prime Minister prepared to lay in the Library a copy of the Cabinet Memorandum brought before Cabinet with his green light - therefore, a few days before the 2010 election - and a copy of the Minutes of Proceedings relating thereto?

Mr Speaker: I will have to intervene at this stage under section 22 (1) (d) of our Standing Orders. Matters relating to Cabinet are considered to be secret and it is for the Prime Minister - because he referred to a Cabinet Memorandum in his answer - to decide whether he is going to answer the question or not.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I thank you for your comments. I have explained from the very beginning that the idea of a geriatric hospital started in 2000 and then it was raised again in 2014. We had in our manifesto, in the election of 2005, specifically said that we want to build a geriatric hospital for old people and then again in the new manifesto of 2010. On 26 February, I have explained that, Mr Speaker, Sir. The whole procedure was started, Cabinet was

informed then that the sum of Rs187 m. was available from the National Lotteries. So, obviously, it is a procedure that has started and was taking place according to whatever delay they had to undergo through the procedures. That is the case.

Mr Bérenger: I know. I have been a Prime Minister as well. Obviously, there must have been a Cabinet memorandum at a given point in time to get the green light from Cabinet to go ahead with the acquisition of a building to set up a geriatric hospital. If that is the case, I put to the Prime Minister again, whatever the Official Secrets Act says and so on, he can lay a copy, if he agrees, of that Cabinet Memorandum in the Library together with the decision recorded in Cabinet.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, to buy any hospital, any property, we do not say: go and buy Med Point or go and buy X or go and buy Y. We start the procedures for buying a geriatric hospital and that is the procedure that has been followed.

Mr Bérenger: The Prime Minister won't even tell us whether there was a Cabinet Memorandum which is, according to my information. Is it not a fact that, therefore, when this issue came before Government a few days before the 2010 election that there were objections from certain Ministers that Government should not proceed with that kind of tender a few days before general elections when Parliament had already been dissolved?

The Prime Minister: First of all, let me just clarify one point. I don't believe that there was a Cabinet Memorandum to that effect as the Leader of the Opposition is saying and secondly, there was no such objection to whatever. The procedures were being followed to buy a geriatric hospital and there were, not one bid, but four bids as far as I remember.

Mr Bérenger: May I know from the hon. Prime Minister whether he is aware now of e-mails exchanged on 17 January, sent by Dr. Malhotra to the then Minister of Health, hon. Dr. Jeetah, on 17 January and the first thing he does the next day when he reaches his office on the 18 of January is order a site visit and I am laying a copy of the note which shows that. Was he aware of that or is he aware now of it?

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order now, order, order!

The Prime Minister: This is the subject of an enquiry. The former Minister of Health...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order!

The Prime Minister: The former Minister of Health has been questioned by ICAC on this matter and the matter rests with the ICAC. This will go to the DPP eventually, I hope.

Mr Bérenger: Was he made aware or has he been since made aware by the then Minister of Health of how many times he met Dr. Malhotra and the date on which he met Dr. Malhotra?

(Interruptions)

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, that would be a question that should be answered by the ICAC. There is an investigation going on and, as I have said, they have already questioned the hon. Minister unlike what some people were thinking that he has not been questioned. He has actually been questioned by ICAC. But what is also important to note, Mr Speaker, Sir - I think I mentioned it at one point – is that the deadline for the submission of bids was on 03 June 2010. That has been extended without the proper procedures being followed, from what I understood.

Mr Bérenger: Can the hon. Prime Minister tell us in fact how many times that issue of the acquisition of a building Med Point to set up a geriatric hospital – does he have the facts - has been raised under his chairmanship in Cabinet?

Mr Speaker: No, I will not allow this question.

(Interruptions)

Discussion in Cabinet is of a secret nature. This is our Standing Orders, I will not allow this question, otherwise, I am going to set a very bad precedent in this House.

(Interruptions)

Order!

Mr Bérenger: If I can move on ...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: I said order! I said order, now!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Bhagwan, order!

(Interruptions)

Mr Bérenger: Can we have some quiet, Mr Speaker, Sir ?

Mr Speaker: Hon. Bhagwan, you started it, keep quiet!

(Interruptions)

I said order, now! There is no need to have that kind of heat in the House for the time being.

Mr Bérenger: Therefore, ICAC started that enquiry a year and a half ago by now, Mr Speaker, Sir. Can I know whether ICAC has taken a statement from the Prime Minister himself?

Mr Speaker: I will have here to intervene and refer to ...

(Interruptions)

I will have here to intervene and refer to a ruling which was given by this House on 13 April 2004 when a question was addressed to the then Prime Minister and the Prime Minister said that he has received legal advice and therefore he was not going to intervene, according to the Act of Parliament, into the matters of ICAC. Further questions were put to him and he said -

“I stand by the advice which the State Law Office has given to me.”

(Interruptions)

Order, I said...

(Interruptions)

I am just applying a precedent of the House and the Speaker agreed with the stand of the then Prime Minister.

(Interruptions)

Order now!

(Interruptions)

Order now!

Mr Bérenger: In spite of what you just said, you have just allowed the hon. Prime Minister to say that ICAC took a statement from the then Minister of Health. This, you allowed ...

Mr Speaker: Yes, I am applying a ruling which was given. I cannot go against the ruling of the House.

(Interruptions)

I am sorry! I might have missed the question at that time.

(Interruptions)

Mr Bérenger: You missed in his case and in my case you noticed. Shame!

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: I am not going to be dictated by the Leader of the Opposition!

(Interruptions)

If that continues ...

(Interruptions)

Mr Berenger: Shame on you! Can I know from the hon. Prime Minister whether ...

Nanien zot pan kapav dire, ban bourik! Nanien!

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order, order! Let me remind this House that previously when questions were put on ICAC, Ministers of this House refused to answer because there was an enquiry going on by ICAC.

Mr Bérenger: Well, the whole country knows now what you allowed the hon. Prime Minister to say a few minutes ago. Can the hon. Prime Minister tell us whether the Chief Government Valuer *a retrouvé la mémoire* by now and if yes, whether fresh statement has been taken from him?

Mr Speaker: That also is the matter of....

(Interruptions)

It is a matter concerning the ICAC and it is for ICAC - it is for the Parliamentary Committee to find out.

Mr Bérenger: Can I know whether the Chief Government Valuer is still suspended or whether disciplinary action has been taken against him?

The Prime Minister: From my understanding, he is still suspended, Mr Speaker, Sir, but they are trying to see if there is a way of doing otherwise but, at the moment, he is still suspended.

Mr Bérenger: Can I know, if I move on to the next question, on 09 November the hon. Minister of Finance was replying to a PNQ and he said that legal advice had been received, that there was no possibility of having an attachment order placed in this whole issue. Can I know from the hon. Prime Minister - he gives us the dates - why has neither Government nor ICAC moved earlier before that was raised here?

The Prime Minister: I think, I answered that question previously, Mr Speaker, Sir; according to the information I have, ICAC had to interview Dr. Malhotra first and they went to London to interview him first. Then, they proceeded with the attachment order.

Mr Bérenger: Can I ask the hon. Prime Minister whether the attachment order referred to has been renewed, how many times, and until when is it valid?

The Prime Minister: My understanding is that it is still valid and I am sure that it will be renewed if it has to be renewed.

Mr Bérenger: As far as the equipment and building are concerned, does the hon. Prime Minister have any kind of figure of recurrent expenditure being spent on the building and on the so-called equipment?

The Prime Minister: From what I understand, I think that the Director of Health Services has asked for a stay of action until further notice.

Mr Bérenger: May I know from the hon. Prime Minister when was the last visit by the health authorities effected?

The Prime Minister: That, the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life would be able to say, but my understanding, as I said, according to available records, a meeting was held on 07 February 2011, a list of refurbishment works to be undertaken was identified and a survey of the existing equipment and additional equipment required was made but, thereafter, the Ag. Director of Health Services advised to stay action until further notice.

Mr Bérenger: Before we move on, if you will allow me, the hon. Minister of Finance and Economic Development again, replying the PNQ on 09 November 2011, had expressed the hope at one point, I quote -

“...until the whole matter is sorted out, everybody takes its share or perhaps, more thankfully, Government gets its money back and gives the clinic back.”

Can I know from the hon. Prime Minister whether any progress has been achieved in that direction since the hon. Minister of Finance and Economic Development made that statement on 09 November 2011?

The Prime Minister: That is still our hope, Mr Speaker, Sir. As I have explained, there is the attachment order. Now, we have to wait until the investigation is over.

Mr Bérenger: The attachment order, as the hon. Prime Minister is aware, is on Rs120 m. stuck in a bank. Can I know what has happened to the Rs25 m. that was already paid out and whether there is any possibility of recouping that?

The Prime Minister: My understanding is that the attachment order is for Rs129 m. and not Rs120 m. My understanding is that it is for Rs129 m. The rest, Mr Speaker, Sir, there was an overdraft of Rs5.7 m. which has been taken by the State Bank and there was also Rs15.5 m. which was due to be given to Mrs Shalini Jugnauth Malhotra and this has already been cashed.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order! Hon. Jugnauth!

Mr Jugnauth: May I know from the hon. Prime Minister whether...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order! I have got only five minutes left!

Mr Jugnauth: May I know from the hon. Prime Minister whether he has presided over a meeting on 18 June 2010 whereby the issue of Med Point was fully discussed?

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, there have been questions about why prices have been increased from whatever it was to Rs144 m., practically doubled.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Bhagwan!

Mr Bhagwan: From what we understand from the hon. Prime Minister, the Chief Government Valuer is still interdicted. Is the hon. Prime Minister aware that that person is having access to his office nearly daily and is also allowed...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order! Listen to the question!

Mr Bhagwan: He is also authorised to do private works for Parastatal Bodies and Government companies, if not Government, also?

The Prime Minister: The hon. Member has to put a substantial question to the House. How can I answer that question!

(Interruptions)

Mr Bodha: Mr Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Prime Minister whether, at some point in time, the former Minister of Health and Quality of Life contemplated a direct sale and that officers advised that it would be proper to go by tender?

The Prime Minister: I believe that is absolutely not true. In fact, if you look at the documents, there are three things that are striking in the document, Mr Speaker, Sir. Concerning the bidding documents, Med Point does not satisfy the specifications, first of all, on the area. The area required was 4,500 to 6,500 square metres whereas the report of the Ministry of Housing and Lands indicated only an area of 3,902 square metres. Therefore, there was a shortfall in the area itself of 600 square metres. The other point is that the tender document had to be for a distance of 3 kms and not 1 km. If it had been tailor-made they would have put 1 km.

Thirdly, the document did not restrict it to any specific region which may have favoured Med Point or whatever. It was meant to be in the vicinity of any of the five regional hospitals.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order! Keep quiet! Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: The hon. Prime Minister has just mentioned that the bid was not compliant with the tender requirements.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order!

Mr Uteem: The hon. Prime Minister has just mentioned that the bid was not compliant with the tender requirements. May I know from the hon. Prime Minister what action does his Government intend to take to rescind the contract awarded to Med Point?

(Interruptions)

The Prime Minister: As I have just explained, Mr Speaker, Sir,...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order!

The Prime Minister: I have myself given those details to show that it was never tailor-made. Furthermore, the other discrepancies as I mentioned, the submission of the proposals were meant to be for up to 03 June 2010 and there is no provision in the PPA regarding revalidation of bids. That is also something that is being enquired into.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Leader of the Opposition!

Mr Bérenger: I have two questions, Mr Speaker, Sir,

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: No cross-talking, please!

Mr Bérenger: Mr Speaker, Sir, on 31 May replying to a PNQ from me, the hon. Prime Minister replied; my point was that we need to amend the declaration of assets and liabilities of Members of Parliament and also, to include people like the Chief Government Valuer for his assets to be covered. On that occasion responding to my questions, the hon. Prime Minister said

-

“If the law requires to be amended following such consultations, this will be done at the earliest opportunity.”

Later on when I insisted on the need for urgent amendments he replied, I quote -

“That’s what I said, Mr Speaker, Sir. In fact, as I said, I believe there have been consultations between your office and ICAC. I think it should not take that long, and we could then bring the amendments that need to be made.”

Can I know why, therefore, a year later nothing has been done and those urgent amendments have not been brought before the House?

The Prime Minister: The reason is very simple. There were lots of consultations, I believe, from your office as well, Mr Speaker, Sir. We want to make it even tighter and that is what they were looking at different options, including other things in that declaration of assets.

Mr Bérenger: The ICAC enquiry started a year and a half ago. When we discussed the attachment order, when the hon. Minister of Finance and Economic Development replied to my Private Notice Question on 09 November 2011, at one point we reached unanimity in the House and, therefore, the hon. Minister said - yes, he would transmit to ICAC, with due respect to the independence of ICAC, but the unanimous wish of the House for an attachment order to be requested. Can I know with the hon. Prime Minister whether he will agree to us informing ICAC - with due respect to the independence of ICAC - that one and a half years after it started there is a unanimous wish here that this enquiry be completed, everybody to give statements and the file to be forwarded to the Director of Public Prosecutions as soon as possible.

(Interruptions)

The Prime Minister: It is noteworthy to note....

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Let the answer come now! We have listened to the question; let us listen to the answer!

The Prime Minister: It is good to note, Mr Speaker, Sir, that nothing was done when the previous hon. Minister of Finance was there. Nothing was done to try to have ...

(Interruptions)

It is only when this hon. Minister of Finance discovered that this was done.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Let me listen to the answer, please!

(Interruptions)

Order!

(Interruptions)

The Prime Minister: It is only when the actual hon. Minister of Finance...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Can you stop talking!

(Interruptions)

Can you stop talking, please!

(Interruptions)

The Prime Minister: It is interesting, as I said Mr Speaker, Sir, to note why there was no attachment order. Then, it is only after the actual hon. Minister of Finance took over that an attachment order was done. There is an inquiry going on. The attachment order is there. It will be renewed if need be; when the time comes, if the time comes and also, then they will be able to proceed. That is known already.

Mr Speaker: Time is over! The Table has been advised

(Interruptions)

Order now! Order now, please. The Table has been advised that Parliamentary Question Nos. B/13, B/14 and B/15 have been withdrawn. PQ No. B/20 addressed to Dr. the hon. Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities will be replied by Dr. the hon. Prime Minister if time permits. Questions addressed to Dr. the hon. Prime Minister! Hon. Mrs Navarre-Marie!

CHAGOS ARCHIPELAGO - UK ALL PARLIAMENTARY GROUP – WORLD HERITAGE SITES

(No. B/1) Mrs A. Navarre-Marie (First Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister for Rodrigues whether he will state if he is aware of the proposal of the UK All Parliamentary Group to include the Chagos Archipelago on the list of world heritage sites on the occasion of the 40th anniversary of the UNESCO Convention on the Protection of the World Cultural and National Heritage and, if so, indicate the stand of Government.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed that the Chairman of the Chagos Islands All-Party Parliamentary Group wrote on 08 February 2012 to the UK Foreign Secretary to convey the proposal of the All-Party Parliamentary Group that the Chagos Archipelago be nominated for inclusion on the World Heritage List in the context of the 40th anniversary of the UNESCO Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage.

The All-Party Parliamentary Group also asked the UK Government to explore with Mauritius and the Chagossians a way of taking its proposal forward so that a nomination could be made before the 40th anniversary of the Convention on 16 November 2012.

As soon as my attention was drawn to this issue, I had consultations with our Legal Advisers to be able to respond in case the UK Government decides to do so. Our position is that Government cannot and will not support the proposal of the Chagos Islands All-Party Parliamentary Group. It is clear that any proposal for the inclusion of the Chagos Archipelago on the World Heritage List at the initiative of any country or group other than the Republic of Mauritius would be inconsistent with the sovereignty of Mauritius over the Chagos Archipelago.

I have been given to understand that the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office subsequently wrote to the Chairman of the Chagos Islands All-Party Parliamentary Group indicating that following an extensive policy review, the Department for Culture Media and Sport announced a new Tentative List in 2011. 38 sites submitted applications for a place on the UK Tentative List and following the advice of an Expert Panel, 11 were selected, including three nominations from the Overseas Territories (Gibraltar, St. Helena and Turks & Caicos Islands). The new List was submitted to UNESCO in February 2012 and is expected to last for a 10-year period and that the UK Tentative List is therefore closed.

Mr Bérenger: Mr Speaker, Sir, I agree fully with the attitude adopted by Government, but the Chairperson of the Chagos Island APPG, hon. Jeremy Corbyn means well for both the Chagossians and for Mauritius as well. Can I know from the hon. Prime Minister whether he has been informed of the principal stand of Mauritius in that matter?

The Prime Minister: Our stand is that we are not agreeable at all. Everything is a disguised way of going around the MPA. It is very similar to what they have done to the MPA. As I said, Mr Speaker, Sir, it has to be looked at in the context of sovereignty. Any proposal for the inclusion of the Chagos Archipelago on the World Heritage site at the initiative of any country or any group other than the Republic of Mauritius would be inconsistent with the sovereignty of Mauritius over the Chagos Archipelago.

Mr Bérenger: There is one point that I don't agree with the hon. Prime Minister; equating Jeremy Corbyn with the former Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Mr Miliband. We are dealing with two sorts of people. My point was: is it not worthy informing Mr Jeremy Corbyn in his capacity as Chairperson of the All-Party Parliamentary Group of the very stand of

Mauritius, informing him that we object to anybody else except Mauritius raising such an issue and so on.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, we are looking at what Government would do. They haven't put this on the list and it is closed for a ten-year period. We would think that this is the end of the matter, but I presume that he might already know about our position.

Mr Speaker: Next question, hon. Ramano!

ELECTORAL REFORM - PROFESSOR CARCASSONNE REPORT

(No. B/2) **Mr K. Ramano (Second Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes)** asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister for Rodrigues whether, in regard to the Report of Professor Carcassonne on electoral reform, he will –

- (a) give a breakdown of the expenses incurred for the production thereof, and
- (b) state the recommendations thereof, indicating the time frame, if any, fixed for the implementation of a new electoral system.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, as hon. Members will be aware, in line with the Government Programme 2010-2015, a team of constitutional experts headed by Professor Guy Carcassonne and comprising Professor Vernon Bogdanor and Professor Pere Vilanova Trias was constituted in September last to make proposals for the reform of our electoral system.

Professor Guy Carcassonne is a French constitutional expert of international repute. He is the holder of a post-graduate degree in Public Law and Political Science and a PhD in Law. He has been teaching constitutional and administrative Law, among others, at the "*L'Université Paris Ouest Nanterre*" and at "*L'Université de Reims*". He has also been a Legal Adviser to the then French Prime Minister from 1988 to 1991. He was appointed as Member of the *Commission de réflexion sur la réforme du mode de scrutin* in 1992. He also formed part of the *Commission de réflexion sur la réforme du statut pénal du Président de la République*.

Professor Bogdanor is a Professor of Government at Oxford University and Visiting Professor of Constitutional History at King's College, London.

Dr. Vilanova is a Professor of Political Science and Public Policy at the Department of Constitutional Law and Political Science at the University of Barcelona, Spain.

The three experts have wide experience in electoral reforms and are frequently consulted by foreign Governments and international organisations on constitutional issues.

The terms of reference of Professor Carcassonne's team were as follows –

- To make proposals for a reform of our electoral system with the following objectives -
 - (i) ***Stability and need to secure effective Government -***
An election should allow the emergence of a majority and it is for the electorate to choose the people by whom they wish to be governed;
 - (ii) ***Fairness -***
The proposals should address and correct the inordinate imbalances created by the First-Past-the-Post system which has frequently produced results which were grossly disproportionate to the share of votes obtained by the different parties;
 - (iii) ***Diversity -***
The electoral system should ensure a fair representation of all the different components of the Mauritian population in Parliament, and
 - (iv) ***Gender balance -***
The under representation of women in Parliament must be addressed. The proposals should aim to eventually move towards parity between men and women.

Professor Carcassonne submitted his Report to me on 18 December 2011.

Professor Carcassonne has not claimed any fee for the Report. The two other team members, namely Professor Bogdanor and Professor Villanova have been paid a fee of 15,100 Euros and 15,300 Euros, respectively.

In regard to part (b) of the question, I wish to inform the hon. Member that Professor Carcassonne also personally remitted a copy of his Report to the Leader of the Opposition on the same day, that is, on 18 December 2011. Furthermore, the Report was made public on the very day on which it was received. The recommendations contained therein are therefore already in the public domain.

Regarding the reform of our electoral system, I would invite the hon. Member to refer to paragraphs 1 to 4 of Chapter 5 of the new Government Programme 2012-2015 on Constitutional Reform. Let me quote the relevant parts thereof for the information of the hon. Member.

I quote -

- “1. *Retooling for the future requires a review of our Constitutional regime. We now have experience of our Constitutional Framework spanning over 44 years. In the light of this, we should, as a nation look at what works and what needs to be improved including reforms of our electoral system and the financing of political parties.*
Government will ensure that the country has an electoral system which is more equitable and which promotes nation building and provides for better representation of women.
2. *The constitutional review will also look at the powers and mode of election of the President. Under our present Constitution, a President who does not derive his legitimacy directly from the people but from the National Assembly and is nominated by the Prime Minister can, in breach of established conventions, abuse this position to thwart the will of the elected Government. We have to ensure that there is no abuse of a privileged position to tarnish the reputation of our country and of our institutions and to impinge on the democratic process.*
3. *Constitutional reform requires the buy-in of the people at large and cannot be decided by the political class alone.*
4. *Government will introduce new enabling legislation providing for the people to be consulted by way of referendum on major constitutional and other issues.”*

Mr Speaker, Sir, the House will certainly appreciate that the reactions and suggestions in the wake of the Carcassonne’s Report have contributed significantly to enrich and move forward the debate on electoral reform and has at the same time demonstrated the complexity of the exercise. Constitutional and electoral reforms are never an easy task as some tend to believe.

As I have repeatedly said, Mr Speaker, Sir, whatever system we would eventually opt for, it will have to ensure that all the components of our rainbow nation find their rightful place in Parliament. No community should feel ostracized from the democratic process. The aim is to strengthen democracy not to weaken it.

The Carcassonne’s Report will certainly be useful in the process of constitutional self-examination on which we are embarked, as there are some worthwhile suggestions in the Report.

Government intends to pursue the discussions and consultations with Constitutional Experts and will then introduce a Bill for Electoral Reform.

Mr Ramano: M. le président, il y a eu le rapport SACHS, le rapport Collendavelloo, le rapport Carcassonne ou encore le rapport Sithanen. Ne sommes-nous pas prêts d'élaborer un projet de loi à être soumis au Parlement, vu qu'il y a maintenant consensus sur la question?

The Prime Minister: There is no consensus on the action. That is why I said we can't go on discussing. We are going to finalise it and then bring a Bill to Parliament and Members will be able to vote whether they want it or not.

Mr Ameer Meea: Mr Speaker, Sir, in light of the recommendation of the Report of Professor Carcassonne, where it clearly spelt out, the abolition of the best loser system, can I ask the hon. Prime Minister whether he is against or for the abolition of the best loser system?

(Interruptions)

It is in the recommendation.

Mr Speaker: The hon. Member is asking the hon. Prime Minister for an opinion which is not allowed under the Standing Order. Yes, hon. Jugnauth!

Mr Jugnauth: The hon. Prime Minister recently stated that during one of his recent visits to England, he had consulted other English experts on this issue. May we know the names of the experts who have been consulted and whether they have been requested to work on any other report or any other aspect of that report with regard to electoral reform?

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, in fact, there was another question – I'm trying to find it where we have the names. I might have the names with me. First of all, Mr Speaker, Sir, I am not trying to give an opinion but just trying to correct a misunderstanding. Professor Carcassonne does not recommend the abolition of the best loser system. He recommends the integration of the best loser system in the new system.

As for the names of the consultants that I met in London, I will give you the names. Lord Phillip Norton, who is a Professor of Government at Hull University and a well-known constitutional expert; he has written so many books. Dr. Michael Bruter, who is a radiant Political Scientist of the London School of Economics and currently leads Europe largest projects in an electoral psychology. He worked as a consultant for prestigious political organisations such as the European Union and the Council of Europe. Dr. Sarah Harisson, who is a Research Officer at the London School of Economics and Political Science, Professor

Michael Pinto-Duschinsky, who is an MA from Cornell, a PhD in Oxford, President of the International Political Science Association Research Committee on Political Finance and Political Corruption and Director of the International Foundation for Electoral Systems. I believe he has also been in Mauritius in the past. Mr Charles Lasham, Country Director of the International Foundation for Electoral Systems, Mr Simon Gylan, Head of Content and Director of International Programs in International Centre for parliamentary studies, Managing Editor for a Government Gazette Magazine. Mr Magnus Smidadt, nine years' experience working for a non-governmental organisation, specialising in democracy and elections and electoral reform society in a varied role and compassing research, public policy administration and events organisations. That meeting was not organised by me specifically, but it was organised because they knew about the discussion that was going on and they wanted to contribute to that discussion.

I understand also that they intend to come to Mauritius, maybe not all of them, but some of them intend to come to Mauritius on their own, not at our request, to have a debate with stakeholders whoever might be interested. That is my understanding.

Mr Bérenger: I heard the hon. Prime Minister say that a Bill on electoral reform will be forthcoming. Can I know from the hon. Prime Minister whether work on that Bill has started at the State Law Office or whether we are still in the context of general consultations?

The Prime Minister: No, work has not started yet. We are at the stage of general consultations although I do not believe that there should be that many consultations. We want to bring a Bill to Parliament and let the Members decide on what they want to do.

Mr Speaker: Next question, hon. Lesjongard!

ELECTORAL BOUNDARIES COMMISSION – REPORT

(No. B/3) Mr G. Lesjongard (Second Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister for Rodrigues whether, in regard to the Report of the Electoral Boundaries Commission on the Review of the Boundaries of the Constituencies 2009, tabled on 10 October 2009, he will state when a motion in relation thereto will be introduced in the Assembly.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, in my replies to a PNQ on 21 November 2009 and to PQ Nos. B/73 on 30 March 2010 and 1B/690 on 30 November 2010 on this matter, I

mentioned the legal and administrative complexities inherent in the recommendations of the Report of the Electoral Boundaries Commission and I also spoke about the sensitive nature of the matter. I also stressed that it would be unwise for Government to rush a resolution in Parliament without a thorough, dispassionate and extremely careful study of the implications and a rigorous preparation of the related legislative amendments.

Furthermore, as I explained earlier in my reply to PQ No. B/2, Government stands committed to the reform of our electoral system as announced in the Government Programme 2012-2015.

As the electoral reform which is under way may have a bearing on electoral boundaries, it would be premature at this stage to specify a date for coming forward with a motion before the electoral reform proposals are finalised.

Mr Lesjongard: Mr Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Prime Minister whether he is aware that on two occasions when such reports were laid on the Table of the House, debates were held less than two weeks later, whereas in 1999, it took nine months for a Motion to be debated, and for the last report, we are still awaiting the Motion to be debated, and our Constitution has it that the review has to take place every 10 years. We are almost nearing 13 years, Mr Speaker, Sir.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, the Constitution says the review has to be held every 10 years. That's all it says.

(Interruptions)

Every 10 years, the review was made; it has not been debated in Parliament. As I explained, Mr Speaker, Sir, it might be an exercise which will have to be redone if we go ahead with the electoral reform and the Bill will come to the House and then we will bring in the Motion accordingly. It might have to be reviewed; that is the whole reason.

Mr Lesjongard: May I ask then the hon. Prime Minister what guarantee do we have that reforms will be coming before the end of his mandate?

The Prime Minister: Well, I can give that guarantee. The Bill will come. Whether the reform will come, I don't know, but the Bill will come.

RESISTANS EK ALTERNATIV V/S THE GOVERNMENT OF MAURITIUS

– PRIVY COUNCIL – FEES

(No. B/4) Mrs S. Hanoomanjee (Second Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister

for Rodrigues whether, in regard to the case brought before the Privy Council by *Resistans ek Alternativ* v/s the Government of Mauritius in relation to the declaration by a candidate standing for election of the ethnic group to which he/she belongs, he will state the -

- (a) names of the legal representatives who appeared for the Government of Mauritius, indicating the fees paid in each case, and
- (b) total costs incurred by Government to defend the case.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I shall reply to PQ Nos. B/4 and B/7 together as they relate to the same matter.

The case of Dany Sylvie Marie and Dhojaven Vencadsamy & Others v/s The Electoral Commissioner, The Electoral Supervisory Commission and The State of Mauritius (also known as the “*Resistans ek Alternativ*” Case) was heard before the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council in London on 25 and 26 October of last year.

The Electoral Commissioner and the State of Mauritius were represented by Mr Geoffrey Cox QC, assisted by Ms Puneet Rai of Thomas More Chambers and Mrs Aruna Narain, Parliamentary Counsel, instructed by Mrs Feroza Moolna, Chief State Attorney. Mr Cox QC and Ms Rai were paid a total fee of £25,000 with respect to pre-trial conferences and preparation for and appearance in the case.

The Chairman of the Electoral Supervisory Commission (ESC) also attended the hearing.

Expenses incurred in relation to attendance at the hearing by the Chairman of the Electoral Supervisory Commission, the Parliamentary Counsel and the Chief State Attorney amounted to Rs829,901.

The ESC was represented by Sir Hamid Moollan QC and members of his Chambers who have been paid a total amount of Rs1,725,000 which includes payment of fees for pre-trial conferences, return airfares and expenses. Mr A. Rajah, Senior Attorney has been paid a total fee of Rs130,765.50 for acting as instructing Attorney in the matter.

I wish to point out that although the application for special leave was set aside by the Judicial Committee, Government decided to waive the costs to the tune of £25,000 in view of the question of far-reaching public importance raised by the applicants.

Mr Bérenger: Can I know from the hon. Prime Minister, the case was not for the abolition of the Best Loser System, but for the abolition of the requirement that candidates should declare their community. Now, can the hon. Prime Minister explain because recently,

these recent months he has been saying that he is against candidates having to declare their community, then why did Government oppose the move by *Resistans ek Alternativ*? Why did Government oppose when the Prime Minister says he is in favour of what *Resistans ek Alternativ* was proposing?

The Prime Minister: That is very simple, Mr Speaker. This is the law as it is. So, we have to oppose it because this is the law as it is. Once the law is changed, and hopefully it will be changed, that will be a different issue.

Mr Speaker: The Table has just been advised that Parliamentary Question No. B/5 has been withdrawn.

MON CHOISY PUBLIC BEACH - MR D. C. - INCIDENT

(No. B/5) Mr P. Jhugroo (First Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister for Rodrigues whether, in regard to an incident involving one Mr D. C., which occurred at the Mon Choisy Public Beach, on or about Tuesday 17 January 2012, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to if –

- (a) the said Mr D. C., was arrested and detained on the same day and, if not, why not, and
- (b) an inquiry has been carried out thereinto and if so, the outcome thereof, indicating the charges, if any, lodged against him.

(Withdrawn)

QUATRE BORNES -- HAWKERS - INCIDENT

(No. B/6) Mr P. Jhugroo (First Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister for Rodrigues whether, in regard to an incident involving hawkers which occurred, on or about Monday 20 December 2011, at Quatre Bornes, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to if an inquiry has been carried out thereinto and, if so, the outcome thereof, indicating if –

- (a) any Member of the National Assembly came on spot and intervened therein, and

- (b) Police Officers were transferred as a consequence thereof, and if so, indicate the number thereof.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that following complaints about illegal hawkers trading in the vicinity of the market fair at Quatre Bornes, two Police officers were on foot patrol on 20 December 2011 along Royal Road, St Jean, Quatre Bornes to prevent and detect offences, including illegal hawking. They came across a private van which was parked on the left side of the road while facing La Louise and the owner was selling “Briani”.

One of the Police Officers asked one Mr N.L, the owner of the van to produce his trade licence, but, instead of producing the document, Mr N.L used insulting and filthy words to the address of the Police officer. He was informed that he would be charged for ‘*Molesting a Public Functionary*’ and ‘*Trading without Licence*’ and he responded in an abusive manner by saying that he would be willing to pay the contravention. He even refused to give his name and address. His identity was later on disclosed through his driving licence.

The Police enquiry in these two cases have been completed and the cases have been lodged before Lower Plaines Wilhems Court and is coming Pro Forma on 29 May of this year.

In regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed that a Member of the National Assembly was, at the time of the incident, passing by and enquired about the reason of the Police officers on the spot.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order! Order!

The Prime Minister: After receiving the explanation given by the Police officers, the hon. Member left the place.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order! Order, please!

The Prime Minister: In regard to part (b) of the question, the Commissioner of Police is responsible for the daily administration of the Force, and has the prerogative to carry out transfers whenever necessary, and that in the interest and exigencies of the service.

Mr Jhugroo: Are you aware hon. Prime Minister that one of the Police officers mentioned in a statement recorded in the Occurrence Book of Quatre Bornes of what was uttered by the hon. Member? Let me quote -

« Sept gardes finn pouss enn marchand. Ala enkor deux pe vini, pe fer neuf. Mo donn ou permission continuer vann ou briani. Personn pa pou kapav fer ou narien. Garde dans Quatres Bornes pa pe fer zott travay koman bizin. Ena prostitués partout, zott pa arreter.»

Can I ask the hon. Prime Minister whether this is not a case of conflict of interest and whether this case should not be referred to ICAC?

Mr Speaker: I do sympathise with the hon. Member for having put this question, but I must draw his attention to Standing Order 40 subsection 5, namely the conduct of a Member of the House cannot be put in question, unless he comes with a substantive motion. If the hon. Member feels very strongly about this, he can have a motion presented to the House.

(Interruptions)

Order now!

Mr Jhugroo: I have more supplementary questions for the hon. Prime Minister. Does the hon. Prime Minister encourage hon. Members to intervene in the performance of duties of public officers?

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order! I do not think that this is a right question to be put, asking the Prime Minister whether he encourages Members of Parliament to commit offences. The hon. Member should rephrase his question.

Mr Jhugroo: Mr Speaker, it was mentioned by the hon. Prime Minister in the past that he will not tolerate this. So, for this reason, I am asking today whether he is encouraging what is happening at Quatre Bornes.

Mr Speaker: Yes, Prime Minister!

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, a lot of lies have been said about this case. If the hon. Member wants to go into the details, I can go into the details. There were nine Police officers there. The Woman Police Constable did not record the incident at the time. In fact, if you look at the Entry Book, the incident already happened when she was leaving the station, first of all. Then she spoke to a journalist and she went and put that...

Mr Speaker: The question is very simple: does the hon. Prime Minister encourage his MPs to do that type of things. That is the question.

The Prime Minister: My answer to that is no because all these are lies. In fact, it is a conspiracy to get....

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order now, please!

Mr Jhugroo: Can the hon. Prime Minister...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order, please! I am sorry. I want some discipline in the House. Hon. Jhugroo!

Mr Jhugroo: Can the hon. Prime Minister....

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: I would not allow that. The hon. Prime Minister has said 'conspiracy'. I don't know whether there is a conspiracy or not. If there is conspiracy, the Police have to start an inquiry.

(Interruptions)

Order, Order!

Mr Jhugroo: Can the hon. Prime Minister confirm that the Woman Inspector or Police officer, Mrs Kistnen, has been transferred to Metropolitan Police Division North as from 10 January 2012 and Sergeant Gopal to the Special Supporting Unit on 31 December? Can I ask the Prime Minister whether there have been any adverse reports against these two officers and whether this is not a punitive transfer of what happened at Quatre Bornes?

The Prime Minister: It appears, Mr Speaker, Sir, that there have been a lot of complaints in that area, that they are not doing enough for illegal hawkers, for prostitution and for other matters. The Commissioner of Police has looked into it. Those who are responsible have to, but that is a matter for the Commissioner of Police to decide. As you know, the Constitution is very clear. For administrating the day-to-day running of the Police, it is not for the Prime Minister, it is for the Commissioner of Police to decide.

Mr Lesjongard: May I ask the hon. Prime Minister whether, in this present case, there has not been a breach of section 9 of the POCA, that is, related influencing public officials whereby it is stated that -

'9. Influencing public official

Any person who exercises any form of violence, or pressure by means of threat, upon a public official, with a view to the performance, by that public official, of any act in the execution of his functions or duties, or the non-performance, by that public official, of any such act, shall commit an offence (...)'.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Lesjongard, here again, you are asking for the legal opinion of the Prime Minister. This is not allowed.

Mr Bérenger: The hon. Prime Minister informed us earlier on that the case is before the court and, therefore, that the Director of Public Prosecutions must have decided that there is a case to be set before the court. Later on, he said that it was all a conspiracy against hon. Ms Deerpalsing. Is he imputing motives and saying that the Director of Public Prosecutions has conspired in a case of conspiracy?

The Prime Minister: No, no, that is not what I said.

Mr Speaker: I think I will have to make my position clear on this issue. The Prime Minister mentioned a case of conspiracy and it is for the Police to enquire whether there is a case of conspiracy or not. This was my position. This is why I said it has to be enquired by the Police. Yes, hon. Bhagwan!

Mr Bhagwan: Is the hon. Prime Minister aware that this is not the first case where hon. Ms Deerpalsing is involved against abuse of power with Police officers...

(Interruptions)

I am not finished...

Mr Speaker: Hon. Bhagwan, please! You are again coming by saying whether it is not the first case that the hon. Member has been committing an abuse of power as a Member of Parliament. It is stated in the Standing Orders that if an hon. Member wants to challenge the conduct or criticise the conduct of a Member of Parliament, he has to come with a substantive motion under section 40 (5). The hon. Member should rephrase the question, if possible.

Mr Bhagwan: Is the hon. Prime Minister aware that this is not the first case where a Member of the Labour Party is involved in abuse of power with Police officers? I, myself, had raised the issue prior to 2010, and thereafter, and the hon. Prime Minister gave the assurance that

he won't tolerate anybody interfering with Police matters. This is a clear case where innocent Police officers have been transferred.

Mr Speaker: The hon. Member is making a statement now.

Mr Bhagwan: No, I am not making a statement. I am asking the hon. Prime Minister...

Mr Speaker: Let the hon. Prime Minister answer to the question!

Mr Bhagwan: ...whether there is a sense of justice in him as Prime Minister...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order!

The Prime Minister: There is, of course, a sense of justice.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order! Order!

The Prime Minister: The hon. Member must look at the connections, who is related to whom and then he will find the answer.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Time is over!

(Interruptions)

Order! Order now!

(Interruptions)

Order! Order!

(Interruptions)

Order, I said! Order! Hon. Bhagwan, order, please!

(Interruptions)

Order! Order, please!

(Interruptions)

If that continues, I am going to suspend the sitting.

(Interruptions)

I am going to suspend the sitting if that continues!

Questions addressed to hon. Ministers! Hon. Quirin!

(Interruptions)

Order, now!

(Interruptions)

I would like to have some order and silence in the House.

RESISTANS EK ALTERNATIV – PRIVY COUNCIL – EXPENSES

(No. B/7) Mr A. Ameer Meea (First Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister for Rodrigues whether, in regard to the recent case brought before the Privy Council by *Resistans ek Alternativ*, he will state the expenses incurred by Government in the defence thereof.

(Vide reply to PQ No. B/4)

NATIONAL SPORTS AWARDS 2011 – INCOME AND EXPENDITURE

(No. B/16) Mr F. Quirin (Third Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether, in regard to the organisation of the National Sports Awards 2011, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Mauritius Sports Council, information as to the –

- (a) income and expenditure therefor;
- (b) names of the sponsors, indicating in each case, the amount of money received;
- (c) composition of the panel which selected the nominees, indicating the criteria used therefor, and
- (d) list of the voters, indicating the respective categories of voters and their respective voting rights

Mr Ritoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, the House may wish to note that the Mauritius Sports Council (MSC) has been organising the National Sports Award since 1986 in line with one of its main objectives which is to develop and promote the practice of sports among the public at large. The National Sports Award is meant to reward athletes and coaches having excelled at national and international levels during the year. It is also the most prestigious and most important event for the sporting community.

Initially there were only five awards, namely -

- National Sportsman Award;
- National Sportswoman Award;
- Most Promising Sportsman Award;
- Promising Sportswoman Award, and

Sports Leadership Award.

Subsequently, over the years, the number of awards has been increased to 10.

The National Sports Award 2011 which was organised in January this year was the 26th edition thereof.

Mr Speaker Sir, I am informed by the Mauritius Sports Council that the expenses incurred for the organisation of the National Sports Awards 2011 amounted to Rs2,192,620. I am circulating details of the expenditures. The expenditures have been met from income received from sponsors and from the budget of the Mauritius Sports Council. **(Appendix I)**

As regards part (b) of the question, I have to inform the House that an amount of Rs1.2 has been received from sponsors. However, the hon. Member will agree with me that it would be unethical on my part to give the names of the sponsors and the amount of money received from each of them.

Mr Speaker, Sir, concerning parts (c) and (d) of the question, I am also circulating the information. **(Appendix II)**. However, I wish to draw the attention of the House that the Panel is appointed by the Board of the Mauritius Sports Council. This Panel has the responsibility to finalise the nominees proposed by the Press, the High Level Sports Unit, the National Sports Federations and the Public. The weightage of their voting rights, as decided by the Board of the MSC, was as follows –

The Press	-	60%
High Level Sports Unit	-	15%
National Sports Federations	-	15%
The Public	-	10%

Mr Quirin: M. le président, j'aimerais savoir par rapport aux différents *awards* octroyés lors de cette cérémonie, si le ministre a reçu des lettres de contestation concernant les résultats des votes et de bien vouloir préciser pour quel *award* ?

Mr Ritoo: I have received one verbal complaint from the parent of one athlete and I have requested the Chairman of the Mauritius Sports Council to look into the matter. This is a dynamic system and I have been informed by the Mauritius Sports Council that they constantly review the criteria for appraisal of nominees.

Mr Quirin: M. le président, j'ai entendu le ministre dans sa réponse préciser que la presse représente 60% des votes. Dans ce cas, le ministre peut-il nous indiquer si c'est

uniquement la MBC qui a participé aux votes et si les autres titres ont carrément refusé de participer à cet exercice ?

Mr Ritoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, I cannot intervene with the panel. It is a panel which is formed by the Mauritius Sports Council and they have got the whole criteria of how they determine the best sportsmen.

Mr Quirin: Le ministre ne répond pas à ma question qui est pourtant simple. Je demande : est ce qu'il peut indiquer si les 60% de votes représentés par la presse, cela provient uniquement de la MBC ou s'il y a eu des autres titres de presse qui ont également participé à cet exercice de votes ?

Mr Ritoo: I understand that there is a representative of the press, the representative of Olympic Committee and Non-Olympic Committees, members of even *la presse écrite et parlée* and the representatives of the High Level Sports Unit. They determine the criteria.

Mr Quirin: Le ministre ne répond toujours pas, mais je passe a une autre question, M. le président. Vu le désintéressement total autour de cette cérémonie, malgré les R 2 millions dépensées, le ministre compte-t-il revoir de fond en comble toute l'organisation ?

Mr Ritoo: I can redirect this issue to the Mauritius Sports Council and the panel. But I would like to remind the hon. Member that he was himself a member of the Board of the Mauritius Sports Council. If there had been anything not proper, he could have made his complaint directly and even the members of the public are invited to make their complaint to the panel of the Mauritius Sports Council.

SPORTS FEDERATIONS – NON-RECOGNITION - LIST

(No. B/17) **Mr F. Quirin (Third Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière)** asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether, in regard to the Sports Federations, he will give a list thereof which are no longer recognised by his Ministry, indicating in each case, the reasons therefor.

Mr Ritoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, I have to inform the House that the following federations are presently not recognised by my Ministry -

- (i) The Mauritius Bridge Federation which has been deregistered by the Registrar of Associations and consequently not recognised by my Ministry;
- (ii) The Mauritius Chess Federation which has failed to comply with the provisions of the Sports Act in spite of the derogation granted to operate with a

minimum of 3 sports regions. Therefore, the Certificate of Recognition has been suspended, and

- (iii) The Mauritius Swimming Federation whose Managing Committee did not have the required quorum. This Federation's Certificate of Recognition has been suspended.

Mr Quirin: M. le président, le ministre, dans sa réponse, a fait allusion à la natation comme étant une des fédérations non reconnue actuellement par son ministère et je puis dire que les raisons avancées par le ministre de ne pas reconnaître la fédération de natation ne tiennent pas debout. C'est carrément de l'arbitraire. Le ministre peut-il nous dire ce qu'il propose comme solution à ce problème ?

Mr Ritoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, I think I made a reply to a question raised by the hon. Member, No. B/929, on 06 December, 2011, where I explained the situation of the swimming federation regarding various correspondence exchanges between my Ministry, the Olympic Committee and the *Fédération Internationale de Natation* (FINA). But, however, I wish to, once again, reiterate the commitment of this Government of putting people first as rightly publicised by the hon. Prime Minister. As such, I would like to remind the hon. Member if he can recall the scenario we had prior to the Indian Ocean Island Games in Seychelles in 2011. As Minister of sports, I invested myself personally and fought against all the odds, the lobbies and the insistence of the federation to debar two Mauritian swimmers residing in the States the right to participate in the game. And also, they wanted to resiliate the contract of the National Technical Director. For the first time in the history of the swimming federation we won 10 gold medals in the last Indian Ocean Island Games.

Mr Speaker: If I understand the hon. Member, the question is very simple, whether the hon. Minister is going to look into the matter of deregistration and having it reregistered. That is the simple question.

Mr Ritoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, we are liaising with the National Olympic Committee and the International Federation to find a solution to regularise it.

Ms Anquetil: M. le président, puisque nous parlons des fédérations sportives, est-ce que le ministre pourrait indiquer à la Chambre s'il est au courant qu'il y a eu un cas qui a été rapporté au bureau de *l'Ombudsperson for Children* concernant la non-sélection de nos meilleurs pongistes pour le championnat ...

Mr Speaker: The question is not in relation to this.

Mrs Ribot: M. le président, j'aimerais savoir du ministre si les nageurs - puisqu'il y a un conflit avec la fédération de la natation - sont autorisés à utiliser les piscines appartenant à l'Etat pour s'entraîner au cours des compétitions ?

Mr Speaker: Malheureusement, la question n'est pas « *relevant* » parce qu'on parle des fédérations qui ont été *deregistered* et non pas de celles qui sont autorisées pour la natation. La prochaine fois, vous venez avec une question.

Mr Quirin : M. le président, le ministre vient de dire qu'il y a des discussions en cours et j'affirme que ce n'est pas le cas. Entretemps, M. le président, ce sont les nageurs qui en font les frais, huit mois sans compétition sur le plan local. M. le président, est-ce que le ministre ne réalise pas que trop c'est trop pour une discipline qui a ramené dix médailles d'or ?

Mr Speaker: *Le ministre a dit qu'il est en train d'avoir des consultations à propos de cette fédération. Ecoutez-moi ! Vous n'avez pas le droit de challenge the answer given.* If the hon. Member is not happy, he can raise it at Adjournment Time.

Mr Quirin : Je vais déposer ici toute une série de correspondances échangées entre le MJS, la fédération, le Comité Olympique Mauricien, la Fédération Internationale de Natation, prouvant clairement que le ministère de la jeunesse et des sports pratique une politique de répression vis-à-vis de la fédération de la natation.

Mr Ritoo : Mr Speaker, Sir, the hon. Member is totally wrong. As at date, my Ministry is still giving all the facilities to the swimmers. They are getting the swimming pool facilities, they are still getting the *bourses d'études*, they are still having the services of the National Technical Director and two weeks back they were sent even to France *pour un stage en France qui nous a coûté R 1.2 millions*. So, they are all benefitting, they are still swimming and they are still participating.

AIR MAURITIUS LTD – NEW ROUTE RATIONALISATION

(No. B/18) Mr K. Ramano (Second Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes) asked the Minister of Tourism and Leisure whether, in regard to the new route rationalisation adopted by Air Mauritius Ltd., in the light of the prevailing Euro zone crisis, he will -

- (a) state if his Ministry is considering new marketing strategies and, if so, give details thereof, and

- (b) for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Mauritius Tourism Promotion Authority, information as to if it proposes the restructuring of its existing offices abroad, in relation thereto.

Mr Yeung Sik Yuen: Mr Speaker, Sir, the House will appreciate that, in the wake of the current international challenges, coupled with the euro zone crisis and their inevitable impact on our traditional source markets, our tourism strategies have had to be revisited.

As regards part (a) of the question, our tourism policies have been reoriented to achieve, *inter alia*, the following objectives –

- (i) the consolidation of our presence in selected traditional markets, where growth potential still exists and which may be exploited, such as France and Germany. In such source markets, aggressive marketing campaigns, increased participation in promotional fairs, roadshows and workshops in collaboration with industry partners are being pursued to enhance the visibility of the destination and to boost sales;
- (ii) the adoption and implementation of a market diversification strategy through a deeper penetration in emerging economies such as Russia, India and China which constitute an immense tourist reservoir and which can be exploited in niche market segments such as wedding and honeymoon, in particular high profile Indian weddings, Wellness and Spa, MICE as well as sports and golf. Also, the identification of new markets such as the Scandinavian countries, the Czech Republic and the Middle-East, which is currently under way will bring an added dimension to this initiative, and
- (iii) the development of regional tourism by conducting sustained marketing campaigns in countries such as Reunion Island, South Africa, Kenya and Seychelles. Furthermore, the organisation of events throughout the year, such as the forthcoming ‘Mauritius Shopping Fiesta’ or sports events are meant to induce travel from countries within the Indian Ocean.

Mr Speaker Sir, I am informed that in this regard, the Mauritius Tourism Promotion Authority (MTPA) is devising and implementing marketing strategies adapted to the targeted segments. In addition to the usual PR and advertising support or roadshows and familiarisation

trips, the MTPA is now resorting to an extensive use of e-marketing, online campaigns on social platforms and celebrity marketing to enhance its outreach.

Collaboration between the MTPA and industry stakeholders, including airlines, tour operators and hoteliers have been considerably reinforced whereby joint promotional packages in several markets, including twin destination offers have been introduced.

In the same breath, the network rationalisation of Air Mauritius as well as the 3% projected increase in seat capacity during the current year, as recently announced by the company would no doubt improve connections with countries like South Africa and India. In other markets, where Air Mauritius does not operate or will discontinue its direct flights at a given date, such as Frankfurt or Munich, I am advised that arrangements with Airline Partners have been made to effectively service these routes. In addition, consultations are ongoing with industry partners for, *inter alia*, the designated airlines of the other country servicing such routes to increase its frequencies to Mauritius.

Mr Speaker Sir, with regard to part (b) of the question, I am informed by the MTPA that an exercise for the restructuring of the authority is at present ongoing and that such exercise invariably encompasses a review of the operation of its offices abroad.

Mr Ramano : M. le président, *Air Mauritius* prévoit aussi cette année la suppression du vol Frankfurt, Genève, Munich, Durban et Bangalore. Est-ce qu'on peut savoir le coût et le nombre d'heures additionnelles que cela impliquera pour les touristes voyageurs ?

Mr Yeung Sik Yuen: Well, in fact, we have also Condor which is still doing three direct flights from Frankfurt. There are some negotiations between the MTPA and some airlines. They will probably increase its weekly frequencies to four flights. We also have Meridiana fly which is doing four flights from Milan and Rome. They will increase their frequencies by one. And also for Edelweiss, they will also increase it by one frequency. There is a hub from Paris, they can fly from Paris to Mauritius.

Mr Ramano : M. le président, le vol Maurice Kuala Lumpur/Shanghai ne prévoit que 123 sièges, ce qui est largement insuffisant si on veut réellement exploiter le marché Chinois. Donc, avec l'annonce d'annulation éventuelle du vol Shanghai/Maurice, est-ce que cela ne compromet pas la stratégie de Maurice vis-à-vis de ce marché ?

Mr Yeung Sik Yuen: Mr Speaker, Sir, I totally agree with the hon. Member and I am informed that some companies have applied to fly the route China to Mauritius and it is under consideration right now.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Bhagwan!

Mr Bhagwan: Can we know from the hon. Minister where matters stand concerning the privatisation of the Mauritius Tourism Promotion Authority? Secondly, since money is very scarce and there is need for tourism promotion, what action does the Minister intend to initiate concerning this policy of 'maja karo' at the Mauritius Tourism Authority as far as...

(Interruptions)

.... payment of fees to fake legal advisers, the celebration of Divali in the month of June and other activities are concerned?

(Interruptions)

Mr Yeung Sik Yuen: Mr Speaker, Sir, if the hon. Member has a case, ICAC is here. He should go to the ICAC and make a case.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order! Order now, please! Please!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Jugnauth is going to put a question, let him put his question! Order!

(Interruptions)

Order! I am suspending the sitting, I will resume at 2.30 p.m.

(Interruptions)

At 12.52 p.m. the sitting was suspended.

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

Mr Yeung Sik Yuen: Mr Speaker, Sir, with your permission, during Question Time, in the heat of the debate, I said some unbecoming words towards hon. Bhagwan. I regret for same. I do sincerely apologise and withdraw the words. Thank you.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Hon. Jugnauth, you had a supplementary question?

Mr Jugnauth: In an answer to a question that was put to the hon. Minister at Committee Stage, he replied that there was now a new strategy that was devised with regard to the tourism policy and, especially with regard to new arrivals. He said that the bottlenecks with the PRs

around the world who were working with us had been removed and that he forecast the tourists' arrivals will grow by 4% to 5%. Now, the hon. Minister is saying that there is another strategy that is being devised. Will he say now which is which, whether the past strategy which dates back only recently has been working or not?

Mr Yeung Sik Yuen: Mr Speaker, Sir, the strategy is still the same and all problems between the MTPA and the PR are already solved.

Mr Bodha: Mr Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Minister whether he can give us the number of flights which are going to be cancelled in May 2012 in Europe and the number of flights which are going to be cancelled in November 2012 in Europe?

Mr Yeung Sik Yuen: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed that there are three flights; one from Milan, one from Sydney and one from Melbourne, which will be suspended as from the end of May 2012. There are another four flights: one from Frankfurt, Geneva, Munich, and Durban as from end of October 2012.

Mr Bodha: May I ask the hon. Minister to confirm that there will be no Air Mauritius flights on the German market, on the Swiss market and on the Italian market?

Mr Yeung Sik Yuen: I have already replied.

Mr Speaker: I don't think that the hon. Member can ask the hon. Minister to confirm. He should rephrase his question.

Mr Bodha: Can the hon. Minister state whether there is going to be no Air Mauritius flights in Germany, in Italy and in Switzerland?

Mr Yeung Sik Yuen: There will be no Air Mauritius flights direct from these countries. However, they can use the hub from Paris.

Mr Bodha: May I ask the hon. Minister whether he agrees that this will have a very negative impact on the industry and urgent measures have to be taken?

Mr Yeung Sik Yuen: Measures have been taken.

CEB - BLACKOUT - 13 DECEMBER 2011

(No. B/19) Mr G. Lesjongard (Second Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to the blackout which occurred on 13 December 2011, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Central Electricity Board, information as to the cause thereof, indicating if a report in relation thereto has been submitted to his Ministry.

The Deputy Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the CEB that the root cause of the blackout on 13 December 2011 was the failure of one circuit breaker to isolate the 66 kV line section between the St. Louis and La Chaumière sub-stations, following a stroke of lightning near one tower line in the vicinity of Coromandel.

A full report on the blackout with recommendations was submitted to my Ministry in January 2012. I am informed that most of the recommendations are being implemented by the Board.

Mr Bérenger: Can I know who chaired the committee that produced that report?

The Deputy Prime Minister: The Deputy General Manager.

Mr Lesjongard: May I ask the hon. Deputy Prime Minister whether the said report confirms that the delay in restoring supply throughout the island on that day was also due to the unacceptable presence of the Chairperson of the CEB in the control room and the low dispatching centre?

The Deputy Prime Minister: I am not informed of this.

Mr Bhagwan: Can we know from the hon. Deputy Prime Minister whether his attention has been drawn by the top management of the CEB of the daily intervention in technical matters by the Chairperson, which is the very cause of concern to all technical staff of the CEB, and whether he is ready to meet the very top management of CEB to discuss same, in view of the frequent cases of breakdown and which are being unattended to?

The Deputy Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I will look into this matter now that my attention has been drawn to it.

Mr Bérenger: I could not hear what the hon. Deputy Prime Minister said, - hon. Lejongard says that one of the causes is the presence of the Chairperson here and there - whether he is not aware or whether it is not in the report. Being given that it is a very serious matter, would the hon. Deputy Prime Minister have any objection to lay a copy of that report in the Library?

The Deputy Prime Minister: I will find out from the Board, Mr Speaker, Sir, whether they are agreeable to it. I personally have no objection.

Mr Lesjongard: We had a similar blackout in 2010 and in replying to a question, the hon. Deputy Prime Minister said that the reason for the total blackout was the cascade effect of the electric circuit throughout the island. Again, when we had the blackout last year, he

mentioned the same effect. Does he agree that until now, the CEB has not been able to find a solution to prevent that cascade effect whenever we have a fault on our network?

The Deputy Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, we have a large number of circuits which are being replaced and we are in the process of replacing it and I hope that they will all be replaced, but it takes time.

Mr Lesjongard: No, my question is related to the protection of our network. It is not possible that each and every time we have a fault on one part of our network, the whole country goes blackout. This is being repeated for the second time, Mr Speaker, Sir.

The Deputy Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, the report does address this issue and part of the issue is the IPPs not being able to island their facilities.

Mr Jhugroo: Can the hon. Deputy Prime Minister inform the House whether the Chairman of the CEB has a right to interfere in the day-to-day management of this department?

The Deputy Prime Minister: The answer is no.

Mr Speaker: I am sorry to interrupt the proceedings of the House. I will now ask the Deputy Speaker to take the Chair, please.

At this stage the Deputy Speaker took the Chair.

PLAINE MAGNIEN – CREMATION GROUND

(No. B/21) **Mr P. Jhugroo (First Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien)** asked the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the Plaine Magnien cremation ground, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Grand Port/Savanne District Council, information as to if consideration will be given for the installation of an incinerator thereat and, if so, when and, if not, why not.

Mr Aimée: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, my Ministry was previously responsible for the implementation of the crematorium project at Plaine Magnien along with a few other sites.

However, on 30 March 2012, the Government has decided that the Ministry of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport & Shipping will be undertaking the construction of crematoriums at 11 sites, including one at Plaine Magnien.

Mr Jhugroo: First of all, let me congratulate the Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly. Can I ask the hon. Minister whether we can have a time frame when this project will be executed?

Mr Aimée: I am sorry, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, now all the files and documents have been referred to the Ministry of Public Infrastructure, I would invite my colleague, the hon. Member to address the question directly to them.

The Deputy Speaker: The Table has been advised that PQ No. B/22 has been withdrawn. So, we move on to hon. Dr. Sorefan.

**IBRAHIM ABDULLAH MARKET FAIR, CITÉ MARTIAL -
TENANTS - ARREARS**

(No. B/22) 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 Ibrahim Abdullah Market Fair, at Cité Martial, Port Louis, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Municipal Council of Port Louis, information as to if the arrears owed by the tenants have been settled and, if so, when and, if not, why not.

(Withdrawn)

IVTB-PHOENIX ROUNDABOUT - THIRD LANE - OPERATION

(No. B/23) 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 third lane at the IVTB-Phoenix roundabout when proceeding towards the south, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Road Development Authority, information as to the reasons why same is operational only between 16.00 to 18.30 hrs.

The vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping (Mr A. Bachoo): Mr Speaker Sir, as a matter of fact, this stretch of the bypass between the St. Jean Roundabout and Pont Fer Phoenix roundabout is not open only between 3.30 p.m to 7.00 p.m., but it is also open on Saturdays between 11.00 a.m. to 2.30 p.m.

Of late, we have also started opening the bypass from 7.30 a.m to 9.30 a.m to accommodate South bound traffic at peak hours in the morning.

The opening hours are determined by the density of traffic during different times of the day and any further extension will be applied on a need basis.

Dr. Sorefan: Can we know from the hon. Minister -

- (i) the cost of the project;

- (ii) if there has been any consultation with the inhabitants of Petit Camp and Valentina before implementing the project, and
- (iii) if the project plan was publicised before implementing the project.

Mr Bachoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the cost of the third lane, that is, from St. Jean to Pont Fer is Rs133,282,167.90 m. I am going to lay a copy - that is the award which was given to the contractor. That is number one.

And number 2, initially the third lane was to start at St Jean and it was to end before the Pont Fer. Ultimately, we found that if we are going to stop it before the Pont Fer roundabout, it won't serve much purpose. Then we thought of creating a by-pass; that would by-pass the roundabout and that will serve the people who are going to utilise it from the north towards the south. So, that was an additional cost of Rs15 m. that we have spent in order to create the by-pass.

Dr. Sorefan: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, regarding such huge sums that have been spent, I see that the Ministry has backpedaled on the issue of a 24-hour by-pass and the Minister, to a question that I asked, said: "I can assure the House that once the works are completed, one can save at least 15 to 20 minutes". If this is so, why has the hon. Minister backpedaled on that by-pass?

Mr Bachoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we started the third lane from St. Jean roundabout up till the Pont Fer. That was the cause which I have just mentioned and that started, in fact, originally from Port Louis till the end of Pont Fer, but from Pont Fer roundabout, we were bound to continue it, an additional by-pass so that the road users can use the by-pass without passing through the roundabout.

Secondly, there is a grade separated junction which is going to link all the three roundabouts, but that is going to take us too much of time and the cost also is very high. So, we thought of a simpler method by which we can by-pass that roundabout and, in fact, even now anybody who is using that road is going to economise 15 to 20 minutes. This is a fact. And when we had started the third lane from Port Louis up till the Pont Fer roundabout, on both sides, that was well-calculated, it was well-planned and earlier also planning was made, consultants had worked on the project. So, we cannot say that it was an haphazard growth and, at least, I would request the hon. Member, instead of gossiping, criticising and condemning, try to rise above and have a look at the way people are using that road.

(Interruptions)

I am fully satisfied by the way they are working.

Mr Jhugroo: Can I ask the hon. Minister why RDA has not considered constructing flyovers at the roundabout of Phoenix to solve this problem because Rs180 m. have been spent for nothing?

Mr Bachoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have just mentioned that there is a grade separated junction. This is what we call a modern flyover that is going to link all the three roundabouts, but the cost would have been above Rs2 billion and that is much time-consuming. So, what Government has decided, we have already included it in the PPP which, in fact, we are evaluating now. That will take us about two to three years' time. In the meantime, what will happen to those people who are caught in the traffic jam at least for hours and hours and that is the reason why we have found it advisable to spend Rs15 m. because we know for the forthcoming two to three years all these people who are going to use this southbound road are going to economise at least 15 to 20 minutes and I personally believe that we have taken the right decision at the right time.

Mr Lesjongard: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I just heard the hon. Minister stating that there were consultants involved in the project. In a reply to a similar question, he had stated that the whole project has been conceived, designed and is being supervised by the engineers from RDA. No consultants were involved and this has resulted in additional savings to Government. In fact, he just confirmed that we have had to pay Rs15 m. additional. May I ask the hon. Minister whether he finds it wise that for such an important roundabout and an additional third lane, we are opening that additional third lane only for two hours per day and we have spent Rs15 m. of taxpayers' money to have that third lane constructed?

Mr Bachoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in the beginning, about 7 to 10 years ago, consultants were appointed to decide what needs to be done but, in fact, the project was supervised and the preparatory work was done by the engineers of my Ministry. I am proud and that is why I always congratulate my engineers. I am proud of them; they are doing a good job.

(Interruptions)

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

Mr Bachoo: Secondly, it is not true to say that this road is being used only for a few hours. I just mentioned from 3.30 hours in the afternoon till 7.00 hours at night, then on Saturday

from 11.00 hours to 2.30 hours and, again, in the morning from 7.30 hours to 9.30 hours. The reason being very simple, because there have been requests made by the inhabitants of Valentina, that is, to give them a little bit of time; this is what, in fact, we have done and if we feel the need that we have to extend the time we are going to do it, but keeping in mind that will not create too much of inconvenience to the inhabitants of Valentina, we have made many proposals to the inhabitants of Valentina and Petit Camp. We are working on those proposals. Unfortunately, there have been some mysterious forces at the back that is creating some problem for us.

Mr Bhagwan: When the hon. Minister is talking about mysterious forces, I hope he is not mentioning the PPS, hon. Assirvaden, not less than a Member of Government...

(Interruptions)

...who is a Parliament Private Secretary and, above all, the first Member of that Constituency who has openly criticised the RDA, the Minister, the Ministry for having wrongly designed and not having taking care of the people's aspirations there.

(Interruptions)

Mr Bachoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I hope the hon. Member won't provoke me to reveal names. I am not going to reveal, but I am aware of the type of campaigns which were conducted by the Members of the Opposition. I am not going to wallow in dirt. One thing I can assure the House, and through the House to the whole population, that anybody who is using that road southbound, from Port Louis towards the South, is feeling happy; because you feel...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Let the hon. vice-Prime Minister reply, please!

(Interruptions)

Mr Bachoo: I have not yet finished. You feel unhappy because they are happy. You feel uncomfortable, because things are moving on very well.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Ameer Meea, please!

Mr Ameer Meea: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir ...

The Deputy Speaker: No cross-talking, please!

Mr Ameer Meea: Can I ask the hon. Minister the name of the contractor that was awarded the contract and, secondly, the names of the consultant that was paid Rs15 m.?

Mr Bachoo: Not a single cent has been paid to the consultant out of the Rs15 m. No money has been paid because, as I told you, the consultant designed them decades ago and, secondly, the contractor, if I am not mistaken, is Gamma Civic.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: We round off with hon. Dr. Sorefan; we have amply mooted on this question.

Dr. Sorefan: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I think the hon. Minister does not live in that area. He does not know that there is congestion. He came with a program of decongestion, but now we see congestion.

(Interruptions)

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

Dr. Sorefan: May I ask the hon. Minister now that he has failed in that direction of design, whether he has envisaged to resign as a Minister or as an MP?

(Interruptions)

Mr Bachoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir...

The Deputy Speaker: Order, please!

(Interruptions)

Mr Bachoo: He does not even deserve...

(Interruptions)

...passing comment on what he has just said.

The Deputy Speaker: Order, please!

(Interruptions)

Mr Bachoo: Shame on you!

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Dr. Sorefan, next question, please!

(Interruptions)

Dr. Sorefan: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as a dental professional, on a point of order...

The Deputy Speaker: Next question, please!

Dr. Sorefan: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, on a point of order, one Member has mentioned 'ale rasse ledent', I am a professional. If he wants, I will 'rasse so ledent'.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Dr. Sorefan, next question, please!

(Interruptions)

Order, please!

WASTEWATER MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY – LEGAL ADVISERS

(No. B/24) Dr. R. Sorefan (Fourth Member for La Caverne & Phoenix) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to the full time and part time legal advisers whose services have been retained and approved, since July 2005 to date, by the Wastewater Management Authority, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Authority, information, in each case, as to -

- (a) their names;
- (b) the date their services were retained;
- (c) the terms and conditions of contract;
- (d) the payments effected, and
- (e) the number of overseas trips undertaken, indicating in each case, the -
 - (i) cost;
 - (ii) destination, and
 - (iii) purpose therefor.

The Deputy Prime Minister: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I am tabling the answer.

LA PRENEUSE - BOIS GOYAVES ROAD & BOIS D'EBÈNE ROAD - RESURFACING

(No. B/25) Mrs J. Radegonde (Fourth Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to the resurfacing of the Bois Goyaves Road, the Bois d'Ebène Road and the other roads opposite La Bonne Chute Restaurant, in the region of La Preneuse, in Constituency No. 14 Savanne and Black River, he will state where matters stand.

The vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping (Mr A. Bachoo): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, following the request made by hon. Minister Aimée, NDU has initiated action. Works are expected to start within a few days.

Mrs Radegonde: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Minister if he is aware of the inconvenience and frustration caused by the condition of the road? I understand the work will start in a few days, but I would like to have the time frame as to when exactly the road works will start and scheduled to be completed.

Mr Bachoo: Hon. Aimée has spoken to me. I am conscious of the problems. I have already mentioned in the days to come, that's all.

Mr Ganoo: Can the hon. Minister tell us who is the contractor who has been awarded this contract?

Mr Bachoo: It must be the district contractor. I am not aware of the company; it is the district contractor of the NDU.

Mr Ganoo: May we know what is the amount of this contract?

Mr Bachoo: It must be around Rs15 m. I don't have the exact figure with me. It is approximately Rs15 m.

Mr Ganoo: May we know when the contract was awarded?

Mr Bachoo: I don't have the exact date, but I have already mentioned, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that it will be in the days to come.

Excuse me. I got the information. They have issued the works order on 12 April and the sum I find here is Rs15,315,230.

Mr Ganoo: What is the date?

Mr Bachoo: The date is 12 April 2012.

Mr Ganoo: Is the hon. Minister aware that, at one point in time, the District Council of Black River wrote to the contractor, asking him to disregard the letters of the Council of Award concerning the above mentioned projects, saying that the funding agency is the Ministry of Public Infrastructure and the latter had officially requested this Council to disregard the financial clearances issued in respect to the funding of the project?

Mr Bachoo: If I am not mistaken, in fact, what happened is that the NDU wrote to the District Council requesting the District Council to undertake the work. But, unfortunately, the District Council cannot go beyond Rs15 m. That is the reason why the matter was brought back to NDU and this time we have launched the tender. With the District Council, it was about Rs18 m., but with our district contractor, it is about Rs15 m. That must be the reason why they had to come back to NDU.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Mrs Radegonde!

Mrs Radegonde: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I heard the hon. Minister mentioning the NDU and the District Council. In a reply to Parliamentary Question Nos. A/253 and A/287 brought to the House on July 2011 and 18 October 2011 by hon. Ganoo and myself, it was noted that there was bidding process launched by the NDU and same will be finalised soon. May I ask the hon. Minister the name of the contractors, if any, who were awarded the bids?

Mr Bachoo: I am not aware as to who were those contractors last year. This time I have got the name. It is Super Builders Company Ltd. Work orders have already been issued. As I have just mentioned, in the days to come the work is going to start.

Mr Ganoo: How does the hon. Minister reconcile his previous answer to the fact that the District Council of Black River wrote to the Safety Construction Company Ltd. to ask them to disregard the clearances and so on? Is it the Safety Construction Company Ltd. or the other company?

Mr Bachoo: It is the Super Builders Company Ltd., that is, the contractor who works for the NDU, the contractor who has been nominated by CPB to work for NDU for one year. This is what I know.

Mr Ganoo: Has work started on this project?

Mr Bachoo: I have just mentioned that on 12 April we have issued the works order. There must be certain problems, but I am not aware. I have been informed by the engineers that work is going to start soon or in the days to come.

COPYRIGHT BILL (New) - INTRODUCTION

(No. B/26) **Mrs J. Radegonde (Fourth Member for Savanne & Black River)** asked the Minister of Arts and Culture whether, in regard to the proposed new Copyright Bill, he will state the time frame, if any, which has been set for its introduction in the National Assembly.

Mr Choonee: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, Government proposes to introduce a new Copyright Bill during this session of the National Assembly.

Mrs Radegonde: Many times, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have heard the same speech as a broken record to me. I would like to know the exact time frame that the Copyright Bill, that is long overdue to the artists, will be brought to the House. The exact time frame!

Mr Choonee: This session, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

Mr Barbier: Right now that a zero draft Bill has been circulated and many organisations have had the opportunity of working and making suggestions, may I know where the situation is actually? Is it still at his Ministry or at the SLO or otherwise? The Minister should inform the House.

Mr Choonee: This is a new question. Anyway, let me just give some additional information, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with your permission. It's true that we are almost ready, should I say, with the Bill and we are having a last consultation. It is DVC - Digital Video Conferencing - with the US Copyright Office on 16 May. As soon as it is over, we will, of course, again go back to the SLO and finalise everything.

STREET CHILDREN - NGO SAFIRE REPORT - RECOMMENDATIONS

(No. B/27) 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 street children, she will state the policy of her Ministry in relation thereto, indicating if the recommendations found in the recent report of the study undertaken by the NGO SAFIRE are being considered by her Ministry and, if so, indicate the measures that will be taken, if any, for the implementation thereof.

Mrs Martin: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, at the very outset, I would like to inform the House that the policy of my Ministry is to intervene and provide support services to children at risk wherever and whenever these cases are reported to my Ministry. In cases where a child is deemed to be in immediate danger and is exposed to harm, either within the family or when he/she has been abandoned and left to himself/herself, an emergency protection order is applied for at the level of the District Court to have the child referred to a 'place of safety' for '*prise en charge*' as appropriate.

I would like to point out that, according to Amnesty International there are two categories of street children, namely children on the street and children of the street. In Mauritius, there are children on the street, that is, they spend their time on the street and then go back to their family environment. It is worth noting that at the level of the Child Development Unit, many of the cases of vulnerable children that are referred for action are not removed through emergency protection orders, but are followed by the Child Protection Team at the level of their family. Parental counselling and social support, as appropriate from other Ministries are also enlisted and provided to the parents to ensure that children are not left on their own.

My Ministry has taken cognizance of the recommendations of the report on the study carried out jointly by SAFIRE and the Mauritius Family Planning and Welfare Association. These will have to be addressed in a holistic manner as there are recommendations therein which fall under the mandate of other Ministries/stakeholders.

I had a meeting with SAFIRE on 28 February 2012 wherein it was noted that the issue of children in street situations cannot be resolved by isolated programmes delivered in silos by Non-Governmental Organisations or by Governmental/Parastatal Organisations alone. During the meeting, SAFIRE has expressed the wish to have the help of my Ministry in elaborating a concerted plan with clear objectives for improving the well-being of these children, to which my Ministry was agreeable.

Mrs Ribot: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, one of the recommendations of SAFIRE Report is that home visits should form part of the Ministry's policies to ensure that the children are not being maltreated and that their integration is effective. I would like to know from the hon. Minister if home visits form part of the policies of the Ministry and, if yes, who will effect those home visits?

Mrs Martin: Actually, as stated, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, home visits are carried out and they are done by the CDU Officers whenever the cases are reported to my Ministry.

Mrs Ribot: I would like to know from the hon. Minister if her Ministry intends to liaise with the Ministry of Education and Human Resources to ensure the effective implementation of the legislation regarding compulsory education up to the age of 16.

Mrs Martin: That can be done, yes.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: The hon. Minister has just said that she believes that there should be work with other Ministries. Can the hon. Minister say whether she has chaired a meeting comprising other Ministries which are involved in the matter and, if so, when and on how many occasions has she chaired such meetings?

Mrs Martin: Actually, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we do have a working-together committee which is chaired by the Permanent Secretary, but I have chaired it once already. It was at the beginning of the year, if I recall correctly, and this is where we take into account all the situations to be able to work together with regard to vulnerable children.

As regards the street children *per se*, it was agreed during the meeting that we had with SAFIRE that they would meet the Head of the CDU to take cognizance of the projects

undertaken by the Ministry and SAFIRE was apprised that my Ministry would participate in their working group as well.

Mr Obeegadoo: I heard the hon. Minister responding to Mrs Ribot's question concerning compulsory education, and since this report came out quite a few months ago, would the hon. Minister tell the House whether there have been any meeting scheduled between her Ministry and the Ministry of Education to see to it why those children instead of being in schools are on the streets?

Mrs Martin: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I can tell the hon. Member that we had a meeting with the hon. Minister of Education, but it was with regard to vulnerable children as a whole, not only street children.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. S. Boolell!

Dr. S. Boolell: In view of the fact that all these consultations will take a long time and the report from SAFIRE has already been issued about a month ago, can the hon. Minister assure the House that something can be done immediately for the reintroduction of social workers who will go out to the street to meet and accompany the children rather than go to the families where they might not meet any children?

Mrs Martin: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, already SAFIRE is doing a great job with that and, as we said, we are supporting SAFIRE in their endeavour and we want to help them out when we will sit together for these discussions. But, there are also things that are already being done with SAFIRE that my Ministry already does with SAFIRE, a number of programmes that we already have at the level of the Ministry which we carry out to help along with SAFIRE.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Mrs Hanoomanjee!

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I think the hon. Minister has not replied to my question. I asked her which other Ministries have been involved in the process of networking. She has not given me the names of the Ministries which are involved and the second thing is that she said there should be a holistic approach. When we talk of holistic approach, I understand that there should be short-term measures and long-term measures. Can he give any indication of when those measures will be elaborated and when they will be implemented?

Mrs Martin: As regards the different Ministries, – I am speaking from memory because it is not within the ambit of the question - in the working-together committee we have the

Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Social Integration, the Ministry of Education; I mean a whole gamut of other Ministries are also involved. The Police as well are involved and that is for the first part of the question. As for the second part of the question, can the hon. Member remind me to what it relates?

Mrs Hanoomanjee: It is related to the holistic approach that the hon. Minister has mentioned which, I understand, the Committee should have elaborated short-term measures and long-term measures. It is a very sensitive issue and also a very urgent issue. So, what are the short term measures that have been envisaged?

Mrs Martin: As for the short-term measures, as I had said before in my answer, whenever the cases are reported to our Ministry we intervene at that level as well. With regard to the medium term measures we are envisaging to work with SAFIRE, as I have already said.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun and we round off with hon. Ribot.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the number 7,000, as proposed by SAFIRE, is a very large number and I wonder whether the hon. Minister agrees with that. I would like to ask the hon. Minister whether she has carried out any form of assessment to figure out whether this number of around 7,000 children on the street is the exact number or whether the hon. Minister intends to carry out a survey to find out what exactly the number is.

Mrs Martin: No survey has been carried out by the Ministry and I understand that SAFIRE has made an estimate of 6,000 children.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, just to add on what has been said; even in an estimate of 6,000 children on the street, I consider it to be a very high figure. I am asking the hon. Minister whether she agrees with that figure and if she hasn't carried out any survey, as mentioned earlier. She is talking about a holistic approach; we need to know, first of all, if we have 6,000 children on the street, what are the measures taken and whether the hon. Minister will agree on that number. If the hon. Minister agrees that there are 6,000 on the streets what measures she intends to take right now, urgently?

Mrs Martin: Like I said, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this is an estimate made by SAFIRE, but I agree with the hon. Member. One child on the street is one child too many. What we have thought of doing is working together with SAFIRE to see in what way we can sort out that

problem together with a whole lot of other stakeholders and Ministries because this is a multi-sectoral issue.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we are talking about measures that we are going to take to help SAFIRE. Could the hon. Minister just mention one measure that she intends to take in order to bring her support to this group?

Mrs Martin: I can mention several measures that we have already taken with regard to what SAFIRE has recommended.

(Interruptions)

Sorry, but the question was asked by hon. Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun if I recall, thank you. The policy makers, for example, in the report made by SAFIRE mentioned that policy makers must be sensitised on the issue. We are already doing it and we are working together in that Working Together Committee to establish protocols in order to enlist the collaboration of all relevant Ministries. This is one measure. Does the hon. Member want any other, because I have several other measures as well that I can table.

The Deputy Speaker: I allow one question from hon. Jugnauth before I go back to hon. Mrs Ribot.

Mr Jugnauth: May I ask the hon. Minister, not about what actions her Ministry has taken with regard to the NGOs, but with regard to the actions taken by her Ministry with regard to the street children, what actions have been taken and what has been the outcome of these actions, if there has been any, not improvement, but if the effects of these actions have been undertaken to know the impact of these actions?

Mrs Martin: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with regard not only to street children *per se*, I mean we take care in the Ministry of the whole lot of vulnerable children and children victims of violence and this encompasses also the street children. When the cases are reported to us, we intervene. Otherwise, we also have different programmes such as the District Child Protection Committee on which the SAFIRE is also a member. On the Community Child Watch Committee, on the training programmes that we have also, with regard to empowering the parents, all these are a whole lot of programmes which we put in place in order to help alleviate that problem.

Mrs Ribot: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the figure of SAFIRE report is most alarming. Since in 2006, the then hon. Minister of Social Security mentioned that there were 182 children

identified and now we moved up to 6,000 street children. We would like to know from the hon. Minister whether there is a kind of explanation to that situation. I heard the hon. Minister mentioned the different Ministries with which she is working to help those street children and I didn't hear her at all mentioned the Ministry of Labour because the SAFIRE report does mention that one of the problems those street children are facing is child labour.

Mrs Martin: Actually, I was speaking from memory, but I believe the Ministry of Labour also forms part of the working together committee.

CHILDREN (VULNERABLE) - OFFICIAL FUNCTIONS – MEDIA EXPOSURE

(No. B/28) 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 vulnerable children, she will state if consideration will be given for measures to be taken for these children not to be exposed in the media during official functions organized for their betterment to avoid them from being ostracised.

Mrs Martin: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as regards vulnerable children, I assume the hon. Member is referring to cases of children already victims of violence or to children deemed to be at risk of violence referred to my Ministry. I would like to inform the House that measures are taken by my Ministry to prevent the exposure of these children in the media during official functions organised for their betterment. In fact, the standard practice is as follows -

- Media people are not allowed to take photographs of children living in shelters and residential care institutions during functions since these children are under court orders (Emergency Protection Order, Interim Committal Order and Committal Order). Nevertheless, if children shows mounted for them at the level of the shelters and residential care institutions have to be given media coverage, media people are made aware that these children faces are to be blurred to avoid them from being recognised. In case the children are taken to functions and celebrations, care is taken for members of the press not to interview them. Members of the media are regularly reminded of the need of confidentiality.
- Further, my Ministry is in the process of preparing a Comprehensive Children's Bill and provisions will be made to ensure that media-reporting on children faring in vulnerable situations do not further stigmatise the child, avoid categorisations or descriptions that expose the child to negative reprisals, including additional

physical and psychological harm, or to lifelong abuse, discrimination or rejection/ostracism.

Mrs Ribot: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in fact, I was not referring to children victims of violence. I was referring to the distribution of school and pedagogical materials to vulnerable children who are shown on television; those children are in the media and they are made at the end of the distribution to come and say how happy and grateful they are to have received those school materials. I wanted to know from the hon. Minister whether she does not consider that kind of exposure to go against the Convention of the Rights of the Child.

(Interruptions)

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

Mrs Martin: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with regard to the mention of violence as mentioned by the hon. Member, it is in line, in fact, with the global study that was carried out in 2006 by the UN special expert Sergio Pinero on child violence, which is taken as an old encompassing word, which includes element of abuse, neglect, growth and negligent treatment as well. This is why we used the term violence. As regards the other aspect mentioned by the hon. Member, this can be considered and I will speak to the hon. Member.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Mr Deputy Speaker Sir, may I ask the hon. Minister, whether she intends to talk to her colleague, the Minister of Social Integration, to ensure that whenever such distribution of books or bags are done to children that this should not pass on TV so that the whole of Mauritius comes to know that this particular child cannot afford a bag or schoolbooks?

Mrs Martin: In fact, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I believe that it is also for the media to take its own responsibility, but as I said before, I have already answered the question with regard to my colleague.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Let the hon. Minister answer, please! Hon. Mrs Hanoomanjee!

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am afraid the hon. Minister misunderstood the question. It is not for the media to take that responsibility. That responsibility rests on the Ministry since it is the Ministry which has signed and agreed to the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Mrs Martin: As I have said before, in the first part of the question which was answered, I will look into that possibility.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Dr. S. Boolell!

Dr. S. Boolell: Could the hon. Minister more specifically instruct the MBC to stop projecting images of children showing extreme gratitude?

Mrs Martin: I can look into the matter.

The Deputy Speaker: We round off the question with hon. Mrs Ribot.

Mrs Ribot: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, can I ask the hon. Minister to see to it that the protection of the child against such exposure in the media forms part of the amendments to the Child Protection Act, which we understand, is under discussion with the State Law Office and of the Children's Bill which is in preparation so that never again our children are going to be used as political agents?

Mrs Martin: I must say, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I do not agree with what the hon. Member is saying. Our children are not used as political agents and they are never going to be used as political agents.

(Interruptions)

Furthermore, like I have said, in my answer, my Ministry is examining and preparing a comprehensive Children Bill and the media aspect will also be taken into consideration.

STANLEY & ROSE HILL - SEWERAGE NETWORK PROJECT

(No. B/29) Mr D. Nagalingum (Second Member for Stanley & Rose Hill) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to the sewerage network project in Constituency No. 19, Stanley and Rose Hill, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the WasteWater Management Authority, information as to where matters stand, indicating the -

- (a) names of the streets where works have not been carried out, as at to date, and
- (b) expected completion date thereof.

The Deputy Prime Minister: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, sewerage works in the regions of Stanley and Rose Hill are being carried out under the two separate contracts, namely the Plaines Wilhems Sewerage Project Lot 1A and Lot 1B respectively.

Works on Lot 1B, comprising some 4,000 house connections started in December 2008 and are scheduled to be completed by September 2012. 95% of the works have already been completed.

As regards Lot 1A, works comprising some 12,000 house connections started in December 2009 and are expected to be completed by mid 2014. So far, 37% of the works have been completed.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am tabling the information with respect to part (a) of the question.

As regards part (b), I am informed that the contractors have to complete all the works within the scheduled completion period unless extensions of time are determined by the Consultant. At this stage, it is not possible to provide detailed information on the completion date of works in respect of each street as this depends substantially on the progress of work and other factors on site.

Special care is, however, being taken to inform inhabitants in advance of works to be carried out in their streets and neighbourhood. This is undertaken by the public relations team of the WMA and the contractor.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Nagalingum!

Mr Nagalingum: In an answer given to PQ No. 1 B/582, on November 09, 2010, the hon. Deputy Prime Minister stated (I quote) –

“I am assured by the WasteWater Authority that the resurfacing of all roads in the region of Stanley/Rose Hill will be completed by June 2011”.

Can I know from the hon. Deputy Prime Minister, as to the expected date of completion of works? I mean the resurfacing of road.

The Deputy Prime Minister: Sorry, what is the last part of the question? Which information you are looking for?

Mr Nagalingum: The resurfacing of road in Stanley and Rose Hill was due to be completed by June 2011.

The Deputy Prime Minister: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with the delay in the works, the street repairs will proceed accordingly. There is some delay, but I will get the information.

Mr Nagalingum: Being given that sewerage work has just started last week according to the WasteWater Authority in Hugnin road and it is expected to last for 12 months, can the hon. Deputy Prime Minister give the assurance that there won't be any delay or extension?

The Deputy Prime Minister: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am glad this has been mentioned. This is probably one of the most difficult assignments of the WMA at the Hugnin

Road. We are getting the cooperation of each and everyone and I hope that we will continue to do so and get no delays.

The Deputy Speaker: Next question!

Mr Nagalingum: May I ask the hon. Deputy Prime Minister, whether this time the Collaboration and Action Plan has been worked out with the CWA and the Mauritius Telecom for the Hugnin road?

The Deputy Prime Minister: The answer is yes.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Bhagwan!

Mr Bhagwan: Can I appeal to the hon. Deputy Prime Minister. I raised the issue concerning Verger Bissumbar on many occasions and their works have not been completed. Can the hon. Deputy Prime Minister give assurance to the public of Verger Bissumbar that their request will be entertained by the hon. Deputy Prime Minister?

The Deputy Prime Minister: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the hon. Member has mentioned this on more than one occasion. I have asked the WMA to include it in the present works. There has been some resistant but I will still try.

The Deputy Speaker: We move on to the next question. Hon. Nagalingum!

PLAZA THEATRE – RENOVATION

(No. B/30) Mr D. Nagalingum (Second 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 -

- (a) the total cost incurred in relation to Phase I, indicating if it is covered by an insurance, and
- (b) where matters stand in relation to Phase II.

Mr Aimée: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I wish to refer the hon. Member to the replies I made to Parliamentary Question Nos. B/30 and B/341 on 22 March and 17 May 2011 respectively as well as to the statement on this issue. Nevertheless, I wish again to inform the House that -

Firstly, a total amount of Rs85 m. has already been incurred in relation to Phase 1 of the renovation of the Plaza Theatre Project which consisted of provision of new roof coverings and other ancillary works:

Secondly, the Phases II and III of the project, which will comprise the renovation of the Façades, Salle des Fêtes and the Theatre are estimated to cost Rs457m. and the question of funding was being taken up with the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development and thirdly, no insurance company was prepared to insure the Plaza Theatre.

I am now informed that the project has been earmarked for funding in the financial year 2015 as indicated in the Public Sector Investment Programme 2012 – 2016.

Mr Nagalingum: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it was announced in the Budget Speech of 2010 that with regard to phases II and III, the Ministry of Finance together with the Ministries of Education and Culture will see for the upgrading of these works. Can I know where matters stand?

Mr Aimée: Between 2010 and now, the economic situation has changed, Mr Deputy Speaker Sir, that is why the Minister of Finance has changed his idea.

Mr Bhagwan: Sir, from what I have heard from the Minister, the project is earmarked for 2015.

Mr Aimée: In the Budget - 2015.

Mr Bhagwan: Some three years! Is the Minister aware that the Plaza Theatre is one of most important *patrimoines* of the country where more than Rs100 m. or more have spent ...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Baloomoody, please!

Mr Bhagwan: ...for the roof and the building is left without any maintenance, without any care and especially it is a risk to fire? I appeal to the Minister, on behalf of all the *patrimoines*, to see to it that something be done urgently to protect this building, whether to find foreign agencies to help, I don't know, through the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of foreign Affairs as it has been done in the past. We cannot leave this building as it is now, at the risk of anything happening anytime, apart from cyclone.

Mr Aimée: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the decision to finance any project, including the project of Plaza theatre actually depends on the Ministry of Finance. I cannot answer for the Minister of Finance.

Mr Bérenger: Obviously, it is elementary that the authority concerned should have planned the three phases and provided for funding through the three phases. Now, we are told that Rs85 m. were spent for Phase I, and God knows when Phases II and III will start. Do we

have expert advice as to what has happened to these Rs85 m. of investment? It must have been running down. Do we have expert advice? How much will be required to redo, recomplete phase I before we move on to Phases II and III?

Mr Aimée: Phase I was, in fact, Rs87 m. and it is only to repair the roof because there was leakage on the roof of the theatre.

Mrs Ribot: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, from what we gather Rs87 m. have been spent for phase I and the roof still leaks. We understand there was a guarantee of ten years over those works concerning the roof. I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether a follow-up is being done on that roof that is costing us so much.

Mr Aimée: Yes, hon. Member.

The Deputy Speaker: We will round off with hon. Bhagwan unless hon. Nagalingum has a final question.

Mr Bhagwan: Being given the importance of the Plaza Theatre which I again say is a national *patrimoine*, can the Minister inform the House whether he has raised the issue with the Minister of Finance personally and even the Prime Minister who is one of the supposedly *experts en bâtiments du patrimoine*? He even has an adviser, Mr Alain Gordon Gentil there.

Mr Aimée: As I had mentioned earlier this project had been explained to the Minister of Finance, but as I said, it will in the Public Sector Investment Programme 2012-2016.

The Deputy Speaker: We will round off with hon. Nagalingum.

Mr Nagalingum: Will the hon. Minister agree with me that the more we will let time go by between Phase I and Phases II and II, the more we will end up in serious trouble?

Mr Aimée: Yes, I know. But, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, somebody with an empty pocket cannot go and buy something like that, you need to have the money from somewhere. This money is coming from the Ministry of Finance. I have said three occasions, the money comes from there.

**RENGANADEN SEENEVASSEN GOVT. SCHOOL –
HARBOUR BRIDGE PROJECT - DEMOLITION**

(No. B/31) Mr V. Baloomoody (Third Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether, in regard to the Renganaden Seenevassen Government School, he will state if the demolition thereof is being envisaged in

the wake of the implementation of the Harbour Bridge project and, if so, indicate how and where the students thereof will be relocated.

Dr. Bunwaree: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Road Development Authority that parts of the Renganaden Seeneevassen Govt. School involving two classroom blocks and one toilet block would, in fact, be directly affected by the Harbour Bridge Project.

My Ministry is looking into the best possible option for the school in due course without hampering its smooth running and without causing any undue hardship to the school community.

Mr Bérenger: May I ask the hon. Minister whether it is not a fact that the Ministry concerned, the Ministry of Public Infrastructure, went ahead without liaising with the Ministry of Education as to what would happen to that school and it is only recently that this issue came up that the school is going to be impacted upon?

Dr. Bunwaree: There was communication, but probably not official on file. *Le tracé n'était pas décidé encore* so we had to wait.

Mr Baloomoody: Can I ask the hon. Minister when was he made that part of the school will be demolished and whether there has been meeting with the PTA, the parents of that school?

Dr. Bunwaree: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, even if the buildings have to be demolished, there would be no problem. I am sure of that, because there is space there and we can build. But, because there is a specific project of national importance and a first line that is going to run nearby, I want to be reassured of all the security measures and so on and so forth.

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, if there has been communication, will the Minister tell us what specific measures are being envisaged because while you have this construction or destruction, the children cannot remain on site. Will he tell us what specific measures have been decided by the Ministry to re-house those children during the months or years it will take for the works to be carried out?

Dr. Bunwaree: We have not decided yet, but a decision will be taken very soon. In fact, there was a primary school there which had been transformed into a MEDCO college - which is most underutilized. It is one of the options; I am not saying that we are going to go into that direction only because we are also envisaging the construction of new buildings on the same premises where there is space.

Mrs Navarre-Marie: Will the hon. Minister state whether parents have been advised of such a situation, whether there have been meetings with the parents and, if so when, and at what intervals?

Dr. Bunwaree: Well, of course, I am going to meet the parents when I will have taken the decision of what we are going to do. I cannot go and meet the parents when there are many options.

Mr Bérenger: Has the Minister been informed by the Ministry concerned that the choice that has been made is final? Are there again possibilities of changes in the alignment?

Dr. Bunwaree: I am not aware of this, but I believe that this is the final one.

Mr Barbier: I want to know from the Minister officially when has he been made aware of the new *tracé* which is now going to be mostly on the left than on the right side as it was before, as it was answered in this august Assembly, and since then what has he been doing to inform the parents? Have there been meetings? Even very recently officers of his Ministry seem not to be aware what is going to happen to the premises of the school. I know what I am talking about. We had a meeting with the Minister and his technicians. Even the Minister, at that time, was not aware that the school is going to be affected by this project. What has he been doing in the recent past so that all stakeholders concerned are informed and a proper decision is taken?

Dr. Bunwaree: Mr Deputy Speaker, the project each time, at each phase, has come to Cabinet and I have been informed regularly of what is happening. In fact, a few weeks ago, the *tracé* has been finalized and it is being looked into. I can give the assurance to the House, to the parents, to the hon. Members that I am going to see to it that there is no undue suffering for the school community.

NICOLAY POWER STATION – OPERATION

(No. B/32) **Mr S. Soodhun (Second Member for La Caverne & Phoenix)** asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to the Nicolay Power Station, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Central Electricity Board, information as to –

- (a) if it has been in operation over the last three months and, if not, the reasons therefor, and
- (b) the difference in cost of production thereof as compared to the other power stations.

The Deputy Prime Minister: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Central Electricity Board that –

- (a) the Nicolay Power Station was in operation over the last three months, and
- (b) the difference in cost of production is around Rs8 per kWh.

Mr Soodhun: May I ask the hon. Deputy Prime Minister to inform the House whether CEB has any project for the implementation of the power station based on LNG?

The Deputy Prime Minister: Not at this stage.

Mr Lesjongard: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Deputy Prime Minister what has been the costs for running the gas turbines for the last three months?

The Deputy Prime Minister: It is a question of multiplication. I will multiply it and get you the result. But, having said that, I would like to draw the attention of the House, this is by no means an exaggerated figure. In 2005, for example, it was 12.2 GWh for the same period.

Mr Lesjongard: Hon. Deputy Prime Minister, I do not know how to do multiplication. I just want to know for the past three months what have been the costs for running the gas turbines?

The Deputy Prime Minister: As I have said, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have not got the multiplication here, but I can do it and give it to the hon. Member. The answer is in the multiplication of Rs12.5/KWh by the KW hrs produced.

STREET CHILDREN – STUDY

(No. B/33) Mr S. Soodhun (Second Member for La Caverne & Phoenix) asked the Minister of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare whether, in regard to the street children, she will state if her Ministry has commissioned any study to assess the present number thereof and the number thereof engaged in prostitution and if so, the outcome thereof, indicating the measures that will be taken.

Mrs Martin: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in regard to the street children, I am informed that there is no study which has been commissioned by my Ministry to assess the present number thereof and the number thereof engaged in prostitution.

Mr Soodhun: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, can the hon. Minister inform the House whether the victimised children have been given proper psychologically advice?

Mrs Martin: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the question relates to street children and whether any study has been done, there has been no study; there has been no number of children thereof engaged in prostitution then.

Mr Soodhun: Are there cases then reported to the Ministry?

Mrs Martin: As regards that question, no.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Since the hon. Minister just mentioned that she is aware of cases of street children engaging in prostitution, may I ask the hon. Minister what measures her Ministry intends to take to support these children?

Mrs Martin: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am afraid the hon. Member did not listen carefully to what I was saying. I repeat my answer again: “in regard to the street children – because the question relates to street children - I am informed that there is no study which has been commissioned by my Ministry to assess the present number thereof and the number thereof engaged in prostitution.”

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, to a supplementary question set by hon. Soodhun, the Minister mentioned that she is aware of cases of street children and to that answer I put the supplementary: what are the measures her Ministry intends to take to support street children engaged in prostitution, which she just mentioned that she is aware of after hon. Soodhun’s supplementary question.

Mrs Martin: In a former answer, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I stated that there are no children of the street in Mauritius; they do not live in the streets, they do not sleep in the streets.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: As a point of clarification, can I understand from the hon. Minister, whether in the absence of any study for street children engaged in prostitution, she is saying that there are no children engaged in prostitution who are on the streets?

Mrs Martin: I am not saying that, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, but the question relates to street children.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in the former answer given by the hon. Minister in this House, she mentioned that there are two types of children in the streets. She mentioned children on the streets and children of the streets, and in her previous answer she mentioned that in Mauritius we do not have children of the street, but we have children on the street and she has just mentioned the exact opposite of what she said earlier. May I ask the hon.

Minister whether she is still confused or whether she can make it clear which type of children we have on the street, whether they are children of the street or children on the street?

Mrs Martin: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we do not have children who stay on the street to sleep, this is what I said.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Soodhun, have you got a supplementary question?

(Interruptions)

Next question!

Mr Soodhun: The question that has been asked, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, concerns the number thereof engaged in prostitution. Can I ask the hon. Minister whether this is the case or not, whether there are cases of children who are engaged in prostitution and whether this has been reported to her Ministry?

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Minister has given a reply to this question. So, we move on to the next question.

(Interruptions)

I am sorry! We move on to the next question. Dr. S. Boolell!

MEDICAL AND HEALTH OFFICERS – RECRUITMENT

(No. B/34) Dr. S. Boolell (Second Member for Curepipe & Midlands) asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether, in regard to the last recruitment exercise of Medical and Health Officers on a permanent/pensionable basis, he will –

- (a) give a list of the recruits, indicating in each case, the date of –
 - (i) appointment, and
 - (ii) full registration with the Medical Council of Mauritius, and
- (b) state the number of the recruits who had previous working experience with the Ministry.

Mr Bundhoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, following the selection exercise carried out by the Public Service Commission for the post of Medical and Health Officers, 223 candidates were offered appointment as Medical and Health Officers/Senior Medical and Health Officers as from 13 February 2012. Furthermore, I wish to point out that the recruitment of Medical and Health Officers on a permanent/pensionable basis rests solely with the Public Service Commission.

I also wish to add that, in accordance with the established principle, a staff list is published officially on a regular basis providing information to the general public on senior officers in the Public Service by the Ministry of Civil Service and Administrative Reforms.

Dr. S. Boolell: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I find that the hon. Minister ignores my request for the date of full registration with the Medical Council. But I would like to ask the hon. Minister whether he has received representations from interns who had been working in the service for a long while before the exercise was carried out as junior interns have been recruited as opposed to senior ones.

Mr Bundhoo: Yes, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have received representations from medical officers, but I have to insist that recruitment of these medical officers rests solely within the powers of the Public Service Commission.

Dr. S. Boolell: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Minister whether the Ministry of Health had a representative on the Board of the PSC to guide the PSC towards recruitment and may I have the name of the doctor, please?

Mr Bundhoo: I do not think so, but I can check this out.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Obeegadoo, please go ahead with your question!

Mr Obeegadoo: Has the Minister taken cognizance of the case which has been much publicised of this Rodriguan young lady who benefited from a scholarship, attended SSR Medical College, qualified and was not offered employment and, if so, will he state whether his Ministry is envisaging alternatives such as contractual employment or whatever the level of the Ministry?

Mr Bundhoo: I have to repeat myself. The recruitment of doctors, medical officers rests solely with the Public Service Commission. The lady has applied through the PSC and I cannot answer why she was or she was not selected. But I can assure the House that hon. Nicholas Von-Mally and MPs from Rodrigues did raise the matter with me and we have now employed her on a month-to-month basis and she is based in Rodrigues and this has already been done. She is already there for the last three or four months now.

Dr. S. Boolell: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Minister whether he has an idea as a responsible Minister for health as to what the future holds for those doctors who finished their internship about three years ago and who have not been recruited at all, who are right now working in call centres and who had hoped on a basis of seniority at internship level to

be recruited by the Ministry of Health. If they apply again, are they going to go the same way that means to the dustbins or will they be recruited?

Mr Bundhoo: I have to remind the hon. Member, and to repeat myself again, recruitment is done solely by the Public Service Commission. My Ministry has nothing to do with that.

(Interruptions)

Can I complete that?

(Interruptions)

Do we have more vacancy?

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

Mr Bundhoo: Yes, we have some more vacancies and they will be declared vacant. We would request the Public Service Commission to start the procedure for further recruitment. I can also assure the hon. Member that this Government is fully aware of the number of doctors who are going to be qualified and entered Mauritius between now and the year 2018 and 2020. It is going to be the responsibility of each and every Government to see to it that we provide maximum possibilities to our young doctors because every single doctor who is in Mauritius is an asset to the country.

The Deputy Speaker: To round up this question, we will take a final question from hon. Dr S. Boolell.

Dr. S. Boolell: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, can the hon. Minister give an indication as to whether if any of those doctors who have not been recruited make an appeal to the PSC Appeal Tribunal they will be discriminated against for any future exercise?

Mr Bundhoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have checked this information. I must say that the Appeal Tribunal does not concern those who are not in the service. The Appeal Tribunal has been brought into Parliament by the Prime Minister, but it is in relation to those who are in service. But for those who are not in service and who have applied and for any reason feel that they are aggrieved, they can always take the case to a court of law which is the Supreme Court.

Mr Obeegadoo: The hon. Minister mentioned 223 offers having been made. Will he tell us how many applicants there were, if that is within his knowledge? He has mentioned projections up to 2018/2020, will he tell us what figures he has in terms of projections?

Mr Bundhoo: I have said it is going to be approximately 1500 to 2,000 between now and 2018 and 2020. What is the number of applicants who have submitted their applications at the Public Service Commission, I regret to inform the House that I do not have the information.

MEDICAL STUDIES - INSTITUTIONS

(No. B/35) Dr. S. Boolell (Second Member for Curepipe & Midlands) asked the Minister of Tertiary Education, Science, Research and Technology whether, in regard to medical studies at undergraduate and post graduate levels, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Tertiary Education Commission, information as to the institutions in Mauritius offering same, indicating, in each case, the

- (a) number of seats available;
- (b) if it falls under the aegis of the University of Mauritius, and
- (c) if it offers internship training, indicating the number of Mauritian students studying thereat.

Dr. Jeetah: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Tertiary Education Commission that four institutions are offering undergraduate medical studies and two are offering postgraduate courses in Mauritius as follows -

A. Undergraduate programmes

- 1. University of Mauritius (MBChB)
- 2. SSR Medical College (MBBS)
- 3. *Ecole de Médecine Louis Pasteur (Diplôme d'Université Médecine Générale)*
- 4. Anna Medical College and Research Centre (MBBS)

B. Postgraduate programmes

- 5. D. Y. Patil Worldwide Ltd (Masters in Surgery and Doctor in Medicine)
- 6. Mauritius Institute of Health (*Diplôme d'Université*)

As regards parts (a) (i) and (a) (ii), I am tabling the information.

With regard to part (b) of the question, I understand that the hon. Member is referring to clinical training. I am informed that all the institutions except for the *Ecole de Médecine Louis Pasteur* which only prepares students for medical studies at University of Lille 2, offer clinical training in government hospitals.

The modalities for clinical training are outlined in the Clinical Training Framework and the Supplemental Agreement for medical studies signed by the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life and each institution.

Regarding internship, once students complete their undergraduate degree, they have to submit their application for internship at the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life and register at the Medical Council. I am informed that subject to funds being available, the students are placed for internship in public hospitals.

Dr. S. Boolell: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, can I ask the hon. Minister whether there is a study that has been conducted to give an indication as to the medical requirements in terms of doctors per head of population over the next - let us say two steps, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir - three years or five years? In view of what might be coming out of the study whether it is logical to allow medical schools to open in Mauritius like a medical campus in Melrose, for instance?

Dr. Jeetah: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, first, it is not because the hon. Member is already a doctor that we should stop our young children to become doctors. What I want to say, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, is that there are two things that were being referred to by the hon. Member.

Firstly, we have a process that has been undertaken by the Tertiary Education Commission to bring about a list of priority fields of study. If you go through that document, you would see that there are a number of fields where we need specialists.

Secondly, I don't know whether the hon. Member was referring to an agreement which the University of Mauritius has had with the University of Geneva whereby they want to open a very high quality institution here in Mauritius in a rural area, and I don't see anything wrong in that subject. Geography is not a problem. I think what is important here is that for the first time the University of Mauritius has been able to have an agreement with such a prestigious institution using English, as medium as opposed to French with Bordeaux.

Dr. S. Boolell: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, may I impress upon the hon. Minister that we already have a backlog of doctors waiting, who are not going to be offered internship through even the funds from Finance because the service can stretch only that much. Under these conditions, is it fair to open new medical schools like one which was opened recently simply because the Tertiary Education Commission is working on its own, without consultation with the Ministry of Health or with the Ministry of Education?

Dr. Jeetah: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the hon. Member has to understand that we have a vision to make this country a regional knowledge hub. If we look at the life expectancy in this country, it varies between 69 and 79. Next door, in Africa, it is 40 years. We have, I think, a moral responsibility towards the African continent. And there are plenty of opportunities in the region for good qualified doctors.

Mr Obeegadoo: I have two supplementary questions, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, if you will allow me. If there is one area where quality matters as much as quantity, if not more, it is medical studies. Will the hon. Minister explain to us why his Ministry, through the Tertiary Education Commission, is allowing the operation of at least four - he said - centres for undergraduate studies in medicine with the project of the Prime Minister to have a proper faculty of medicine at University of Mauritius - now we have UTM partnering Anna Medical College, private institutions like Louis Pasteur and SSR Medical College - whereas we could have had one single high quality, properly equipped and resource centre for medical studies at the University of Mauritius?

Dr. Jeetah: The hon. Member has a point. We are building a good public medical school. We have the University of Mauritius which is working with Bordeaux. Now, we have already started a fourth year and soon a fifth year and, hopefully, students will be completing their medical degree here which was not the case previously. We are supporting our public University to give opportunities to our kids. And with regard to quality, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I happen to know that in this cohort at the University of Mauritius, one has to have six units, as they say in Mauritius, in "O" levels and five "A's", out of which, three need to be "A*". As far as quality is concerned, we should not worry. With regard to the private sector, the hon. Member needs to understand that we had difficulty - that was since I was Minister of Health - that we did not have enough specialists. We must consider ourselves lucky that today we have D. Y. Patil which is offering post graduate courses for our doctors and in time I can guarantee the hon. Member that we will have some of the best medical schools in this part of the world.

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we have just heard the Minister of Health telling us how many more doctors were expected to come back from abroad. We know how many have applied and not obtained the job. Will the Minister not agree that as much as it is the responsibility of Government to offer opportunities to all qualified "A" level holders, it is also the responsibility of Government not to lead young people astray into qualifying with

qualifications that will not offer them employment and should there not be, at this stage, either championed by the Prime Minister's Office or the Ministry responsible for the economy, some sort of forward planning taking into consideration the projections of the Ministry of Health and what is being envisaged in the tertiary education sector?

Dr. Jeetah: I suspect that hon. Members are a bit worried that we have done too well too soon.

(Interruptions)

I can guarantee...

(Interruptions)

I have some figures, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, for the period 2000 to 2005 - I sought for the information and I have got it. We had about 100 qualified doctors recruited for their internship. Between 2005 to date, we have been able to recruit another 950. What does that show? It means that at one period of time we had a dearth of doctors and today we have a number of doctors who have completed their studies are able to offer their services. But, the critical issue here, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, if you look at, for example, the cardiac centre, would you believe that in Mauritius we have only one doctor who conducts open heart surgery at the cardiac centre! So, what we are doing here is we are building for the future and I do not have any doubt that we are on the right track.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have a very simple question which requires a very simple answer. We all know that doctors, after their studies, come back and they have to undergo internship before they can practice. We know also that the regional hospitals cannot sustain that number of students for internship. What does the Tertiary Education Commission propose to do to address such an issue?

Dr. Jeetah: The hon. Member ought to know, she was Minister of Health. This question is to be addressed to the Ministry of Health. But, I can answer...

(Interruptions)

I can answer.....

(Interruptions)

I have answered that this is a board...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Give your answer in a straightforward manner, please!

(Interruptions)

Dr. Jeetah: This is subject to the availability of funds, I have already answered this.

The Deputy Speaker: We will round up this question with a final question from hon. Dr. S.Boolell.

Dr. S. Boolell: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Minister what are the measures of quality control which are being implemented by the Tertiary Education Commission to ensure that those undergoing training at specialist level locally turn out to be efficient specialists?

Dr. Jeetah: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as I said, the Tertiary Education Commission has come up with a regulatory framework for post-secondary education. There is now a clinical training framework plus a supplementary agreement which makes the process clearer in terms of number of students and all the requirements. I can lay on the Table of the Assembly all these documents.

Dr. S. Boolell: I am talking about external examination.

Dr. Jeetah: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, all the institutions which operate here have to abide by the requirements of TEC. I am going to lay on the Table of the Assembly all the Regulatory frameworks.

STC – DONATIONS – BENEFICIARIES

(No. B/36) Mr R. Uteem (Second Member for Port Louis South and Port Louis Central) asked the Minister of Industry, Commerce and Consumer Protection whether, in regard to donations made by the State Trading Corporation, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Corporation, information as to the amount donated in cash and in kind on a yearly basis, since 2005 to date, indicating in each case, the name of the beneficiaries thereof and the criteria used for the selection thereof.

Mr Sayed-Hossen: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the State Trading Corporation that the information is being compiled and will be submitted at the earliest for tabling at the National Assembly.

Mr Uteem: May I know from the hon. Minister whether for these donations there has been the approval of the board of the STC?

Mr Sayed-Hossen: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have requested the State Trading Corporation to provide me with the information and, as I said, the information will be supplied and it will be tabled at the National Assembly.

Mr Uteem: May I know from the hon. Minister why is it that in the financial statements of the State Trading Corporation no mention is made of any donation in kind or in cash made by the State Trading Corporation?

Mr Sayed-Hossen: I will need to look into that particular question. I will come back to the hon. Member.

NATIONAL RESILIENCE FUND - SCHEMES

(No. B/37) Mr P. Jugnauth (First Member for Quartier Militaire & Moka) asked the vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to the National Resilience Fund, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to the schemes set up to support enterprises facing difficulties due to the Eurozone crisis, since the presentation of the 2012 Budget to date.

The vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development (Mr X.L. Duval): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the National Resilience Fund was created in the 2012 Budget in order to stimulate growth and resilience in the economy and to provide support to enterprises requiring liquidity in the event of an expected resurgence of the world economic crisis.

The NRF has at its disposal an amount of Rs7.3 billion to finance a total of 22 schemes which comprises 9 new schemes announced in the 2012 budget, as well as 9 schemes designed under the Stimulus and Additional Stimulus Packages of 2008, and two new schemes developed under the Economic Restructuring and Competitiveness Programme of 2010.

I am tabling full details of all the schemes financed by the NRF.

I would wish to inform the House that in view of the multiplicity of schemes, I have asked for these schemes to be rationalised so that assistance available to entrepreneurs may be more easily understood and accessed.

Mr Jugnauth: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I suppose the Minister will have to table the answer. May I know, with regard to each scheme, how much money has already been spent as at to date?

Mr Duval: Yes. The hon. Member did not ask for that information but it is being provided in the second question that has been asked by hon. Li Kwong Wing.

Mr Jugnauth: May I know if the hon. Minister is envisaging, in the light of the situation that is prevailing, new schemes that he is proposing to come up with?

Mr Duval: It is always possible, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, to bear in mind what extra can be done but, at the moment, the good news is that there is sufficient amount of money, Rs7.3 billion. Some of that money has been spent, a lot of it remains and, if necessary, of course, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we will look at the situation.

Mr Li Kwong Wing: With regard to the schemes, can the vice-Prime Minister inform the House whether there is a specific promotion scheme to the value of more than Rs550 m. for promotion campaigns? Can he also tell us what are the criteria that will be used to carry out these campaigns and who are the people who are going to be selected to participate in these campaigns and whether it is going to select the people who are supposed to be helped rather than officials who spend all their time on missions and never put their foot in the office?

Mr Duval: Well, I would not accept the last comment of the hon. Member because the figures, fortunately for us, prove that Mauritius has done extremely well over the last 10 or 20 years.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the amount of Rs500 m. is a provision for additional budget which would be necessary for the Board of Investment, Enterprise Mauritius and MTPA principally because we have asked them, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, to increase their activity overseas to shore up Mauritian exports, whether it be services for which the BOI is responsible, manufacturing for which the Enterprise Mauritius is responsible or tourism for which the MTPA is responsible. None of that money has been used so far because they are using their own budget. It is a provision that is there in the National Resilience Fund, should the need arise because we have asked them to be more active and that money is there to be used.

Mr Li Kwong Wing: May I ask the vice-Prime Minister whether he is ready to apply the same principle as in the scheme for small-scale industries with the bankers, that Rs3 billion package, where the list of different applicants, the list of those who have been approved for disbursements and the list of those applicants who have been refused any funds, are publicly disclosed so that we know how this fund is being used effectively and so that we do not have a

repeat of the use of funds of the stimulus packages which have been wasted in the case of Jean Suzanne and Ram Mardaymootoo?

Mr Duval: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, firstly, in the case of Mr Jean Suzanne at Infinity or in the case of RS Fashion, etc. no money has been lost by the funds concerned. Secondly, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am sure that it is a slip of the tongue from the hon. Member, it is not possible for us to publish the names because banking law does not allow it for us to publish the names of everyone who is benefiting from the SME concessionary loan. That is not possible. As far as this is concerned, it is to shore up the budgets of these particular organisations and as for any budgetary item, questions are asked to these organisations. They will provide the information.

I just want to add, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that in addition to this, there are a lot of specific programmes - in all there are 20 programmes - a large number of these address small and medium enterprises and these include marketing overseas, for attendance of fairs overseas. That information is also being provided, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

Mr Jugnauth: In the light of the Ministry's prediction that the growth rate is likely to be less than 3%, may I know whether there are sectors that are going to be prioritised with regard to this strategy?

Mr Duval: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that is not the case, we have not said that this is likely to be. If there is a tsunami, then obviously something can happen, but we are at the latest projection and I thank you for this opportunity. The latest projection is from our Ministry: 3.6%. Now, other people have come to 3.8%, MCCI, an independent body has estimated 3.9%. Nobody has a crystal ball to know what will happen the next three months, so far as this item in our projection or the other is concerned. As you can see overseas, every day, every week, people and other countries are changing. IMF is changing its predictions for growth every week almost. So, everybody is changing and we should not pretend that we have a crystal ball for the future. Nobody has a crystal ball for the future. What everybody is converging on a growth rate of around 3.6% to 4%, anything else, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, is simply untrue.

Mr Li Kwong Wing: In view of the size of this National Resilience Fund, which is more than Rs7 billion; can the hon. Minister inform the House whether there is a special steering committee which looks after the allocation of these funds and also measure the effectiveness of the use of a fund and make sure that these funds are properly allocated and disbursed according

to specific criteria? Also, can the hon. Minister who are the people responsible for handling with so much money, so that they are not being misused and what measures are taken in case that there has been misuse of these funds?

Mr Duval: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as I have mentioned before in the case of previous use of the funds, now there is a committee, a system and I'll gladly provide information to the members of the committee, if the hon. Member asks for it, but I understand it is, in fact, private and public sector people together. I will provide information on them also.

Mr Jugnauth: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the document of the letter of Development Policy from the Ministry of Finance, itself, states that private sector investment is most likely to remain morose and total investment will drop to below 24% and taking into consideration the fact that job creation will remain low and if the tourism sector is affected, growth is most likely to drop below 3%. This is the document from the Ministry of Finance. I am very surprised why the hon. Minister is saying that this is not true, unless there is a tsunami. This document does not speak of a tsunami. It speaks of only the unfavourable international economic situation that is prevailing and that might further deteriorate.

Mr Duval: If the hon. Member has understood the purpose of that letter was to ask for a loan. You don't ask for a loan if you don't need a loan. You have to make a case for the loan. You don't go and ask for a loan saying that everything is fantastic.

(Interruptions)

Rama Valayden had a nice story on that one. Now, if you ask for a loan, then you must put forward a case for the loan. That is clear. So, it was also possible, it was necessary, therefore...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Let the hon. Minister give his reply, please.

(Interruptions)

Listen to the hon. vice-Prime Minister, please.

Mr Duval: Obviously, when you are asking for a loan you have to put the worst case scenario and this is what the Ministry did at that point in time, but I can tell the hon. Member - if he is interested - that there is no slump in tourism, that textile was a little down, but has picked up in March - I don't have the latest figures - that the offshore sector is creating 10% more GBC1's than previously thanks to our efforts in Africa, etc. There is, at the moment, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, no tsunami. This is why the MCCI has, a few days ago, published a 3.9% increase.

Obviously, we have to be careful. It is my role, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, to make sure that if there is a big problem, we are not caught with our pants down. That is not our intention. So, obviously, we have a standby loan from African Development Bank and we are making sure that we can get some other loans. If there is a problem, I cannot come to the House and say: Sorry, I thought it was going to be fine! We need to be prudent: *gouverner, c'est prévoir*.

Mr Jugnauth: Is the hon. Minister saying that the conclusion that growth is likely to drop below 3% is based on false assumptions, false figures and such a document being sent to the World Bank?

Mr Duval: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I don't have any lessons to take from the hon. Member and we can go into that. I am saying to the hon. Member that I am sorry if he doesn't understand that when you ask for a loan, you also have to put also the worst case scenario. If something happens, then I will need the money. I need that as a loan. If the hon. Member does not understand that, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am very sorry, but I have no lesson to take from him. I can assure you. But, it was on a worst case scenario, if something happens then we will need the DPL.

The Deputy Speaker: The Table has been advised that PQ Nos. B/39, B/40, B/44 and B/47 have been withdrawn.

EMPLOYMENT RIGHTS ACT – EMPLOYEES – LAYING OFF

(No. B/38) Mr A. Ganoo (First Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Minister of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment whether, in regard to the employees, he will state -

- (a) the number thereof whose employment has been terminated since the promulgation of the Employment Rights Act to date, indicating the sectors in which they were employed, and
- (b) if Government will consider amending the law regarding the laying off of workers.

Mr Mohamed: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, according to our records available at my Ministry during period 02 February 2009 which is the date of proclamation of the Employment Rights Act to 31 March 2012, I have the sets of figures that have been compiled and I am tabling a list of cases indicating the sectors involved where there has been termination of employment. Before I am to continue, I'll tell my hon. friend to, at least, have a copy of the document.

In actual fact, prior to the proclamation of the Employment Rights Act in February 2009, it was not mandatory upon any person who is terminating the employment of another to communicate it to the Ministry. However, ever since February 2009 the proclamation date until 31 March 2012, there has been a termination of employment of 15,538 workers and that have been registered at the level of the Ministry.

As regards part (b) of the question, the hon. Member may wish to note that I am proposing to bring some amendments to the labour laws, the salient features of the proposed amendments have already been communicated and made public and, at the moment, those amendments are being finalised at the Attorney General's office.

So yes, the amendments are being brought.

Mr Ganoo: From the figures that have been circulated, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the total amount of workers laid off is: 15,538 since the proclamation of the new law, which was in February 2009. The hon. Minister will agree with me that this is a serious situation and I have with me a few PQs that have been put to him in the past. The law was proclaimed in 2009 and as at 2010 the figure was 4,400. As at 10 May 2011, to a question put by my friend, hon. Reza Uteem, the figure were 6,900, that is, approximately around the figure 7,000 as at April 2011. So, one year after, we are now May 2012, 7,000 have shot up to 15,000, which means in the past year 7,000 workers have lost their jobs. This is a very serious figure, which should be a matter of concern to all of us. This is why I think we should impress upon the hon. Minister that there is urgency for the law to be amended. He should come before this House once for all to have an in-built system to prevent the employers to make an abuse of the term, which was described as "economic reason". The hon. Minister should know himself, he admitted in his answers to PQs that many employers have been making an abuse of the new provisions in the new law proposed by this Government in 2008, proclaimed in 2009 and which has opened the doors to abuse resulting in redundancies.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Ganoo, I think you have made your point.

Mr Ganoo: My point to the hon. Minister is: when will these new amendments be brought before this House?

Mr Mohamed: In actual fact, let me first of all say that I totally agree with what the hon. Member has just said. I have always said the same thing, that there was a law that was brought in. There are a minority of employers who have made an abuse of the situation, and to give

exact figures from February to December 2009 the termination of employment registered at the Labour Office is 4,461; from Jan to Dec 2010 it is 4,291; from Jan to Dec 2011 it is 5,320 and from January to March 2012 it is 1,466 and when you add up all those figures it is precisely 15,538.

Out of those 15,538, 5,989 laid off workers have joined the workfare programme that precisely was created ever with the Employment Rights Act. Now, with the workfare programme that did not exist before, we have been able to disburse a total amount of Rs248,761,675 that have been paid as transitional unemployment benefit to those workers. At the same time, the three issues that I would like to address following the remarks and the question of the hon. Member is that between 2005 to 2010 without in anyway saying that there is no urgent need to rectify it by an amendment in the law, it is however important to also realise that between 2005-2010 there have been 50,900 job creation change in employment. Therefore, there have been more job creation than job losses within the same period. Also what I would like to say is - as I have explained - I have already gone to Cabinet with proposed amendments. We are, in fact, setting up a new institution in order to see to it that this abuse that certain employers make will no longer exist. We are also precisely making very important changes with regard to termination of employment in the Employment Rights Act.

We are also bringing some positive changes to the workfare programme that works in the advantage of laid off workers. Therefore, I can assure the hon. Member that Cabinet has already approved those changes and every single change that is being brought will precisely address this situation, which I totally agree with him, must be addressed because there are certain employers who make an abuse of the situation.

Mr Uteem: For the period concerned, may I know from the hon. Minister the amount contributed by the employers who laid off those employees to the fund and how many cases have the permanent secretary brought before the Industrial Court to recover severance allowance for employees that have been laid off?

Mr Mohamed: The only figures that I have in my possession is the amount of money - as I have stated earlier on - in terms of transitional and employment benefit that has been paid out. It is Rs248,761,675.

With regard to the amount of cases, as I have said, 5,989 workers have joined the workfare programme. Out of the 15,000 also, 5,989 have joined the workfare programme, that

means that the difference have not joined the workfare programme and if they have not joined the workfare programme, most of the time it is because they have come to a settlement with their former employers or have found another employment, that is why they have not joined the workfare programme.

What exactly is the amount of money that has been contributed in that fund from the 248 by an employer, I do not have the exact figure. If the hon. Member comes with a substantive question I shall gladly communicate same to him.

QUATRE SOEURS – FOOTBALL PLAYGROUND - UPGRADING

(No. B/39) Mr M. Seeruttun (Second Member for Vieux Grand Port & Rose Belle) asked the vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to the project for the upgrading of the football playground at Quatre Soeurs, he will state -

- (a) if the works have been completed, and
- (b) the cost incurred therefor.

(Withdrawn)

SSR INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT - PUBLIC SERVICE VEHICLE LICENCE - APPLICATIONS

(No. B/40) Mr M. Seeruttun (Second Member for Vieux Grand Port & Rose Belle) asked the vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to the last invitation for applications to operate a Public Service Vehicle Licence at the Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam International Airport, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the National Transport Authority, information as to

- (a) when same was first advertised in the press;
- (b) the number of applications received as at to date, and
- (c) the number of licences that are to be issued.

(Withdrawn)

The Deputy Speaker: Time is over!

MOTION

SUSPENSION OF S.O 10(2)

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

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

PUBLIC BILLS

First Reading

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

- (a) The Sugar Insurance Fund (Amendment) Bill (No. I of 2012)
- (b) The Sugar Industry Efficiency (Amendment) Bill (No. II of 2012)
- (c) The *Université Des Mascareignes* Bill (No. III of 2012)
- (d) The Environment and Land Use Appeal Tribunal Bill (No. IV of 2012)

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

At 4.18 p.m. the sitting was suspended.

On resuming at 4.53 p.m. with Mr Speaker in the Chair.

MOTIONS

CIVIL ESTABLISHMENT ORDER (NO. 2) 2011

CIVIL ESTABLISHMENT (RODRIGUES REGIONAL ASSEMBLY) ORDER (NO. 2) 2011

The Minister of Civil Service and Administrative Reforms (Mr S. Moutia): Mr Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I would like to move that the two Motions standing in my name be taken together namely –

- (i) *“That this Assembly resolves that the Civil Establishment Order (No.2) 2011 made by the President of the Republic on 9 December 2011 and laid on the Table of the National Assembly on 13 December 2011 be approved.”*
- (ii) *“That this Assembly resolves that the Civil Establishment (Rodrigues Regional Assembly) Order (No.2) 2011 made by the President of the Republic on 09 December 2011 and laid on the Table of the National Assembly on 13 December 2011 be approved.”*

Mr Speaker: Let me put the question! The Minister has made a request that the two Motions be taken together. I take it that there is no dissident voice in the House. The hon. Minister may proceed.

Mr Moutia: Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. Section 3(1) of the Civil Establishment Act 1981, as subsequently amended, stipulates that the President may by Order –

- (a) establish offices in the Public Service of Mauritius;
- (b) determine the number of persons to be appointed to such offices, and
- (c) determine the emoluments to be attached to such offices.

The Civil Establishment Order (No. 2) 2011 is a consolidated Order reflecting the changes on the approved establishment of Ministries and Departments for Financial Year 2012.

The Civil Establishment (Rodrigues Regional Assembly) Order (No. 2) 2011 is a consolidated Order reflecting changes in the approved establishment of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly.

The Civil Establishment Order (No. 2) 2011 and the Civil Establishment (Rodrigues Regional Assembly) Order (No. 2) 2011 are, therefore, now submitted for approval by the National Assembly for Financial Year 2012.

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

The Deputy Prime Minister rose and seconded.

Question put and agreed to.

GOVERNMENT PROGRAMME 2012-2015

Mrs B. Juggoo (Third Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue): Mr Speaker, Sir, I beg to move the following Motion standing in my name that –

“This Assembly resolves that the Government Programme 2012-2015 presented to this Assembly on Monday 16 April 2012, copy of which has been circularised amongst Honourable Members, be and is hereby approved.”

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order, now! Order! Order, please!

At this stage, Members of the MMM Opposition and MSM Opposition left the Chamber.

Mrs Juggoo: Mr Speaker, Sir., I am deeply honoured today to rise as a woman Member of this House to reflect on the contents of the Presidential Address read for the first time by a woman - Mrs Monique Ohsan-Bellepeau.

This programme is about people and development, development for people, of people and by people. It seeks to uplift the average Mauritian to enjoy the fruits of development and creates new opportunities for them. Albert Einstein could not have phrased this Government's vision for the people of Mauritius more aptly –

“All that is valuable in human society depends upon the opportunity for development accorded to the individual.”

That was said by Albert Einstein.

Small as we are, and diminished daily by faster means of communications, Mauritius is a country whose citizens never turn back when confronted by obstacles and challenges with a Prime Minister like hon. Dr. Navinchandra Ramgoolam, however daunting our obstacles are.

As a Government we never shrink from lending a helping hand to the most needy and disadvantaged, wherever they may be. Even as the euro zone debacle and the recession in the markets of our main trading partners work havocs, this Government demonstrates a spirit of courage, perseverance and generosity that is a harbinger of hope, pride and solidarity among the various constituents of our rainbow nation. It has come with an ambitious programme. As part of the democratic process the programme needs to be analysed, debated, chewed and digested. This is a pre-requisite to chalk our way with a view to building a nation on solid bedrock to withstand external shocks.

It is sad, Mr Speaker, Sir, that a significant number of elected members from this august Assembly have run away from their duty and turned democracy into a sham.

Their reason: the most trivial and childish - the Prime Minister should dissolve Parliament and call for a snap election. This Government elected for five years commands a comfortable majority, and there is no defection. The people gave this Government a mandate and expect it to be respected. But some people are living in a world of make-believe. They can continue enjoying the fantasy while this Government continues to transform this country. In the name of integrity and honesty such hon. Members could, at least, refund the taxpayers the wages equivalent to today's session or part thereto.

Mr Speaker, Sir, before I move on to the commitments of the Government, allow me to say that it was indeed a moment of great joy and pride for the women community to have witnessed and took cognizance of the vision of this Government, more so when such an address was delivered by a lady, who is currently at the Head of our primary institution.

I feel equally proud today, Mr Speaker, Sir, to have been given the chance to address the House onto this firm commitment of Government as stipulated in the said programme. I will fail in my duty, if I do not express my heartfelt thanks and gratitude to the hon. Prime Minister for having given me such an opportunity. I am equally grateful to all our colleagues, the Deputy Prime Minister, the vice-Prime Ministers and Ministers. *Ceci dit, M. le président*, what more evidence would one need to be convinced that the present Government is doing all that is needed to show its firm commitment towards women empowerment, thereby giving the women community an equal opportunity and entrusting them with the role of higher responsibilities and trust. This can only happen and realisable with the Labour and PMSD Government.

Mr Speaker, Sir, those not having a short memory would surely remember that it was the present Prime Minister, and the then Leader of the alliance Labour/PMSD/MSM, who took the decision in nominating so many women as candidates at the last General Election.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the Governmental Programme 2012-2015 had to be revisited because of those, who aborted their obligations *vis à vis* the population despite the trust place in them.

Funny enough, those who are the same people who claimed to have the highest respect for our institutions and yet they are not present in this debate on the Governmental Programme. They chose to have a walk-out and they proclaim themselves as an alternative to the present Government. The truth, Mr Speaker, Sir, is that they have no basis whatsoever for any argument apart from gossips. If they had, I am sure they would have accepted the invitation of a *face à face* with the hon. vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, hon. Xavier-Luc Duval. This is what this Government has done and is doing. However, taken off-guard and being short of arguments, the Opposition chose the easy and coward way of boycotting the debate. Mr Speaker, Sir, cowards die many a time before their death, and I am afraid to say many of those who walked out would not have a second chance, maybe, to participate in another debate on the particular Presidential Address. Many of them would die a premature death. It is in Parliament, Mr Speaker, Sir ...

Mr Speaker: The hon. Member has to say politically.

Mrs Juggoo: Politically, Mr Speaker, Sir! It is in the context of politics. It is, Mr Speaker, Sir, in the National Assembly that we have the power to push ideas or to alter the course of events. Unfortunately, many of our colleagues chose to cash taxpayers' money and spend their time and energy haranguing in nocturnal meetings with absolutely no influence on the course of national and international events. While this Government is upholding institutional democracy, others chose to abdicate from their responsibility.

The Presidential Address is an integral part of our democracy. When the international outlook becomes gloomy, the euro zone plunges deeper into crisis and our main markets are marred by uncertainty and contractions while on the domestic fronts we are confronted with new threats and challenges, it is the duty of any respectable Government to review its programme in the name of representative democracy and chalk a new trajectory befitting a modern ambitious nation.

As we are on the theme of democracy, Mr Speaker, Sir, allow me to reflect on grass root democracy. We, Members of this Assembly, often get all the media coverage and attention. We all know that many who have worked in the shadows and deserve no less. To them, and especially to the supporters from my Constituency, who have made democracy a living experience, I say thank you. There are hundreds, if not thousands of our supporters who have laboured strenuous efforts at grass root levels to participate in the democratic process. A lively democracy is not only about what elected Members say or do in the National Assembly. It is all about all those who zealously and passionately get involved in ensuring that the best and most practical ideas are translated into action. It is to them that I would like to pay a special tribute to enlivening democracy through their enthusiasm and dedication.

I will now speak about the world crisis. Against the backdrop of the financial crisis, the melt down, the world recession, and once again the emergence of a new economic crisis in the euro zone, this Government is battling its way and manages to emerge from troubled water, almost unscathed.

The Presidential Address, Mr Speaker, Sir, has been a moment for Mauritian Governments to reflect on the challenges and opportunities, set out our priorities, and call Mauritians together to strengthen our nationhood and economy. I find this very inspiring. So, it is with great pleasure that I stand here to reflect on what we have done, what we are doing and how we intend to proceed in the next three years. Ours is a time of global change, upheaval and

uncertainty. Many fear that the world's largest trading bloc – the European Union – is on the verge of recession as it struggles to deal with its ongoing debt crisis. Even some of the best performers like the Netherlands, once critical of the ailing Greece, are now in troubled water. Despite various policy steps to contain the euro area debt crisis and banking problems, risks to stability have increased manifold. Sovereign financing continues to be a challenge with a great degree of downside risk. Apprehensions of a worsening of the crisis lurk in the horizon. Economists predict that 2012 will be a year of turbulence, the more so as globalisation has intensified. Credit default swap in Western Europe will most probably widen as ratings downgrades followed from different directions.

For the world's largest economy, the United States, one of our most reliable trading partners, despite the long distance separating us, overcoming the economic challenges will also take many years and great effort with negative influence on our economy and standard of living. We are a small vulnerable economy, too weak to have any influence on world economic or political trends. We have to adjust to what the major powers do, and try to slither through to survive. For these reasons, the country needs to be united and the various parties constituting the Government have to put aside differences and personal interest and, hand in hand, combined efforts to reach our goals for the common good. But what did we see, Mr Speaker, Sir? Betrayal! Deserting the economic battlefield!

The domestic front will say it is no secret that economic progress is a direct function of political stability, strong government, clear vision and dedicated mission. Yet, Mr Speaker, Sir, when the government needed all the support to harness and mobilise its resources, it found itself in the centre of a political blackmail, one of its partners, instead of uniting its efforts to reinforce the battlefield against a hostile economic war, chooses to keep the government and the country to ransom, preferring personal interest over State affairs. It was as if Macbeth had invited Banquo to the party, and then ambushed him. The Labour Party rescued the MSM from dying into oblivion, supported it with milk just as the farmer fed the dying snake he had collected on the grassy path until the snake is revived. We all know from la Fontaine's fable at which the snake, once saved, turned its venomous deadly strike: none other than the farmer who rescued it from certain death. This is exactly what the leader of the dissenting party chose to do: strike back at the Labour Party and its leader.

Mr Speaker: The hon. Member refers to the party not to the leader.

Mrs Juggoo: Strike back at the Labour Party.

As Shakespeare would put it in Julius Caesar, this stab has been the deepest cut of all, and the stabbing continues unabated. Worse, Mr Speaker, Sir, they have initiated an infectious campaign, accusing this Government of economic mismanagement, auguring a climate of the most pessimistic economic scenario of doom and gloom. They dare to make a comparison of their economic performance when they were in power during the period 2000-2005 and the period this government has been in power. Mr Speaker, Sir, this is a historic place. It is an important symbol of our democracy. It is more than that; it is a living, breathing institution - one that continues to grow and to evolve. It is an institution of truth. And I chose this institution to set the records straight.

Mr Speaker, Sir, statistics do not lie. The World Heritage ranked Mauritius 8th ahead of such stalwarts as the US, the UK and France in terms of economic freedom and performance. They grouped Mauritius with the select group of high achievers - Hong Kong, Singapore, New Zealand and Chile. Mauritius compared favorably with them in the category of fiscal management, sometimes outperforming them. This Independent American Organisation does not owe Mauritius anything and has no reason to pay lip service to the Government of Navin Ramgoolam. Similarly, the Ibrahim Index or the World Bank Report on the best place to do business has no reason to praise Mauritius, unless we deserved it. We earned it through hard work, appropriate policies, discipline, teamwork and dedication. Facts and figures speak for themselves, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Let's look at the variables, our debts. Total external debt was Rs28.9 billion in 2002/2003 and Rs26.3 billion in 2005: it was Rs 23.7 billion in 2007/2008. Total public sector debt as a percentage of GDP stand at 52.3%, representing a figure of Rs166.9 billion in 2010. In mid 2003 total public sector debt reached a staggering 71% of GDP, even if that was for a short period. Currently, public sector debt as the ratio of GDP is 54%, well below the recommendations of the Maastricht Treaty compared to 64% bequeathed by the MMM-MSM Government in 2005. I understand that in economics and finances absolute figures are less meaningful, and analysis for comparative purposes is effected through ratios. Comparing absolute figures in two different times while ignoring time preference value of money are meaningless and demagogical. The important criterion is sustainability. And it is on this basis that credit agencies believe there has been positive evolution and would consider upgrading their rating, an observation in sharp

contrast to what is taking place for countries like Spain, Ireland or Portugal and even the Netherlands.

Our fiscal deficit in 2005 when this Government was swept to power, the outgoing Government left an unsustainable budget deficit of 8.1%, containing all the signs of an inflation spiral, impending impoverishment and rising burden. This was the most irresponsible act, and it is a pity we do not have a Fiscal Responsibility Act similar to New Zealand.

The annual average growth rate during the period 2000-2005 works at 4.9% compared to 4.8% for the period 2005-2010, based on an apportioning of the time period each Government assumed office. The hitch is that the Labour Government bequeathed a growth rate of 10.2% in 2000 whereas the other Government left a heritage of 2.7% growth rate.

The economy started shedding jobs slightly earlier than 1996. Trends of rising unemployment were discernible. The country attempted to grapple with this problem without much success for the past 16 years. However, by 2000, it was still manageable at 6.7% and the new government that came in power failed to take necessary action. When they lost the 2005 election, unemployment had soared to 9.6%. In mid-2003 the figure had even exceed 10%. The second government of Navin Ramgoolam laboured strenuous efforts to curb unemployment which fell to 7.5%, rising slightly and subsequently stabilising at 7.5%.

Mr Speaker, Sir, on this variable we have to admit the Alliance Government fared worse than the MMM-MSM Government. Their average annual rate of inflation is estimated at 4.7% compared with 6.7% for the last seven years. However, it is worth pointing out that growth and unemployment were high during the MMM-MSM Government which collectively have a dampening effect on inflation. The trade-off between employment and inflation is well established in conventional economic textbooks and empirically well-documented. Moreover, the turbulence currently faced in the euro zone has a ripple effect on the international arena, including trading nations like Mauritius. Current account deficit: this Government has monitored closely the deficit of the balance of payment. The trade balance deficit is expected to widen and rise from Rs72 billion last year to Rs92 billion this year. Yet, the current account deficit is expected to show a surplus, which means that the country is moving fast towards a service economy. It also shows a satisfactory healthy state of such sectors as tourism, ICT and the financial sector despite the concerns raised by the Indian authorities or the shrinking of some of our traditional tourist market in the light of the euro zone crisis. Things are not so bad, it would

appear, despite the pessimism some sections of our politicians tend to air so frequently. It is no secret that this Government has scored an A⁺ on this issue. The FDI inflows since 2006 exceeded the cumulative FDI for the last 40 years preceding 2006. The widening gap between saving and investment has been compensated by rising inflows of FDI. It is true that savings have declined, but it is still positive. Of course, this Government will strive to encourage people to save through more attractive policies, low inflation and positive interest rate. This is one of the small black spots which we need to address in all urgency.

On our social indicators, Mr Speaker, Sir, life expectancy keeps increasing and we seem closer the European countries than African countries. With a fleet of more than 400,000 vehicles, car ownership has increased faster than we could have imagined, showing the growing affluence of the nation and the feminisation of both car ownership and driving. Access to water and electricity is virtually 100%. Internet access is rising while Government has stepped up efforts in all directions to participate in a cable network that improves daily. We are now living in a world of shrinking dimensions. Mobile phones exceed the population of Mauritius and phone bills account for a growing share in every Mauritian's income. Household electrical appliances are no longer considered as a luxury and have come to be taken for granted. With a growing number of hospitals and the flow of newly trained doctors, access to better health care has improved considerably over the last few years. The fight against poverty continues while progress in social housing is on a rising curve.

International trade and manufacturing: paradoxically, as far back as the 1960s, Mauritius has reputed to be one of the most open economies to the world. Indeed, during the 1960s, Mauritius together with Hong Kong and Trinidad and Tobacco were the most open economies. Trade policies were instrumental in transforming the economic structure. During the 1980s, international trade was the engine of growth providing the locomotive driving force for the rapid pace of development. Government is a firm believer in international trade and employs all the possible resources to galvanise the region. Regional cooperation is a vital plank in Government's strategy and accentuates development. Mauritius is an influential and respected member of both the South African Development Community and the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa and many others. As the euro zone can barely lift its head from troubled waters, the export-oriented firms were faced with daunting challenges such as shorter delivery time, uncertainty, orders postponed or simply no orders. Fortunately, the trade policies which

Government has cautiously nursed over the years clicked and manufacturers turned to SADC countries to compensate for the fall in European orders. Our imports are also undergoing similar structural change, with a paradigm shift from the west to the east. In the next decade the east will be placing, at least, three large economies among the top 10 world economies. Our diplomacy will have to revamp our trade policies and redirect our focus and I am sure hon. Dr. Boolell is doing a good job.

The unemployment problem has broached on the economic situation and drawn a comparison between our performance and that of the outgoing Government. Allow me, Mr Speaker, Sir, to dwell on one of the thorniest issues confronting our society. Youth unemployment is a source of frustration. Unemployment is heavily skewed against women which consequently complicates both the poverty problem and women empowerment problem. A job provides a firm anchor in life, bestowing dignity and respect to the holder. This Government is aware and will take the bull by the horn.

In 1983, Members would recall Sir Gaëtan Duval had launched the challenge: '*Solange amenn mo diary*' and the country moved rapidly from a rate of 19.7% unemployment within a decade to bring down unemployment by 2.7%, Mr Speaker, Sir. Although it was a MSM led Government, it would be historically inaccurate to ignore the contribution of the Labour Party and the PMSD in reducing unemployment. We have been instrumental in the past; as well we can do it today with greater diligence and vision. Yes, we definitely can. Yes, we can! This Government has a plan. This plan focuses – I'll just brush up a bit on the Government Programme plan - on the decent work country programme; provision of training for youth under the National Youth Employment Programme; promotion of green jobs; creating more space in the SMEs; making a new pillar of the economy take-off; ensuring high-quality training at university level and others.

An intelligent island: during the mid 1990s, the hon. Dr. Vasant Bunwaree coined the term 'an intelligent island'. Some pessimistic critics ignored this term as being trivial, and even turned it into a laughing stock. Today, the Cybercity is a reality, Mr Speaker, Sir. Mauritius is firmly anchored as a Cyber economy, but this did not just happen. It has been caused to happen and Government has closely monitored its progress. It has continued playing an enabling role through capacity-building, provision of infrastructure, construction of building space, connectivity and appropriate pricing policies. The programme defines the objective of

Government: to “make our country an intelligent island through achieving full Broadband Connectivity”. Its ambition for the nation is telling: “Connect and every household with at least one Megabyte per second by 2015.” Submarine fibre optic cable continues to be extended. The LION 2 now complements the existing SAFE network. The recent investment to correct the deficit infrastructure has revealed one thing. Mauritius does not have sufficient highly trained workers in technical jobs such as engineering, architecture, design or quantity surveying. As a result, the country had to turn to foreign labour. This has resulted in delays and cost overruns. And we know the state of the infrastructure when we moved in, in 2005. The cost of road congestion alone was exceeding Rs4 billion a year. It is no secret we face new problems in water supply and ICT also faces some speed constraints. We need to train our youth in high quality jobs. This is how we upgrade and move towards a high wage economy. We have done much in public infrastructure. Much remains to be done, and I have no doubt that our hon. Prime Minister, of course, through Minister Bachoo’s Ministry and hon. Bachoo’s vision keeps widening day by day as he implements more projects. The demand for technical jobs will correspondingly rise, and we need to reduce our dependence on foreign expertise.

While efforts in improving our infrastructure will continue, it is the SMEs that will be the most dynamic sector. Government’s vision to democratize wealth ownership will be translated in concrete terms through the creation of thousands of small entrepreneurs. The SMEs already collectively is a big player, contributing to over 40% of GDP and employing more than 50% of the labour in diverse sectors. Government has committed itself to providing more facilities to stimulate the sector and maximise revenue.

Government is stepping up efforts to improve access to finance. Access to finance remains a critical issue. In spite of the big talks, banks are no easy partners for SMEs. Excessive prudence and a condescending treatment are both frustrating and discouraging. It is also anti-developmental. It is, therefore, time for our Government to come with a positively discriminating scheme which makes banks become less rigid and play a more enabling role. Many of the charges and penalties bank charge should be reviewed and revamped. At a time when we are relying on better trained personnel and high technology, including internet facilities, the cost to the bank to treat each dossier should have declined. Paradoxically, banks have introduced a whole plethora of charges, and the slightest delays are sanctioned by huge penalties. These discourage entrepreneurship and exports. Banks have made huge profits while hundred of firms

went bust or made losses. This situation speaks for itself. SMEs cut across sectors from tourism, retailing, ICT, manufacturing, agriculture, construction or consultancy to new sectors that could emerge with the Ocean Industries.

The Ocean Industries

Mr Speaker, Sir, Mauritius is an Ocean State. With some 2.3 million square Km, including some co-managed and disputed areas, Mauritius exercises sovereignty over an area two-third the size of Europe. This is the new pillar of growth which will transform our economic landscape and anchors us firmly and solidly among high-income nations. With the growing aspirations of the nations for higher standard of living, higher-paid jobs, safer and cleaner environment, Mauritius faces daunting challenges to respond to the new economic order and keeping its population contented. Government is turning to the ocean to address its problems of resource scarcity and eco-friendly industries. Government's vision is to make of Mauritius within the next 10 years, a nation fully conscious of its immense potential as an Ocean State. This is a key channel through which we can advance economically to greater prosperity.

What can the ocean do that we have not done so far? So far, Mauritius has developed a thriving beached-based tourism industry and a successful seafood sector. However, the ocean offers new vistas of growth. I will now elaborate on some selected ones –

1. Green Data Centre;
2. The Deep Water Ocean Industries;
3. Floating Windmills Farm;
4. Ocean Energy Conversion Technology and Wave Energy & Petrol;
5. Sports and Leisure Activities Based Industry;
6. Pharmaceutical Industry and Emerging Sectors;
7. Conventional Marine Industry;
8. Harvesting Metal Nodules, and many others, Mr Speaker, Sir.

The Green Data Centre places Mauritius as an important destination for key performers and reinforces the ICT sector as well, broadens its scope. The pharmaceutical sector is destined to be an emerging high-income industry based on ocean resources.

Some work has already been done with regard to the deep water industries. The Government had, in 2006, despatched a team comprising of Dr. Ashok Aubeeluck, then Director

of Budget, Dr. Suddhoo, Director of MRC and Mohammed Vayid on a mission to Hawaii where an industrial park is already operational and the Land-based Oceanic Industry is a reality. I would like to mention some of them, Mr Speaker, Sir. For example –

1. Desalinated Mineral Water;
2. Renewable Energy;
3. Aquaculture;
4. Seaweed Culture;
5. Pearl Culture;
6. Thalassotherapy;
7. Cosmetics;
8. High Purity Marine Salt;
9. Inland Tourism;
10. Aquaponics;
11. Pharmaceuticals;
12. Healthcare Products, and many others.

What is this deep ocean water? It is a pure and clean source of water that can be harvested from uncontaminated depths of the ocean, desalinated, consumed locally and exported in bottles. The water is found 1,000 metres deep and is cold with temperature ranging between 4° C to 6° C degree cold; coming through a deep conveyor belt originating in the North Pole in Greenland. It is inexhaustible and mineral-rich with multiple applications. I would not go into more details of this, Mr Speaker, Sir, on this matter. Yet, Mr Speaker, Sir, the opposition has not only played down this vital sector, - this is why I chose to speak a bit lengthy on this - but has tried to ridicule the present Government for what they consider a utopian concept. I am sure with the nomination of Mr Dev Manraj by the Prime Minister, the former action-oriented financial secretary, as head of the new project implementation and monitoring unit, we have an excellent drive to push ahead with such projects. This sector will open new vistas of growth provided it is confided in the right hands.

Mr Speaker, Sir, if we concentrate only on one single theme – that of reducing our dependence on fossil fuel and reducing our import bill – we will already have achieved much. Fossil fuel imports account for some 24.4% of our total import bills. We can use the ocean near

the south and mount floating wind turbines to generate electricity. We can create a 50-hectare of windmill farms, the technology of which is now available and supply electricity from the south of the island. This technology is available from the Scandinavian countries. I am not going to go deep down into it.

Before concluding, Mr Speaker, Sir, I would like to bring to the attention of this august Assembly the problems of pre-primary school managers. With the setting up of units of pre-primary schools in Government primary school on one hand and the investment from returning Mauritians, competition has become stiff and the current private managers of small pre-primary schools are facing daunting challenges and threats of closures. While we cannot halt the train of development, our action has nonetheless to be tempered by tolerance, understanding and a caring approach that permits a smooth phasing out or a gradual upgrading of quality. We are sitting on a hot seat with many women managers facing the danger of closures and bankruptcies, loss of jobs and difficulties for infants. It is time we create the conditions and facilities to assist them, otherwise, a new social problem may arise and that might explode. Pre-primary schools would be part and parcel of mainstream development, and it is our duty to respond to their needs. I am sure hon. Dr. Bunwaree already has a vision for this sector.

Mr Speaker, Sir, both time and space constraints constrain us to comment further on the Government Programme. I continue to speak to the needs of successive generations of Mauritian families. This House is where we consolidate democracy and participate in generating new ideas. Ideas for the development of a nation have to be voiced in the right place where they have the possibilities to be translated into actions. This Assembly welcomes new ideas and also provides the forum to ensure that ideas are translated, and nobody bluffs. It is *du choc des idées jaillit la lumière, M. le président. Et c'est sur ce fond du débat que nous renforçons la démocratie.*

Mr Speaker, Sir, the success of a nation is about the well-being of its people and it's this caring Government that puts people first. Let me round up with Barack Obama's reflection –

“This is the moment when we must build on the wealth that open markets have created and share its benefits more equitably. Trade has been a cornerstone of our growth and global development, but we will not be able to sustain this growth if it favours the few, and not the many.”

Thus saying, I would like to thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Dr. A. Boolell rose and seconded.

(5.45 p.m.)

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

Mr Speaker, Sir, forgive me, I'll be very quiet today and try to be very sober – *la situation oblige*. Well, I would like to start my intervention by referring to section 1 of the Constitution. A lot of my hon. friends, here, today and members of the press will ask themselves why shall I refer to section 1 of the Constitution. And the answer is very simple. I shall read section 1 of the Constitution –

“Mauritius shall be a sovereign democratic State which shall be known as the Republic of Mauritius.”

I have underlined in there this element of sovereign democratic State. Democracy is of utmost importance there. That leads me to reflect, Mr Speaker, Sir, at a time when to be a Member of the Legislative Assembly in the old days, one had to be chosen by certain persons, our colonial masters. To have the honour and the privilege of sitting here to take decisions about where this island, prior to independence, would go, one had to be chosen and based on what qualifications, surely it was not *suffrage universel*. And then, times changed where we were fighting to go towards this concept of democracy, and then, all of a sudden, things changed for the better gradually. It was people who could be candidates, but you could only be a candidate if you could satisfy certain criteria. You could be a candidate to hold the office only if you could satisfy certain criteria and also those who are allowed to vote were those who could satisfy certain criteria. It was not *suffrage universel*. And then, finally, the time came when, through the excellent, laudable, historical work of the Labour party which was the advent of *suffrage universel*, and, very often, we take such a thing for granted. We take for granted the right to be seated here in this august Assembly because we forget that once upon a time we had no right to be seated here, it only depended on the will of certain people, if we were in the good books of certain others. It took a fight for us to be able to sit here. That's why when we read section 1 of our Constitution it talks about a democratic State.

And today, Mr Speaker, Sir, I shall be somewhat subdued, forgive me, as I said, *la situation oblige*. Because when one comes up with a motion in the name of the hon. Member who spoke before me, when you read Erskine May, when you read the Standing Orders, it calls for a debate. And how can one have a debate on a Government Programme, how can you debate

an idea, how can you exchange views, how can we do so if we are not challenged in our views because the Opposition is not here? The Opposition has, in my humble view, Mr Speaker, Sir, spat on this fight that our forefathers have fought to bring us to this august Assembly, to give the people the right to choose who will be their representatives here to decide of their fate, of the fate of this country and of this nation. “Democracy” seems to be a very vain word for certain people.

Allow me, on a lighter note, because sometimes we have to really choose the lighter note in the face of such unacceptable behaviour, in my humble view, on the part of the Opposition, to choose to run away when the time comes for them to come and say: we do not agree and why we don’t agree; this is what we suggest and this is what we are telling you, you should do this instead of that; this is your programme, I don’t agree with your programme, because this is what we consider to be a better substitute to what you propose, stand by what you believe. This is the purpose of a debate in this National Assembly. But then we have to choose, as I have said, a softer side, a lighter note, but all the more worrying, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Section 2 of our Constitution says: “The Constitution is the supreme law of Mauritius” and that very Constitution in which we have a chapter on Legislature, - where we are - we have one on the Executive and we have one also on the Judiciary. Earlier on, and that is the lighter note because I am talking about the need of the Opposition to come up and propose something, a substitute, challenge us. Because we invite it, challenge us for the good of the country. Challenge us to do better, challenge us for us to work for our country, for our people. But, how can we expect that Opposition to do so when someone from the Opposition earlier today, the Leader of the Opposition actually, went as far as to ask the hon. Prime Minister why is it that Mauritius challenges, even if you do not believe someone should register his ethnic or communal *appartenance* at the time of being a candidate, why do you go and challenge it at the Privy Council. The answer is very simple: because the Constitution is supreme. If someone who is the Leader of the Opposition puts such a question without even realising that there is section 2 of the Constitution that says that the Constitution is supreme and that you have to uphold that Constitution, I am wrong and I have to plead that I am wrong to expect the unexpected. To expect them to at least be here, and be responsible and come and challenge us and earn really what they are earning, I am wrong!

On the one hand you have a Government - sometimes I am wondering what is happening to this country. I have to ask myself, members of the press, Mr Speaker, Sir, what is happening

to our country, when here I read the Government Programme, before even going into paragraph 1: Key to quality of life is economic prosperity for all. I go to the contents, chapter 1: prosperity. Interesting! This Government is coming with a programme and the first chapter talks about prosperity for the nation. And what the Opposition does - because this is basically the role of a responsible Opposition to be here, as I have said earlier on, and to tell us what they have to say in the name of prosperity for the nation. What do they have to say, what do they have to contribute? When here you have a Government which is talking about prosperity, connectivity, a modern society and there, you have the Opposition which is only concerned about petty - actually I am trying not to use any word that would not be parliamentary.

(Interruptions)

That is the problem. It is so easy for them to drop to unparliamentary ideas. I have to be candid about it and I do apologise. Here you have a Government which is talking about prosperity, connectivity, about the people, what is going to happen to them. You have a Government that refers in the first page of its programme to the 2020 vision that had already been prepared at the first mandate of the hon. Prime Minister. Here we are going into the second phase and a third phase, here being the third mandate. Now, what do they propose at the other end? They are concerned about who was in a bungalow and who was not! This is basically the recipe for the success of the nation. This is what they are going to propose to the youth: who was in a bungalow! This is what they are going to propose to the youth: who went to a hotel for dinner!

(Interruptions)

This is what they are going to propose to the youth: who went there and who did this and whose wife did that! This is what the youth is going to say: oh yes! We are really interested, Sir! You are going to be *l'alternance*, tell us how we are going to be busy bodies watching over our neighbours! We are going to go under the bed of our neighbours and watch what they do late in the night because this is progress, this is *modernité*, this is the Opposition!

(Interruptions)

You have challenges in Europe, you have challenges in the United States of America, you have people who are losing their jobs by hundreds of thousands in this world, millions in China, and here, they are only interested in - actually, in nothing! What they are interested in is not this programme, what they are interested in, Mr Speaker, Sir, is for everyone in Mauritius to lose their job, because when people suffer the most, this is when they are happy. Because, have not

we heard it from the former President! Now, free at last! I can talk about him because he is no longer President! The Standing Orders do not stop me from doing so. Now, let us talk the truth. Let us now say what we all wanted to say. He has waited, this *soi-disant Premier ministre de l'avenir* who dances to the tune of the 40s and the 50s. He was waiting for people to suffer until he could come out. In other words, waiting, they are going to suffer more; oh no, not enough, a little more of suffering! Now I am ready, I am coming out! This is basically someone who is going to replace Dr. the hon. Navin Ramgoolam! Oh, God help our country!

So, at the same time you have a programme here that talks about nation building and what do they propose about nation-building? We have to go back in history and see what they had proposed. *Celui qu'on propose comme le Premier ministre d'alternance* is the very same person - I do not say so, the Leader of the Opposition says so - who did nothing for nation-building. But, on the contrary, at every single opportunity he got, he insulted minorities in this country without thinking about nation-building. Was not he the one, Sir Anerood Jugnauth, who talked about that Koran *enn insanité*? Was not he the one who, when he was Prime Minister made it that all the people coming back from the Hajj were undressed simply because they had to be undressed *pour le plaisir de certains*, mocking at them, humiliating them? Was not he that very person who talked about one community as being *démons*? And then he talks about nation-building! What you have at the same time is someone who is the Leader of the Opposition who himself in this august Assembly, talked about how he, Sir Anerood Jugnauth, as Prime Minister, was receiving money from drug traffickers in a "*tente*"! Shown in Hansard! And, today, he sits next to Sir Anerood Jugnauth and tells us: I feel good, because I feel that he is becoming young!

(Interruptions)

The youths of this country, Sir, are interested not in the programme, but are interested to know what he felt?! I am not interested to know what he felt! The thousands of youths out there do not want to feel what he felt, because this is not what we want to do. Our hands are safe where they are and we shall not try to put them in places and feel other things!

(Interruptions)

If at all there is something to feel!

When you talk about the Government Programme, there are certain people who pretend that *la crise* on Euro does not exist; it is a figment of our imagination, fiction. At the same time, they talk about they having the answer but we have not heard anyone of them come to challenge

us and tell us what answers they have to the challenges we are facing. Facts! Today, I said it earlier, almost 16,000 people lost their jobs between the beginning of 2009 and March of 2012. When at the same time, between 2005 and 2010 we have created more than 50,000 jobs. That is something important. What is the most important? In the 15,000 or so people that lost their jobs, more than 10,000 obtained other jobs immediately and that is why they did not come to the workfare programme. Whereas when they were in power under the Prime ministership of the Leader of the Opposition or the other former President, former Prime Minister - former, former and former - more than 57,000 people lost their jobs in export-oriented enterprises alone. Let alone other sectors. They did not find any compensation, no compensation whatsoever. Here, they stand up and say that we are the great defendants of this nation. We will be able to sort out the worst and to give solutions to the problems. We, as a Government, under the Primeministership of our Leader, hon. Dr. Navin Ramgoolam, we got solutions. We have been implementing solutions. The former Minister of Labour, my colleague, now the Minister of Education, came up with a law that is soon going to be amended as is exposed and explained in the Government Programme and Cabinet has already approved it. We are working fast. Why do we work fast?

When you look at the Programme, at paragraph 12, it talks about the need to create employment. We realised what the youth really require. What the youth require is a government that is responsible, a government that realises that we have an intelligent population and we have given that intelligent population Tertiary Institutions, Secondary Institutions and Vocational Institutions for them to be educated and prepare to become employable. What they want in return is for us to go a step further, better what we have already done, create more jobs for them and this is precisely what we are doing.

We have a National Youth Unemployment Programme that this Government Programme talks about. What is it exactly? It is precisely to give the opportunity to the youth between 16 and 25 years old to find jobs, not only to make them unemployable by giving them training, but identifying the areas where there is a lack of qualified human resource. Once we identify those areas we give them the training. While they are being trained, they are given a stipend and while they are being given the stipend, they are being trained on the jobs and at the end of the training we are guaranteeing them a job, a livelihood and the right and ability to see a brighter future. This is what this Government is noting. This is what this Government is proposing. This is what

this Government is implementing. Have we heard anything on the other side as to what do they propose as a miracle solution? Nothing!

What is really hypocritical on the Opposition, I'll tell you what it is, Mr Speaker, Sir. Each and every time going about Khamajeet, in spite of the fact that everyone knows in Mauritius that whatever was said about Khamajeet is blatant lies. Whatever was said on records and recordings have been edited. Everyone knows it, but they are not going to be honest enough to come and admit it because it serves their interests to come and *salir* the name of someone. Soil his name. We do not care, let us do it more so by abusing Parliamentary immunity, let us do it here, not outside, but here. What is worst is that we have Members of that same opposition who go outside in their constituencies and say that Government should give you jobs in Government. Government cannot give jobs in the private sector. Government must do something for you in Government. They asked people in our constituencies: « *pas pe faire narien pu to gagne travail, be qui kalité député sa ?* » This is what they are doing.

In other words, on the one hand trying to pretend to be clean, virgin Mary, you have nothing to say about their credibility but, at the same time, the very same people go and are trying to force the inhabitants of Mauritius to put pressure on Members of Government to commit an unlawful act. If this is not unacceptable and immoral on the part of the Opposition, what is it? This is why I say - I talked to members of the press as well - "Take note of all this. In the name of justice, take note of all this." Is this country going to be governed by nothing else, but rumours? Is this country able to turn out to be happy and really excited just because we see mud being thrown at someone face for the fun of it? Is this country really to be progressed because it sells to report news that is untrue? Are we to develop a new pillar of economy, which is *quoi*? A new pillar of *palabres*, gossips. This is what they propose as a new pillar. They have the solution, a pillar of *palabres*. Maybe I shall ask the hon. vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Finance to tax that industry and we would become a very rich nation, no need to find oil. Because they are spurting out a lot of detritus and they are good at it - free natural resource. My god, what is worse, does this really concern the youth?

When we talk about employment again and the 57,000 people that lost the jobs, it reminds me of something and I have to say it here. My elder hon. friend, who was here, will remember. In the 1970's, was it not Sir Aneerod Jugnauth and Paul Raymond Bérenger, who were crying out loud against IRA. They even went as far as to call it la *loi scélérat*. They have

promised *monts et merveilles* to the workers of this country, that when they would come to power in 1982, they would see to it that they would abolish IRA and repeal the law. Did they do it? Each and every time that there has been a change in the labour legislation, labour laws of our country, maybe a lot of honourable friends have not realised it, it has already been the Labour Party that has done it and not the others. Once again, when it will come to changing labour laws of this country, who will it be at the head of this country? A Prime Minister, a Leader of the Labour Party and we will do it, not them. Why is Aneerod Jugnauth talking about protecting the labour force? But why did he not get rid of IRA? He took advantage of it. What about the Leader of the Opposition? When he was Prime Minister, why didn't he do it? He didn't. On the contrary, when he was Prime Minister, he basically sent the Police and armed forces to welcome workers who were protesting with sticks; women workers on top of it, and he said that you don't expect me to do otherwise was his answer. He said that you can't expect me to remove the sticks from the hands to give them bottle to bottle feed them, *biberon*. Where is their credibility? Where is the credibility of those people? And they come and talk about *alternance*.

We are talking about turning our employment information centres into *pôles d'emploi*, what is it? It is to have service to the youth, service to the people because everyone knows, as it stands right now, our employment information centres, our employment officers, what are they? They are simply officers that people go there and have their cards out and stamped, that's all. Are we really doing something that could be done? No, we are not. We have to be honest about it. We could do more. We have to turn them into professional, modern, employment agencies where they find employment, place youth in their jobs even in Mauritius or abroad and not only in Mauritius. By the way, we are developing so many bilateral agreements with Canada; with provincial Government of Saskatchewan; with Italy soon to be signed at the moment being looked at and vented at the Attorney office and with France, we have already signed. Australia is seeking to enter an agreement with us. At the same time Abu Dhabi is seeking to enter into an agreement with us.

Why? Because they look at Mauritius, or they look at our human resources with admiration and they say that they do not have what we have; the vision of the first Prime Minister of Mauritius, Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam; free education. They did not have the chance; we had. They were not blessed with a way we were blessed and that vision today has

produced such a situation that others are seeking to employ our Mauritian brothers and sisters. So this is what we are proposing and what are they proposing in return? Nothing!

What are they proposing Sir? Nothing! We are talking about *Maurice Ile Durable*, not only as a concept any more, the hon. Prime Minister has championed that idea, implemented that idea and now we are turning it into green jobs. Not only simply green jobs, but jobs that will give us a decent wage where there is *l'existence* of occupational safety and health issues, *dans le respect* in green jobs. We have had forums on it, it's already being implemented in Mauritius and what did the Opposition once again have to say about it? Nothing! Because they don't even understand what green jobs are, maybe they think it is a colour! I guess in the 80s it did not exist when Sir Anerood Jugnauth was Prime Minister, so that is why he thinks it is a colour. There is nothing more to say about it.

We have set up the National Tripartite Forum. Why have we set up the National Tripartite Forum? We are continuing our tripartite dialogues. What did the Opposition have to say about it? Nothing. We can go on. We talk about how Government finds it really important for workers to work in a safe and healthy environment. We have done it under this Government. We have brought regulations, we have brought laws, the Occupational Safety and Health Act, regulations pertaining to migrant workers and their accommodation, regulations pertaining to lifts, Asbestos, noise at work and many other regulations, regulations soon coming about ship building, regulations soon to come about transportation of workers from their place of work to their place of residence, what type of vehicles is going to be used that they should not be sitting at the back of lorries, fall down and have themselves killed. We are putting all those regulations in and look at the figures, this is how we judge whether things are working or not; what do the figures tell us?

This year and I always say that and we all know that: one death is one too many and we are sad for the people who lose their loved ones and when I, as Minister of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment have to sit down and read a brief and see the name of the person who has died, his address, how he died and realised from the description of the accident that this death could have been avoided. One death is one too many. Since the beginning of this year, we have had two deaths on their places of work. Once upon a time in 2003 and 2004 we have had 23 deaths, this year for almost half a year now we have the lowest rate of fatal accidents ever in the history of this country. Why? Because we're working together as a responsible Government. We

are ignoring the silence of this incompetent Opposition because they have nothing to propose. We are interested in solutions, we are interested in facts, implementation, we are not interested in the silence of the Opposition and the empty criticisms.

Mr Speaker, Sir, there are many things that this Government is doing and I have come to the conclusion that even when it goes to safety and health, even if we have good results, even if the Mauritius Employers Federation through the work of this Government, the MEF, the trade unionists have finally decided to sign the Decent Work Country Program and it will be signed soon before I go to the annual conference at the ILO. In spite of all that, the Opposition will never, ever see anything good in what we do and I have also come to the conclusion that we have to accept that fact. We have to accept the fact that in spite of everything that is modern, there is vision here. There is a program even though it is full of good work, good deeds that we are going to implement within a timetable that is set in spite of all the good work, we have to accept that the Opposition will never see anything good in it. Maybe I have to accept that certain members of the press will not find anything good in it because good news does not sell. I will put it very candidly - good news does not sell.

We have only when we go outside of our country that we are going to be proud of being Mauritians, it is only foreigners, foreign institutions, experts that look at Mauritius and say 'you're an amazing country, you are great people; but, in Mauritius, we are so good like the Opposition and certain people of kicking down our own country and not being proud of our own. We are so good at admiring what foreigners can do, but we forget that we have an able population, we have an intelligent youth, we have a bright future and this is what my message is today when I go through what this Government programme is for the youth of this country, Mr Speaker, Sir.

We have understood what the call of the youth is. We have understood the challenges that they themselves face in their everyday lives. We have understood that they want security in terms of the obtention of a job. We understand that they want to earn a decent living, they want decent wages. We understand that we have the solutions as well to what their expectations are and we are busy implementing those solutions that we have worked out and that is in the Government programme because this is not for us that live in this country of today, but it is for the children and the youth because it is them that shall be at the helm of this country in the

future. We are the guardians of their future and we will be able to deliver. As Winston Churchill said –

“A kite flies against the wind and not with it.”

Since the Opposition is full of wind we shall fly against them and we will beat them at their own game. Thank you very much.

Mr Sayed Hossen: Mr Speaker, Sir, I move that the debate be now adjourned.

Dr. A. Boolell rose and seconded.

Question put and agreed to.

Debate adjourned accordingly.

Second Reading

THE SUGAR INSURANCE FUND (AMENDMENT) BILL

(No. I of 2012)

Order for Second Reading read.

The vice Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development (Mr X. L. Duval): Mr Speaker, Sir, I move that the Sugar Insurance Fund (Amendment) Bill (No. I of 2012) be read a second time.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the Sugar Insurance Fund (Amendment) Bill (No. I of 2012) reflects a deep commitment of Government to inclusive development and democratisation of the economy. Government has always upheld the importance for all economic sectors and industries to develop and thrive and when times are challenging, Government has always stood by those who need its support. The small planters are amongst those who have been hit the hardest by the dismantling of the ACP/EU Sugar Protocol in September 2009 and a corresponding 36% reduction in the price of sugar exported to the EU. Indeed constant increases in the cost of production have considerably reduced net income and profit margins at all levels of operation in the sugar industry.

For example, income accruing to sugar cane growers, for the crop 2007 as determined in accordance with the Sugar Insurance Fund Act was an amount of Rs18,206 per tonne. It came down to only Rs13,409 per tonne in 2010 despite changes in marketing strategy to maximize export earnings, that is a big fall Mr Speaker, Sir.

In the face of these challenges, Government has brought about significant reforms to ensure a secure, stable and high quality supply of sugar whilst helping planters, in particular

small planters and metayers to maintain a fair and decent livelihood for themselves and their families.

The aim of the numerous reforms is to increase the income of sugar cane planters to above Rs21,000 per ton, and a strategy to achieve this goal includes: yield improvement through Field Operations, Re-grouping and Irrigation Projects currently known as FORIP which would benefit mainly small planters, reform of cess institutions and support for fair trade certification.

In fact, the potential benefits accruing from reduction in cess, FORIP, and fair trade as announced in the Budget Speech, will amount to some Rs17,600 per *arpent* per annum. But this, of course, is providing that each planter takes advantage of all the different measures now available to him.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the payment of insurance premium accounts for a significant deduction from planters' income. Since 2009, various associations representing all stakeholders in the sugar industry have called for a reduction of the insurance premium payable to the Sugar Insurance Fund Board (SIFB).

Government has responded positively by bringing about major reductions in the premiums payable as follows: 10% in 2009, 70% in 2010 and again, 70% in 2011. However, these reductions were announced on an *ad hoc* basis.

This is fine, but hon. Members will agree that in order to encourage planters not to abandon their fields, there needs to be greater predictability and stability as to future income streams. *Ad hoc* reductions in premiums, though welcome, do not provide the predictability and stability required.

Recognising the fact that the balance of the Fund has, over the last decade, grown steadily from Rs1.5 billion in 2001 to over Rs5 billion in 2011, I announced in the 2012 Budget Speech and I quote that: "As from next year, the SIFB will offer new policies that should bring further drastic cuts in the premiums".

The consulting actuaries appointed by the SIFB, have had consultations with all concerned parties and examined their various proposals and written memoranda and came up with their final report in October 2011.

Thus, Mr Speaker, Sir, the main purpose of the Sugar Insurance Fund (Amendment) Bill 2012 is to implement the recommendations of the consulting actuaries with regard to a reduction

in insurance premiums thereby increasing revenue for the planters, from small to large growers, millers and metayers.

Secondly, it corrects an anomaly in the operation of the formula used to assign a ranking to a planter.

Thirdly, it consolidates the account for fire insurance.

Fourthly, it introduces the concept of an enlarged factory area and fifthly, it addresses the issue of compensation applicable to millers in case of poor milling efficiency.

Mr Speaker, Sir, in line with the objective to reduce costs, Section 25 of the SIF Act and the Second Schedule to the Act are being amended to provide for a 50% reduction in the premiums.

The impact of such a cut in premiums is clear. The income of all producers, but mostly small producers and metayers, who have been affected the most by the reduction in the price of sugar, will increase by Rs900 per ton of sugar that is, approximately Rs2,800 per *arpent* under cultivation.

It is estimated that altogether, sugar planters will reduce their costs by some Rs280 m. a year due to this 50% discount on insurance premium. This will certainly improve the competitiveness of the industry.

The new legal framework however, ensures that this reduction in insurance premiums, which means obviously a corresponding reduction in income of the SIFB, does not undermine the solvency of the Fund. It introduces major reforms to ensure that the lower premium is sustainable over the long term.

Thus, Mr Speaker, Sir, the Bill provides for a fundamental change regarding compensation payments to sugar producers. Firstly, compensation will now be triggered on an island-wide catastrophic events basis rather than on a factory area basis. According to this new mechanism, compensation payments will be triggered when there is a 25% or higher reduction in the sugar production, for the year under consideration, on an island-wide basis.

The Bill also provides for compensation payments, after actuarial assessments, in the case where reductions in the production of sugar are less than 25% but more than 20%; so, between the range of 20% and 25%.

I shall be making appropriate regulations to give effect to the above.

Thus, Mr Speaker, Sir, there will be two triggers for compensation to be payable:

- (a) firstly, automatic payment when sugar crop reduction is higher than 25%, and
- (b) secondly, payment, subject to confirmation by actuary, when sugar crop reduction is less than 25% as may be prescribed under Section 25(2), but more than 20%.

Furthermore, to reduce inconvenience for small planters and metayers, and to reduce the administrative burden falling on the SIFB, the planters and metayers will now need to register their crop every five years instead of every year as is the case presently. SIFB will thus save on administrative costs which are being passed on to sugar producers through the lower premiums.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the reforms above strike a fair balance between the need to reduce cost of production while providing the operators with the necessary insurance protection from major adverse events.

Mr Speaker, Sir, planters and metayers will also be extremely pleased to know that we are correcting today a long standing anomaly with respect to ranking.

A ranking is assigned to each planter to determine the level of annual insurance premium to be paid and the compensation to be received. The ranking table currently appearing in the Second Schedule to the SIF Act sets out a range of ranking positions starting from 5 and going to 15. Each rank thus assigned to any planter may change from one year to another depending upon the claims' history of each insured party linking the latter's insurable sugar in any crop year with the annual premium and compensation of the previous crop year through a mathematical formula.

The ranking system rewards good performance and reproves poor performance but, at the same time, discourages those who are ranked very low from improving. This is because moving up the ranking table, especially for those ranked below five can take a very, very long time, going up to 41 years. This means that a planter ranked below five could be condemned to pay higher premiums and receive lower compensations in case of an event for the next 41 years. This anomaly is being corrected in the Bill. The lowest rank will henceforth be five so as to enable these planters to move up faster in the ranking, pay lower premiums and also be entitled to higher compensation.

The Bill also provides for a reduction in the fire compensation by 20% from its present value of Rs625 per ton of cane. To consolidate the account for fire compensation, there were a number of options that would involve increasing premiums and/or reducing compensation.

Since the central objective of the reform is to reduce cost to operators, the Bill provides for a reduction in compensation of 20%.

This is necessary to restore equilibrium of the separate fire insurance account which was being deleted lately. The fifth schedule of the SIF Act has been amended accordingly.

The Bill also introduces the concept of enlarged factory area. It enables a proper computation of the miller's total insurable sugar in certain situations where certain mills have closed down and the canes from the factory areas are being crushed by other factories as part of mill centralisation.

Regarding reduced compensation, applicable to millers in case of poor milling efficiency, it is considered as superfluous. In fact, it has never been invoked because the provision relating to reduce compensation due to risks associated with events other than covered risks like cyclones, droughts and excessive rainfalls, do not exist for the millers and cannot be quantified either because the statistics simply do not exist.

The recommendation concerning enlarged factory area is reflected in an amendment to the Fourth Schedule and that regarding the reduced compensation to millers is reflected in an amendment to the Third Schedule. Mr Speaker, Sir, there are in all 12 sections of the Act that are being amended along with four of the five Schedules. New regulations, as I mentioned, will also have to be made under the amended Act for determining the prescribed area and the prescribed percentage of total insurable sugar for any particular year.

Mr Speaker, Sir, in conclusion, the amendments I am bringing to the Sugar Insurance Fund Act constitute a long-awaited response to the expectations of the sugar industry and, in particular, of the small sugarcane planters and *métayers*. This is the first time that a Government will be legislating to reduce insurance premium over the long term whilst maintaining the solvency of the Fund.

Mr Speaker, Sir, it is yet another measure announced in the Budget Speech to improve efficiency and a nation's competitiveness that is being implemented. The percentage of the Budget measures implemented with this measure will amount to almost 80%, Mr Speaker, Sir, with the help of all my colleagues.

As from now, small and large planters, millers and *métayers* will benefit from increase income totalling Rs280 m. a year. And we must not overlook the larger picture. It is also a major stride to achieve greater competitiveness of our export sector and the Mauritian economy.

Mr Speaker, Sir, with these words, I commend the Bill to the House.

Dr. A. Boolell rose and seconded.

(6.32 p.m.)

The Minister of Agro-Industry and Food Security (Mr S. Faugoo): Mr Speaker, Sir, allow me, at the very outset, to congratulate the hon. vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Finance and Economic Development for coming up with the proposed amendments to the Sugar Insurance Fund Act.

The amendments are the outcomes of the actuarial exercise conducted on the SIFB as announced in the last Budget Speech. These amendments will further comfort the planters of sugarcane who have endured serious difficulties after the drastic cut in the sugar price by 36% and the dismantlement of the Sugar Protocol which have been further aggravated by the euro crisis.

The amendments have been amply discussed with the different stakeholders at several meetings held by the Sugar Insurance Fund Board and also those held under the aegis of my Ministry and that of the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development.

Indeed, with this drastic cut, planters experienced a huge decrease in their revenue as the price of sugar dropped from Rs18,620 per tonne in the year 2007 to some Rs13,409 per tonne in 2010, Mr Speaker, Sir, representing almost a reduction by 28% per tonne of sugar. It is worth mentioning at this stage that the breakeven point is Rs15,000 per tonne of sugar produced, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Improving the financial status of the planters especially the small planters and *métayers* is imperative to produce the critical volume of canes and sugar for the industry to remain financially sustainable. Moreover, we have some 20,000 small planters and *métayers* and for many of them, this is their sole or main income generating activity. They need to remain in the sugarcane sector to produce this required volume. This measure is indeed one of the series of measures that we have introduced since 2006 under the Multi Annual Adaptation Strategy.

Mr Speaker, Sir, with the reform of the EU sugar regime, the sugar industry was at a crossroad and we had a choice to make, either to maintain the *status quo* which implied the demise of the industry or to take bold, deep and innovative measures to re-engineer the industry with the collaboration of all stakeholders. We chose to re-engineer the sugar industry and to transform it into a sugarcane industry. Deep and profound measures were formulated for this

purpose. I must mention here that the hon. Prime Minister had insisted that the reform programme should give a particular attention to small planters, *métayers* and workers of the industry.

Mr Speaker, Sir, we have already taken several measures to improve financial position of the planters. These measures aim at increasing their revenue. First, we have taken a very bold step to reduce the cess paid by planters from Rs519 m. to Rs287 m. This represents an average saving of Rs700 per tonne of sugar or Rs2010 per *arpent* for each of the 20,000 planters. The cess will be further reduced, thus enabling a higher saving for planters. We are expecting to reduce it to 4% as from Crop 2012, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Concurrently, we have taken another measure to bring higher cost effectiveness and efficiency of the cess funded service providing institutions. We have merged 6 service providing institutions, namely Cane Planters and Millers Arbitration and Control Board, the Farmers' Service Corporation, the Mauritius Sugar Authority, the Mauritius Sugar Industry Research Institute, the Mauritius Sugar Terminal Corporation and the Sugar Planters Mechanical Pool Corporation into one authority, the MCIA, meaning the Mauritius Cane Industry Authority. Planters will thus continue to receive the services provided to them.

We have encouraged planters to subscribe to fair trade certification as mentioned by the hon. vice-Prime Minister. This scheme enables planters grouped in cooperatives to obtain a premium of 60 USD per tonne of sugar. Government provided support to the tune of Rs15 m. in 2011. Indeed, the number of cooperatives that benefitted from this support rose to 23 in 2011, Mr Speaker, Sir. The price of molasses sold for producing potable alcohol has been increased by an amount equivalent to Rs10 per litre of absolute alcohol. This represents an additional revenue of some Rs300 per tonne of sugar for every planter.

Mr Speaker, Sir, we are now coming with the present amendment to the SIFB Act. This will further relieve the financial burden of the planters by reducing by 50% the premium payable on insured sugar which may be as much as Rs2,800 per *arpent*. Possibilities for compensation to be paid would be automatic when sugar crop reduction is higher than 25% or payment subject to confirmation of the validity of the Fund by an Actuary when sugar crop reduction is less than 25% but above 20%. Moreover, the assessment will be based on a national basis which will result in a saving on the operational cost of the SIFB.

Another important amendment being proposed aims at correcting an anomaly whereby formerly most planters in difficult areas whose ranking falls below 5 for years who are paying a higher premium and receiving lesser compensation in case of an event, that is, any ranking below 5 is being restored to 5 and any value going above 15 to 15, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Furthermore, amendment is also being made to reduce fire compensation by 20%. Besides reducing the premium payable to planters, the amendment will also provide for the registration of cane plantations of an area not exceeding 10 hectares every 5 years instead of a yearly registration as it is provided for under the present Act. This will help reduce administrative cost of the SIFB that will impact positively on the revenue of the planters.

Other measures that have been initiated to support small planters include the field operations, regrouping an irrigation project, tax exemption on sugar proceeds, reintroduction of duty free facilities for the purchase of double cab, advance to planters for two consecutive years, exemption from payment of VAT, post harvest schemes, tax incentives to cooperative credit societies, loan to cooperative credit societies, fertiliser subsidy scheme, subsidy on cane planting material, discount on tractor rates for land preparation amongst others. All these have indeed a positive impact on the revenue of the planters, especially the small planters, Mr Speaker, Sir.

The amendments clearly depict our commitment to transform the sugar industry and to honour the pledge we have made to the planting community, especially the small planters and the *métayers* to increase their revenue and indeed their general welfare.

I am proud that the sugar reform program of Mauritius is often cited as a showcase by the EU for the ACP and non ACP countries, Mr Speaker, Sir. Indeed, only last week, we hosted a delegation from Fiji Island, who came here to get acquainted with our reform measures and achievements. They have indeed expressed their appreciation of our achievements and wish to sign a Memorandum of Understanding for future collaboration.

The Government Programme 2012-2015, Mr Speaker, Sir, clearly states that “Government will undertake a major rationalisation of parastatal bodies and State-owned enterprises with a view to improving cost-effectiveness, quality of service and optimal use of human resources.” Indeed, at the very first sitting of the present session of the National Assembly, we are introducing this measure, which goes a long way to show the commitment of Government .

With the able leadership of the hon. Prime Minister and the mobilisation of all the stakeholders, we will surely succeed in the reform programme, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Thank you.

(6.41 p.m.)

Mr Duval: Mr Speaker, Sir, I thank my colleague for his very pertinent remarks. I would say that I very much regret the absence of the Opposition on such an important occasion in the House, affecting 20,000 planters and their families. Mr Speaker, Sir, I wish to reassure the population and especially the small planters that this Government will leave no stone unturned so that every family can benefit from economic development and a prosperous life.

Question put and agreed to.

Bill read a second time and committed.

COMMITTEE STAGE

The Sugar Insurance Fund (Amendment) Bill (No. I of 2012) was considered and agreed to.

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

Third Reading

On motion made and seconded, the Sugar Insurance Fund (Amendment) Bill (No. I of 2012) was read the third time and passed.

Second Reading

THE SUGAR INDUSTRY EFFICIENCY (AMENDMENT) BILL

(No. II of 2012)

Order read for Second Reading read.

The Minister of Agro-Industry and Food Security (Mr S. Faugoo): Mr Speaker, Sir, I move that the Sugar Industry Efficiency (Amendment) Bill (No. II of 2012) be read a second time.

As mentioned in the explanatory memorandum, the object of this Bill is to make better provision for the election of representatives to the Assembly of Delegates as far as section (6) of the Sugar Industry Efficiency Act is concerned and ensure that there are adequate numbers of new and experience representatives in the Assembly of Delegates.

Members of the House may wish to note that the Sugar Investment Trust is a statutory body set up under the Sugar Industry Efficiency Act. It is the largest shareholder based public company in Mauritius with more than 40,000 shareholders mostly agricultural workers, artisans and pensioners and a small planters of the sugar industry. Maybe at this stage, it is good that it goes on record that when we are debating such an important amendment which touches the lives, the interests of 40,000 Mauritians, men and women, Mr Speaker, Sir, the Opposition has chosen not to present.

Concerning the previous Bill, amendment is being brought to the Sugar Insurance Fund Board Act. In fact, we are bringing changes to better the welfare, the interest of the farmers community, the small planters, the poor *metayers*, Mr Speaker, Sir. Then, again we saw that they are absent, they have abdicated, they are gone. Let it be on record that, today, it is the first sitting of the session, Mr Speaker, Sir, they have chosen to walk out.

The Act makes provision for an Assembly of Delegates, which consist of six representatives from each factory area elected by the shareholders of the Trust in the respective factory areas. The Trust is administered and managed by a Board of Directors which consists of six Directors elected from the Assembly of Delegates, while three independent Directors are nominated, inclusive of the chairperson. The law as it stands today does not limit the term of office of a delegate or a Director. This had led to some of the delegates and/or Directors serving on the Assembly of Delegates and Board continuously for more than 16 years. This has led to frustration among shareholders. The shareholders have voiced out their concern in that regard in the General Assembly on numerous occasions.

Mr Speaker, Sir, in order to broaden and democratise the opportunity to all shareholders, we are bringing this amendment which will limit the term of office of a delegate or a Director. This amendment will give the opportunity to other shareholders of the Trust to be represented at the Assembly of Delegates and thereafter at the Board level, especially at a time when the number of delegates will decrease with a revision in the number of factory areas in the context of centralisation of the sugar milling activities as per the Multi Annual Adaptation Strategy.

In line with the above, new regulations have already been made to deal specifically with election of Directors and representatives. These regulations contained relevant provisions of the Sugar Investment Trust Regulations 1995 and also make additional provision as follows -

- (i) term of office of the delegates has been reduced from 6 to 3 years, to align it to the term of office of Directors, and
- (ii) the term of office of nominated Directors has also been aligned with those of elected Directors.

Mr Speaker, Sir, with these words I commend the Bill to the House.

Dr. A. Boolell rose and seconded.

Question put and agreed to.

Bill read a second time and committed.

COMMITTEE STAGE

(Mr Speaker in the Chair)

THE SUGAR INDUSTRY EFFICIENCY (AMENDMENT) BILL

(No. II of 2012)

Clauses 1-3 ordered to stand part of the Bill.

Clause 4 (Commencement)

Motion made and question proposed: "that the clause stands part of the Bill."

Mr Faugoo: Sir, I move that Clause 4 be deleted and replaced by the following –

“4. Commencement

This Act shall come into operation on a date to be fixed by Proclamation”

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 4, as amended, ordered to stand part of the Bill.

The title and enacting clause were agreed to.

The Bill (as amended) was agreed to.

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

Third Reading

On motion made and seconded, the Sugar Industry Efficiency (Amendment) Bill

(No. II of 2012) was read the third time and passed.

ADJOURNMENT

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that this Assembly do now adjourn to Tuesday 15 May 2012, at 11.30 a.m.

The Deputy Prime Minister rose and seconded.

Mr Speaker: The House stands adjourned.

At 6.51 p.m., the Assembly was, on its rising adjourned to Tuesday 15 May 2012, at 11.30 a.m.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

POLICE OFFICERS – EXTRA DUTY ALLOWANCE

(No. B/8) Mr V. Baloomoody (Third Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister for Rodrigues whether, in regard to the extra duty allowance paid to Police Officers for assisting members of the public for private purposes, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to the total amount of money paid, over the last two financial years to date, indicating how the officers are selected therefor and remunerated.

Reply: I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that the performance of extra duty by Police officers is governed by Standing Order 111 of the Police Standing Orders.

Extra duty fees are claimed from members of the public and private organisations in respect of extraneous duties of a private nature performed by Police officers. All requests for extra duty are made to Divisional Headquarters of the area concerned.

Over the last two financial years, the sum paid by members of the public seeking police assistance for private purposes is as follows –

Financial Year 2010	Rs12,089,412.50
Financial Year 2011	Rs15,134,967.50
Period January to 03 May 2012	Rs3,868,544.25

Extra duty is performed by Police officers who are off-duty and volunteer to undertake such duties. A Police officer is allowed to perform a maximum of 15 hours of extra duty a month. However, where a Police officer who has already been selected for extra duty, fails to

turn up, he is replaced by another volunteered off-duty Police officer although he may have already performed his 15 hours of such duties during that month.

In order to ensure a fair allocation of such duties amongst eligible Police officers, I am informed that a master register is kept at the level of the Divisional Headquarters. The Divisional Commander has to ensure that all members of his division are offered the possibility of performing extra duty on a roster basis.

Furthermore, the Internal Control Unit of the Police Department also conducts regular audit exercise on the allocation of extra duties and reports to the Commissioner of Police if ever any irregularities are noted.

PRIME MINISTER – OVERSEAS MISSIONS - UNITED KINGDOM

(No. B/9) Mr S. Soodhun (Second Member for La Caverne & Phoenix) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister for Rodrigues whether, in regard to the official mission undertaken by Dr. the Honourable Prime Minister in the United Kingdom, from 19 to 26 February 2012, he will state the outcome thereof.

Reply: I was invited by the Rt hon. David Cameron, Prime Minister of the United Kingdom to attend an International Conference on Somalia held at Lancaster House, London. Some 50 countries, including 16 Heads of State and Government, as well as, Mr Ban Ki Moon, UN Secretary General, Mrs Hillary Clinton, US Secretary of State, the Rt Hon. Baroness Catherine Ashton, EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Mr Alain Juppé, Foreign Minister of France, the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, the Secretary-General of the League of Arab States, the Secretary-General of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation and the Vice-President of the World Bank, participated in the Conference.

The objectives of the Conference were to tackle the many issues facing Somalia, the region and the international community, and discuss a road map for the reconstruction and development of Somalia, as well as how to address the issue of piracy in a coordinated way.

In my address to the Conference, I stated that it was vital for the Somali authorities to demonstrate their determination and take bold and decisive measures for the early implementation of the road map adopted in September 2011. On the issue of piracy, I reiterated that Mauritius had demonstrated its commitment in the fight against piracy, signed an Agreement with the European Union for the transfer of suspected pirates for investigation, prosecution, trial

and detention in Mauritius, and provided a proper and adequate legal framework for that purpose. I added that measures to combat this scourge of piracy, which has cost nine billion US dollars last year in disrupted trade besides the human tragedy involved, should be adopted, the more so as maritime security holds the key to economic development in the region. The issues of plundering of fishing stocks by illegal fishing and the dumping of toxic wastes in the Indian Ocean should also be addressed.

The Rt. hon. D. Cameron, UK Prime Minister met with me to express his deep appreciation to the increasing engagement of Mauritius in international efforts to combat piracy in the Indian Ocean and for the Memorandum of Understanding between Mauritius and the European Union in that connection. The British Prime Minister also expressed the wish that Mauritius signs a separate Memorandum of Understanding with the UK on the conditions of transfer of suspected pirates and seized property. I explained that Mauritius cannot sign the Memorandum of Understanding, at this stage, as there were policy and security implications to be addressed. The British side was informed that once these issues were fully addressed at the level of our Government, Mauritius would revert to the UK with a view to pursuing formal bilateral discussions. I can now state that formal discussions with the UK for the finalisation of the MoU will start shortly.

Following discussions which Mauritian officials had with Somali officials during the Somalia Conference in London, negotiations will be initiated with a Somali delegation which will be in Mauritius from 24 to 26 May 2012 to negotiate and conclude an Agreement for the transfer of sentenced pirates from Mauritius to Somalia.

I had a bilateral meeting with Mr Ban Ki Moon, UN Secretary General and evoked the problem of piracy in the Indian Ocean and the escalating terrorism in the Middle East. I took this opportunity to invite the UN Secretary General to attend the Global Forum on Migration and Development scheduled to be held in Mauritius in November 2012.

In London, I also attended two meetings on 21 and 24 February 2012 with our external lawyers, namely Mr Philippe Sands, Q.C., Mr Paul Reichler and Mr James Crawford, S.C., on the Chagos Archipelago issue and reviewed progress in the proceedings before the Arbitral Tribunal and discussed various options. The Secretary to Cabinet and Head of the Civil Service, the Solicitor-General, Ms A. Narain, Parliamentary Counsel, and Ambassador J.N. Meetarbhan were present at the meetings.

Subsequent to my meetings held with our external lawyers, further exchanges of views and correspondences of the Memorial (i.e statement of case) to be presented by Mauritius in the arbitral proceedings have taken place between my office and the State Law Office, on the one hand and our external lawyers, on the other hand. Another meeting will be held in London next week with a view to finalising the Memorial.

In the course of my meeting with our external lawyers, I also sought their views on the proposals of the UK All-Party Parliamentary Group that the Chagos Archipelago be nominated for inclusion on the World Heritage List. As I mentioned in my reply to Parliamentary Question B/1, we have decided, in the light of the discussions on the implications of the proposal, not to support it.

I also attended a meeting with a team of International Consultants and discussed with them the current proposals for the reform of our present electoral system to ensure that such reforms would bring about fairness and equity.

AIR MAURITIUS LTD. – STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP

(No. B/10) Mr P. Jugnauth (First Member for Quartier Militaire & Moka) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister for Rodrigues whether he will state if Government has been apprised of the decision of Air Mauritius Ltd., to enter into a strategic partnership and, if so, the outcome thereof.

Reply: I wish to refer the hon. Member to paragraph 25 of the Government Programme 2012-1015 where it is mentioned that Air Mauritius will finalise its proposals for a strategic partner to help achieve greater global connectivity and efficiency.

SUPERINTENDENT OF POLICE – TRAVELLING STUDENT –WHISKY DUTY FREE

(No. B/11) Mr A. Gungah (First Member for Grand’Baie & Poudre d’Or) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister for Rodrigues whether, in regard to the recent reported case of a Superintendent of Police posted at the Airport Police station who caused a travelling student to purchase whisky duty free on his behalf, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to if an inquiry has been carried out thereinto and, if so, the outcome thereof.

Reply: I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that following an anonymous complaint received on 10 January 2012 at the Independent Commission Against Corruption, the latter has started an investigation in relation to an alleged incident which occurred on 17 December 2011.

GRAND'BAIE POLICE STATION – VEHICLES – PARKING SPACE

(No. B/12) Mr A. Gungah (First Member for Grand'Baie & Poudre d'Or) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister for Rodrigues whether, in regard to the Grand'Baie Police Station, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to if it lacks parking space for Police vehicles and damaged vehicles following accidents and, if so, if consideration will be given for the conversion of the abandoned land of the Grand'Baie Public library into a parking space.

Reply: The Commissioner of Police has informed that the Grand'Baie Police Station has parking space to accommodate five vehicles. It can cater for the three vehicles attached to that Police station, as well as for persons calling thereto.

In regard to accidented vehicles, after examination by Police they are returned to their owners on the same day. In cases where such vehicles are kept for longer period for examination and enquiry purposes, Police has recourse to parking facilities available at the Grand'Baie Criminal Investigation Division or the National Coast Guard Post at Grand'Baie, which are situated at a distance of around 500 metres from the Police station.

Police is aware of the inadequacy of parking facilities at the Grand'Baie Police Station, and since January 2010, a request was addressed to the Ministry of Housing and Lands for an additional plot of land located between the Grand'Baie Public Library and the Police station to be vested for these purposes. In this connection, discussions were also held with the Ministry of Education and Human Resources and the Ministry of Housing and Lands, following which an agreement has been reached to use part of the Grand'Baie Public Library compound as a common parking area for the Grand'Baie Police Station and the Library.

The Police has already initiated action for the delimitation of the yard and the contractor on site will be requested to undertake the required minor works.

**MBC V/S PRINCIPAL LABOUR & INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS OFFICER –
COURT JUDGMENT**

(No. B/13) Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister for Rodrigues whether, in regard to the Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation (MBC), he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Board thereof, information as to if, following the Industrial Court judgment in the case of the Principal Labour & Industrial Relations Officer v/s the MBC, which found the MBC guilty as charged on the 3 counts the –

- (a) fines imposed have been paid, and
- (b) actions taken, if any, against the Director General thereof.

(Withdrawn)

**MGI/RABINDRANATH TAGORE INSTITUTE – DIRECTOR –
QUALIFICATIONS & SALARY**

(No. B/14) Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister for Rodrigues whether, in regard to Mr B. M., Director of the Mahatma Gandhi Institute/Rabindranath Tagore Institute, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Mahatma Gandhi Institute/Rabindranath Tagore Institute, information as to –

- (a) his academic qualifications, indicating his previous experience, if any, in a similar capacity in the academic field, and
- (b) the salary, benefits and perks to which he is entitled.

(Withdrawn)

LABOUR LAWS – AMENDMENTS

(No. B/15) Mr S. Obeegadoo (Third Member for Curepipe & Midlands) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister for Rodrigues whether, in regard to the proposed amendments to the labour laws as recommended by a Government High Powered Committee set up in relation thereto, he will state if he has been informed of the decision of the Trade Unions of the private sector to reject same and, if so, will he consider meeting the representatives of the said Trade Unions.

(Withdrawn)

IPPs – ELECTRICITY – PURCHASE

(No. B/20) Mrs S. B. Hanoomanjee (Second Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to the purchase of electricity from the Independent Power Producers, he will state if any agreement has been reached between the Independent Power Producers and Government, in the context of the agreement which was signed between Government and the Mauritius Sugar Producers Association, in December 2007.

Reply (The Prime Minister): In reply to PQ 1B/127 on 22 June 2010, the House was informed that, in accordance with the Agreement signed in April 2008, between Government and the Mauritius Sugar Producers' Association, an independent consultant was appointed in May 2009 to review the energy sector as applicable to the Independent Power Producers.

The consultant submitted the final report in October 2009.

The Independent Power Producers expressed serious reservations on certain aspects of the consultant's report.

Subsequently, I had a meeting with MSPA, it was decided to appoint a Committee under the chairmanship of the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities, to pursue further discussions with the representatives of the MSPA.

Discussions are ongoing.

SABLE NOIR PUBLIC BEACH – EXTENSION

(No. B/41) Mr J. C. Barbier (Second Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the proposed extension of the Sable Noir public beach, he will state where matters stand.

Reply (The Minister of Housing and Lands): Hon. Members will recall that I had indicated in this House that consideration was being given to the extension of the Sable Noir Public Beach. I am pleased to inform the House that the required survey exercise has now been completed and the Sable Noir Public Beach is being extended by an area of an approximate extent of 0A90P (3,800 m²). The appropriate Notice has been prepared and is to be published in

the Government Gazette on Saturday next for the proclamation of the extended site as a public beach.

LES GUIBIES, PAILLES & CITE ST LOUIS - SEWERAGE SYSTEM

(No. B/42) Mr J. C. Barbier (Second Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to the sewerage system of Les Guibies, Pailles and Cité St Louis, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Wastewater Management Authority, information as to if it has been informed of the obstruction thereof thus causing inconveniences and, if so, indicate if immediate remedial measures has or will be taken.

Reply: I am informed by the Wastewater Management Authority that from March to April 2012 five blockages were reported and cleared in the regions of Guibies, Pailles and Cité St Louis. The House may wish to note that blockages occur mainly as a result of misuse of the sewerage system. In this regard frequent preventive cleaning of the sewerage system is undertaken by the Wastewater Management Authority. However, the only effective measure to prevent such misuse is sensitisation and a change of mindset of the population on the proper use of the sewerage system. The Wastewater Management Authority regularly undertakes sensitisation programs in most affected areas.

**ECONOMIC RESTRUCTURING AND COMPETITIVENESS PROGRAMME &
NATIONAL RESILIENCE FUND - ALLOCATION**

(No. B/43) 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 measures taken in the light of the Eurozone crisis, he will state the total amount of budgetary funds appropriated, and actually disbursed as at to date, under the –

- (a) Economic Restructuring and Competitiveness Programme, and
- (b) National Resilience Fund, indicating the criteria for the allocation thereof between the economic sectors and the institutions and for the recovery thereof, if any.

Reply: As regards the budgetary allocation and amounts disbursed under the Economic Restructuring Competitiveness Programme (ERCP), for the financial years 2010 and 2011, an

amount of 3.8 billion rupees was earmarked for spending and the actual disbursements amounted to around 1.5 billion rupees.

The National Resilience Fund (NRF) came into operation on 1st January 2012 with a budget of 7.3 billion rupees. The actual spending as at end March 2012 amounted to 240 million rupees. I am tabling a detailed breakdown of amount budgeted and spent with regard to the ERCF and NRF.

It is to be noted that some existing schemes like LEMS, Factoring and Planters Harvest Schemes are advances to leasing companies. These schemes are starting to become self financing and consequently, not much additional funding may be required from the NRF.

The House may also wish to note that an amount of Rs314m has already been disbursed so far by commercial banks under the SME Concessionary Loan Scheme which is partly guaranteed by Government.

Regarding the criteria and allocation of funds between the economic sectors and the institutions, the budgetary allocations are based on projections at the time of the budgeting exercise and on perceived demand. The allocated amounts are not rigid and there can be reallocations when there are changes in demand in the future.

With regards to the recovery issue, I presume that the hon. Member is referring to criteria for reimbursement. The relevant information, in this connection, has been provided in the list of schemes I have tabled for the reply of P.Q No. B/37.

MONETARY POLICY COMMITTEE - LEAKAGES

(No. B/44) 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 Monetary Policy Committee, he will –

(a) state if –

- (i) a due diligence exercise had been carried out on the members thereof, prior to their appointment;
 - (ii) he has been informed of the leakage of the decision on the repo rate at the first meeting of the Monetary Policy Committee and the consequences thereof, and
 - (iii) the nominees' vote for the reduction of the repo rate reflected the policy stance of Government, and
- (b) for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Bank of Mauritius, information as to the actions taken to avoid leakages in the future.

(Withdrawn)

STC - PETROLEUM PRODUCTS - SUPPLY

(No. B/45) 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 petroleum products, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the State Trading Corporation, information as to if the agreement for the supply thereof by Mangalore Refinery and Petrochemicals Ltd., is guaranteed by the Government of India and, if so, table copy thereof.

Reply: I am informed by the State Trading Corporation (STC) that the Purchase and Sale Agreement (Contract) between the State Trading Corporation and the Mangalore Refinery and Petrochemicals Ltd (MRPL) was signed on 01 July 2010 in presence of hon. S. Soodhun, the then Minister of Industry and Commerce and hon. Murli Deora, the then Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas of the Republic of India.

It is to be noted that MRPL is a subsidiary of Oil and Natural Gas Corporation Ltd. which is an undertaking of the Government of India.

The assurance that MRPL will honour its commitments to the STC has been repeatedly given by the Government of India to the hon. Prime Minister of Mauritius – the last one being the one given by Shri Jaipal Reddy, the hon. Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas of the Republic of India as well as by Shri Manmohan Singh, the hon. Prime Minister of the Republic of India during the last visit of the hon. Prime Minister to New Delhi in February 2012.

This assurance was given verbally and as such, there is no document to be tabled.

EMBASSIES – POSTS - FILLING

(No. B/46) Mrs A. Navarre-Marie (First Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade whether, in regard to the Mauritian Embassies, he will give a list thereof where the ambassadors have not yet been posted, indicating when the posts will be filled.

Reply: Out of our 18 Mauritian Embassies abroad only two, namely, the Islamic Republic of Pakistan and the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia/African Union do not presently have an Ambassador.

An Ambassador will be posted in Addis Ababa in June this year and procedures are underway for the appointment of a High Commissioner in Pakistan.

TOBACCO INDUSTRY (LOCAL) – WORKERS & STAKEHOLDERS

(No. B/47) Mr S. Obeegadoo (Third Member for Curepipe and Midlands) asked the Minister of Agro-Industry and Food Security whether, in regard to the local tobacco industry, he will state the steps taken by Government to safeguard the interest of the workers and of the stakeholders thereof, following the decision of the British American Tobacco to stop purchasing tobacco leaves on the local market.

(Withdrawn)

SUICIDE – CHILDREN AND TEENAGERS

– JANUARY 2006 TO FEBRUARY 2012

(No. A/1) Mrs F. Labelle (Third Member for Vacoas & Floreal) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister for Rodrigues whether, in regard to suicide and attempt at suicide, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to the number of reported cases thereof among children and teenagers, since January 2006 to February 2012.

Reply: The Commissioner of Police has informed that the number of reported cases of suicide and attempt at suicide involving children and teenagers are as follows -

YEAR	SUICIDES		ATTEMPTS AT SUICIDE	
	Children	Teenagers	Children	Teenagers
2006	1	4	6	64

2007	-	7	5	77
2008	1	1	13	72
2009	-	7	24	69
2010	-	5	12	66
2011	-	7	10	80
2012 (as at February 2012)	1	1	4	17

MAURITIUS PORTS AUTHORITY – 35TH ANNIVERSARY - ACTIVITIES

(No. A/2) Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister for Rodrigues whether, in regard to the celebration of the 35th Anniversary of the Mauritius Ports Authority, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Authority, information as to the activities carried out in connection therewith, indicating in respect of each activity, the -

- (a) cost incurred therefor;
- (b) name of the service providers therefor, indicating in each case, the procedure followed for the award of the contract, and
- (c) number of persons invited therefor, indicating the number of workers of the Port who were invited at the main function.

Reply: The Director-General of the Mauritius Ports Authority has informed that the Authority carried out a series of activities to mark the celebration of its 35th anniversary. These activities were -

- (i) Family Day for employees of the Mauritius Ports Authority, their spouse and children;
- (ii) Commemorative Special First Day Cover;
- (iii) Commemorative gift for each employee;

- (iv) Commissioning of a Historical Book, and
- (v) Official Ceremony to commemorate the 35th Anniversary and launching of the Historical Book.

The total cost incurred by the Mauritius Ports Authority in relation to these activities amount to Rs6,410,979.

I am also informed that in some cases quotations were sought whereas in others it was by direct procurement. It is to be pointed out that the Mauritius Ports Authority had recourse to direct procurement of services as it opted for quality of service in view of the high profile of the event.

As regards part (c), I am informed by the Mauritius Ports Authority that there were a total of 388 guests invited at the book launching ceremony. Out of 525 employees of the Mauritius Ports Authority 128 were invited. The remaining 260 invitees comprised Members of the Diplomatic Corps, Representatives of International Organisations, Port Stakeholders, Port Users' Council, Port-Based Organisations, Shipping and Fishing Companies, Freight Forwarders, Clearing Agencies, Board Members, Religious Heads, Representatives of Trade Unions and Cargo Handling Corporation Ltd Management.

BLACK RIVER –

POLICE SUB-DIVISIONAL HEADQUARTERS – SETTING UP

(No. A/3) Mr A. Ganoo (First Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister for Rodrigues whether, in regard to the proposed setting up of a Sub-Divisional Headquarters at Black River, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to -

- (a) if land has already been earmarked therefor and, if so, indicate the -
 - (i) location, and
 - (ii) extent thereof, and
- (b) where matters stand.

Reply: In regard to parts (a) and (b) of the Question, the Commissioner of Police has informed that a new Police Station has been constructed at Black River and is operational since 09 April, 2012. However, a Sub-Divisional Headquarters is under construction at Bambous, adjacent to the Bambous Court House to cover the district of Black River. The building is being constructed on a plot of land of an extent of 1,411m².

The construction of the building started on 15 September, 2011 and is expected to be completed by July 2012.

GRAND'BAIE

– CLOSED CIRCUIT TELEVISION STREET SURVEILLANCE SYSTEM

(No. A/4) Mr A. Gungah (First Member for Grand' Baie & Poudre D'Or) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister for Rodrigues whether, in regard to the Closed Circuit Television Street Surveillance System installed in Grand'Baie, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to if any survey has been carried out to assess the efficiency of the recordings thereof and, if so, indicate -

- (a) when it was carried out, and
- (b) the actions taken in relation to the
 - (i) shortcomings, if any ;
 - (ii) quality of the images by night ;
 - (iii) replacement of some cameras by PTZ Cameras, and
 - (iv) installation of additional cameras.

Reply: The Closed Circuit Television Surveillance System in the region of Grand'Baie is operational as from 21 October 2011.

In regard to part (a) of the question, since the coming into operation of the CCTV System, three surveys have been carried out in November and December 2011 and March 2012, in the region of Grand'Baie by the officers of the CCTV Grand'Baie Control Room. The purpose of these surveys was to ensure that the images captured by the CCTV cameras were of good quality and if there was need to re-orient some of the cameras in certain regions.

During the course of the latest survey carried out in March this year, it was found that at some places, CCTV cameras were obstructed by branches or trees while at some places at night, the visibility was reduced as the intensity of light emanating from the street lighting was inadequate.

In regard to part (b) of the question, following the surveys, the Police contacted the Beach Authority and the Pamplemousses/Rivière du Rempart District Council to make arrangements for the trimming of branches and also to increase the bulb capacity of the street lighting at the relevant locations. Lopping of branches has already been effected. In the regard to the rehabilitation of the lighting system on the public beach at Grand'Baie, this would be undertaken upon commissioning of the coastal protection works currently being executed by the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development.

The Police has also taken necessary steps to re-orient some CCTV cameras with a view to better capturing a further range of area.

There are 41 rotating cameras and the replacement of some fixed CCTV cameras by Pan-Tilt Zoom (rotating) cameras will be considered, as and when required.

Consideration is also being given to the installation of additional cameras in the region of Grand'Baie in the light of the new requirements identified during the surveys.

PORT LOUIS (NORTH) DIVISION – CLOSED CIRCUIT TELEVISION STREET SURVEILLANCE SYSTEM

(No. A/5) Mr A. Gungah (First Member for Grand' Baie & Poudre d'Or) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister for Rodrigues whether, in regard to the Closed Circuit Television Street Surveillance System installed in Port Louis (North) Division, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to if any survey thereof has been carried out between 15 to 22 November 2011 and, if so, indicate the shortcomings, if any, indicating the remedial measures taken, if any, in relation thereto, including recommendations for the installation of additional cameras at strategic points and, if so, when and, if not, why not.

Reply: The Closed Circuit Television Surveillance System in the region of Port Louis is operational as from 21 October 2011.

A team of officers comprising the personnel of the Crime Intelligence Unit, the Central Investigation Division of the Metropolitan North, the ADSU and the Communication Branch carried out a survey in the region of Port Louis North from 15 to 22 November 2011 to ensure that the images captured by the CCTV cameras are of good quality and if there is need to re-orient some of the cameras in certain locations.

The survey revealed that some CCTV cameras were being obstructed by overgrown branches of trees, there were insufficient street lighting in some locations, thus causing difficulties to view images at night, and some cameras had to be re-oriented.

To remedy the situation, the Police requested the Municipality of Port Louis to make arrangements for trimming of branches of trees and also to increase the bulb capacity of the street lighting at the relevant locations. Lopping of trees is being undertaken by the Municipality of Port Louis as and when required to ensure visibility. In regard to the upgrading of lightings in the region of Port Louis, the Police is liaising with the Municipality of Port Louis in that respect. The re-orientation of some cameras by the Police is underway.

The installation of additional cameras at other strategic points in the region of Port Louis North would be considered as and when required and subject to funds being available.

LINE BARRACKS –

POLICE EXCHANGE TELEPHONE SYSTEM - UPGRADING

(No. A/6) Mr M. Seeruttun (Second Member for Vieux Grand Port & Rose Belle) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister for Rodrigues whether, in regard to the Police Exchange Telephone System at the Line Barracks, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to when it was last reviewed, indicating if consideration will be given for the upgrading thereof.

Reply: The present system of the Police Telephone Exchange based at the Line Barracks is operational since March 2000. It has a capacity to filter 60 incoming calls at a time and accommodate as much as 12,000 calls over a period of 24 hours. It is also equipped with a

management storage device that stores the caller's phone number, exact time call and duration of conversation on a day to day basis. Those data can be stored for a period of at least 10 years.

The Commissioner of Police has informed that the present system has proved its usefulness and so far, no complaint about delays in answering phone calls at the Police Telephone Exchange has been received. Besides, since the coming in operation in October 2011 of a new Digital Radio Communication System which comprises 24 base stations with 3000 terminals, the number of calls received at Police Telephone Exchange has decreased. It is not therefore felt that the system needs upgrading.

MOKA – MORTUARY HOUSE AND RESEARCH CENTRE - CONSTRUCTION

(No. A/7) Mr M. Seeruttun (Second Member for Vieux Grand Port & Rose Belle) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister for Rodrigues whether, in regard to the proposed construction of a Mortuary House and Research Centre at Moka, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to -

- (a) if land has already been identified therefor, and if so, indicate the -
 - (i) location, and
 - (ii) extent thereof, and
- (b) where matters stand.

Reply: In regard to part (a) of the question, the Commissioner of Police has informed that land has already been identified in the yard of Moka Police Station for the construction of a Modern Mortuary Complex. The required extent of land will be extracted from the existing plot of land thereat, once the size of the different components of the Modern Mortuary Complex would be finalised.

In regard to part (b) of the question, the Project Plan Committee of the Ministry of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping has already approved the project. The Ministry is currently working on the architectural design for the Complex.

POLICE OFFICERS – EXCESS MILEAGE/TRAVEL GRANTS - CLAIM

(No. A/8) Mr D. Nagalingum (Second Member for Stanley & Rose Hill) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister for

Rodrigues whether, in regard to Police Officers who have claimed excess mileage or travel grants, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police -

(a) a list thereof, since 2000 to date, indicating in each case the -

(i) period, and

(ii) quantum thereof, and

(b) information as to if any -

(i) refund was effected, indicating in each case the quantum thereof, and

(ii) disciplinary or court action was initiated against them, indicating, in each case, the conditions and/or charges, if any.

Reply: The Commissioner of Police has informed that the payment of mileage and travel grant to Police Officers is made in accordance with paragraph 18.2.71 of the PRB Report 2008.

In regard to part (a) of the question, the Commissioner of Police has informed that there is no available record of any excess of mileage or travel grant paid to Police officers for the years 2000 to 2006. However, over the period January 2007 to 03 May 2012, there have been 34 cases of excess mileage/travel grant amounting to Rs312,721.

In regard to part (b) of the question, in 27 cases, the total excess amount of Rs185,021 have already been refunded and in 7 cases, the total excess amount of Rs127,700 have not yet been refunded.

In regard to part (c) of the Question, out of the 27 cases where excess amounts have already been refunded, two Police Officers were reprimanded and two others were given warning. The remaining 23 cases do not warrant disciplinary action.

Out of 7 cases where excess amounts have not yet been refunded, one Police officer was arrested for forgery and released on bail. The case is still under enquiry by the Central Criminal Investigation Division. As regards the remaining 6 cases, the necessary administrative procedures have been initiated by the Police Department to recoup the necessary amount and for disciplinary action.

ABERCROMBIE POLICE STATION – POLICE QUARTERS

(No. A/10) Mr P. Jhugroo (First Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister

for Rodrigues whether, in regard to the Police Quarters situated at the Abercrombie Police Station, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to -

(a) the number thereof which -

(i) are occupied, indicating the names of the occupiers thereof;

(ii) are unoccupied;

(iii) have been converted into offices, giving a list thereof and indicating when they have been converted, and

(b) where matters stand in relation to the vacation of each of the occupied quarters.

Reply: In regard to part (a) of the Question, the Commissioner of Police has informed that -

(i) four Police Quarters at Abercrombie Police Station are occupied by the following Police Officers -

- PC 4381
- PC 1329
- PS 3607
- PC 2018

(ii) none of the Police Quarters is unoccupied, and

(iii) eight Police Quarters have been converted into offices and are occupied as follows -

YEAR OF CONVERSION	BLOCK	UNIT
2004	AC/7	<i>Brigade pour la Protection des Mineurs</i>
2005	AC/10	CID Metropolitan(North)
2005	AC/12	Prosecutor Metropolitan (North)
2006	AC/5	Divisional Support Unit and Divisional Traffic Police
2007	AC/3	DNA Office and Enquiry Room
2007	AC/8	Police Family Protection Unit

2008	AC/13	CID Metropolitan(North)
2011	AC/14	CID Metropolitan(North)

In regard to part (b) of the question, a notice had been served on PC Charlot to vacate the quarters. As he failed to do so within the prescribed delay, legal action has been initiated against him.

BOARD OF INVESTMENT – CHAIRPERSON – OVERSEAS MISSION

(No. A/11) Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin and Petite Rivière) asked the vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to the Chairperson of the Board of Investment, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Board, information as to the number of overseas mission he has undertaken, since his appointment to date, indicating in each case, the –

- (a) countries visited, and
- (b) cost incurred in terms of air fare, per diem allowances and other related expenses.

Reply: I am informed by the Board of Investment that the Chairman of the Board of Investment, since his appointment in November 2005, has undertaken 15 missions. The total cost incurred to date has been MUR 2.2 Million. The purpose of these missions was to showcase the investment opportunities which Mauritius offers in different sectors namely financial services, ICT/BPO, Freeport and logistics, knowledge, healthcare, manufacturing, hotel and tourism, and real estate. These missions were also the conduit to promote Mauritius as the platform between Asia and Africa.

I am also informed that the BOI does not have a “*Per Diem*” policy. Since 2006, the BOI has implemented a policy whereby accountable expenses are refunded in lieu of *per diem*. The BOI has enforced a strict policy of accountability by requesting all receipts for payments effected during missions. Such receipts include hotel bills, transport and food consumption receipts.

In this connection the information requested in part (a) and (b) of the question is being placed in the Library.

CITÉ LA CURE – ROADS - TARRING

(No. A/12) 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, information as to the amount of money spent in respect of each of the roads tarred thereat, since 2010 to date.

Reply: I am informed by the City Council of Port Louis that the following two roads were completely resurfaced in 2011 at Cité La Cure –

- (a) Jhelum Street over a surface area of 2,375 m² at the cost of Rs1,163,750, and
- (b) Colville Deverell Street over a surface of 2,620 m² at the cost of Rs1,238,744.

I am further informed by the Council that it undertakes patching works as and when required to keep the road network in that region in good condition.

CRÈVE COEUR & CAMP LA BOUE – BUS TERMINALS

(No. A/13) Mr G. Lesjongard (Second Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue) asked the vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to the projects for the construction of bus terminals at Crève Coeur and at Camp La Boue, he will state where matters stand.

Reply: Concerning the bus terminals at Crève Coeur and Camp La Boue, following a visit, appropriate sites have been identified for a platform and a bus terminal, respectively. The design is currently being finalised.

NHDC - GOVERNMENT CONTRIBUTION - SYNDIC

(No. A/14) Dr. R. Sorefan (Fourth Member for La Caverne & Phoenix) asked the vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to the Government contribution of Rs200 per month per

apartment for the setting up of a syndic, as announced in the last budget speech, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the National Housing Development Corporation, information as to the number of households who will -

(a) benefit therefrom, and

(b) not be eligible thereto, indicating the reasons therefor.

Reply: With regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed that this scheme targets 41 NHDC housing estates which are occupied by 6,179 of low income and lower-middle income families.

The objective of this approach is to encourage these residents of NHDC housing estates to appoint their own syndic. The main role of the syndic will be to ensure coordination, discipline and maintain common areas in a clean and orderly state.

As far as part (b) of the question is concerned, 3 NHDC housing estates, which are located at Trou aux Biches (Fleury sur Mer), Beau-Bassin (Harewood Park) and Sodnac (Villeneuve), are occupied by middle-income families and are therefore, not eligible under the scheme.

A provision of Rs17 m. has been made in the 2012 Budget to cater for Government contribution towards Syndic, including administrative expenses.

FLORENTIA ROAD, CHEMIN GRENIER - DRAINS - CONSTRUCTION

(No. A/15) **Mrs J. Radeonde (Fourth Member for Savanne & Black River)** asked the vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to the Florentia Road, at Chemin Grenier, he will state if he has been informed of frequent flooding thereat and, if so, will he state if consideration will be given for the -

(a) construction of drains thereat, and

(b) the resurfacing of the road.

Reply: The flooding problem at Florentina Road, Chemin Grenier has been reported to the National Development Unit on 28 February 2012. Remedial works will start as soon as all clearances have been obtained.

ILE AUX BENITIERS - FIRE OUTBREAKS

(No. A/16) Mrs J. Radegonde (Fourth Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Minister of Environment and Sustainable Development whether, in regard to “Ile aux Benitiers”, he will state the -

- (a) number of fire outbreaks thereat over the past five years, and
- (b) measures that have been or will be taken for the protection of the ecological, historical and cultural environment thereat.

Reply (The Minister of Agro-Industry and Food Security): I am informed that there were two fire outbreaks at ‘*Ile aux Benitiers*’ over the past five years, that is, from 2008 till now.

The protective measures already taken are -

- (i) Firebreaks of an extent of 835 m x 3 m have been created, and
- (ii) Signboards to sensitise the public are under preparation and will be affixed on the islet.

Protective measures that will be taken are -

- (i) the burnt filao trees on the island will be removed to decrease fire hazards;
- (ii) the Forestry Service will plant twice the number of trees burnt. Preference will be given to endemic trees being planted;
- (iii) additional firebreaks will be opened on the islet;
- (iv) sensitisation campaigns will be carried out by the Forestry Service, and
- (v) another expedition has been scheduled for the end of this month in order to fix the signboards, to create additional firebreaks, to carry out sensitisation campaigns and to plant endemic trees.

In respect of protection of the historical and cultural environment, the Ministry of Arts and Culture is currently assessing the historical and cultural heritage of the islet.

FOREST SIDE - BRIDGE - RETAINING WALL

(No. A/17) **Dr. S. Boolell (Second Member for Curepipe & Midlands)** asked the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the bridge found at the corner of the Louis de Rochemouste Street and the Orchidees Street, in Forest Side, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Municipal Council of Curepipe, information as to if consideration will be given for the strengthening of the underlying ground with a retaining wall to stop the land sliding and erosion thereat.

Reply: I am informed by the Municipal Council of Curepipe that following a site visit effected by its Head of Works Department at the concerned locus, it has been observed that there was problem of soil erosion near the bridge abutment close to an existing boundary wall. The Council has therefore proposed the construction of a retaining wall over a length of 15 metres starting from the bridge and extending downstream on both sides of the river banks in order to address this problem.

I am informed that the Council will not be in a position to undertake this project estimated to cost Rs1.3 m. due to financial constraints. In the circumstance, the matter is being referred to the Ministry of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport & Shipping for its consideration.

CORIOLIS STREET, CUREPIPE - NARROW BENDS & BUS STOPS

(No. A/18) **Dr. S. Boolell (Second Member for Curepipe & Midlands)** asked the vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to the Coriolis Street, at *16ème mile*, in Curepipe, he will state if consideration will be given for -

- (a) a review of the security measures thereat concerning the narrow bends causing visual obstruction, and
- (b) the relocation of the bus stops which are located far from the settlement areas which cause unnecessary pedestrian movement and increase accident hazards.

Reply: With regard to part (a), a preliminary survey was carried out by the TMRSU to review the security measures at Coriolis Road, *16ème mille*, pertaining to the narrow bends causing visual obstruction. The recommendations to further improve road safety along this classified road are under consideration.

As far as part (b) is concerned, with regard to the relocation of the bus stops, which are located far from the settlements areas which cause unnecessary pedestrian movements and increased accident hazards, a location for an additional bus stop, in direction of the Motorway, (between Modelly and Isoory Lane) has been identified and will be implemented.

CHEMIN GRENIER – MARKET FAIR

(No. A/19) Mr A. Ganoo (First Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to the market fair at Chemin Grenier, he will state if consideration will be given for the construction of a new modern market in replacement thereof to adequately serve the local community.

Reply: From information received from the Grand Port Savanne District Council a plot of land about four acres has been identified near the Chemin Grenier Village Hall for the purpose of a new market fair.

The Grand Port-Savanne District Council has through the Ministry of Local Government and Outer Islands submitted the Project Request Form for approval.

The National Development Unit will consider the construction of the new market fair once all clearances including finance would have been obtained.

SOLAR WATER HEATERS SCHEME – COMPANIES - SALE

(No. A/21) Mr P. Jugnauth (First Member for Quartier Militaire & Moka) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to the Solar Water Heaters Scheme, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Development Bank of Mauritius Ltd., information as to the companies authorized for the sale of solar water heaters to the public thereunder.

Reply: (The Minister of Environment and Sustainable Development): The following 33 companies which are selected and registered by the Development Bank of Mauritius Limited under the Solar Water Heater Scheme are authorised to sell solar water heaters to the public.

	Ah-Koye Ha Chow & Co	34, Jummah Mosque	Port Louis	akhc@intnet.mu/wills.akhc@intnet.mu
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1	Ltd	St.		
2	Arzam Khan & Cie	River View	Central Flacq	panther.mauritius@gmail.com
3	Cliffton Hill, Home Emporium CO. Ltd	Royal Road, Le Hochet	Terre Rouge	clifftonhillswinburn@hotmail.com
4	Dalafix Limitee	1 Steel Avenue	Riche Terre	fmaurel@dalafix.intnet.mu / sales@dalafix.intnet.mu
5	Duraco Ltee	Riche Terre Road, B33 Riche Terre	Port Louis	admin@duraco.mu
6	Espace Commercial Limitee	70 Etienne Pellereau St	Port Louis	espaceltee@intnet.mu
7	Ever Green Solar Ltd	4, Beau Rivage	Tombeau Bay	mikeseedanie@yahoo.com / evergreenso-larLtd@gmail.com
8	First Response Ltd	S05 Orchard Centre St Jean Rd S05	Quatre Bornes	first-response@intnet.mu
9	Fortaweld Ltd	31 Nicolay Rd	Port Louis	fortaweld@intnet.mu
10	Ibsons Ltd	Tagore lane	Mesnil Phoenix	arcom@intnet.mu
11	KNU Express Ltd	36 Boulevard Rivalentz St	Port Louis	knjexpress@intnet.mu
12	Long Life Industries Ltd	26 Arsenal St	Port Louis	achansun@orange.mu
13	Madeena Saib Co	Morcellement Ithier	Plaine Magnien	anmadeenasuib@gmail.com
14	Mega Baron Ltee	3 Koenig Lane	Phoenix	mbaron@intnet.mu
	Mosolar Ltd	12 Kamaya St	Roche Bois	mosolar@mosolar.com

15				
16	PinnacleTechnologies Limited Pinnacle	La Porte,	Esperance Trebuchet	info@vagrouplimited.com / adesh@vagrouplimited.com
17	Plasticon Ltd	1 cite Laval Street	Port Louis	plasticon@intnet.mu
18	Privilege Energy Ltd	2 Jenner St	Port Louis	dabeesingh@intnet.mu
19	Rd Networks & Communication Ltd	B 34 Cite Joachim	Forest Side	rdnetworks@intnet.mu / microhouze@intnet.mu
20	Redline Distribution Ltd	Royal Road	GRNW	redline@intnet.mu
21	Rey and Lenferna Ltd	Royal Road	Bell Village	admin@reylenferna.com / bjuste@reylenferna.com
22	Robert Le Maire Ltd	733 Old Moka Road PO Box 733	Bell Village	c.magon.rlm@rlmgroup.mu
23	Secureworks Ltd	Royal Road	Curepipe	avinash@secureworksmauritius.com / sales@secureworksmauritius.com
24	Societe Rajkoomar Ramguttty & Co	Place Margeot St Ignace, Wong Chin Building	Rose Hill	transcom@intnet.mu
25	Solartech Co Ltd	52, Banyan Street, Cite Valijee	Port Louis	solartech@hotmail.com
26	Solray Plumbing Co Ltd	Royal Road	St Pierre	solray@hotmail.com
27	Sotratch Limitee	29, Meldrum St	Beau Bassin	k.padiachy@stech.intnet.mu / stech@intnet.mu
28	Standard Solar Engineering System Ltd	29 St Georges Street	Port Louis	hd.group@live.com / ritesh.hurchund@gmail.com
	Sun Industries Limited	39-34 Royal Rd	Port Louis	kush@tech4u.biz / info@tech4u.biz

29	(Skyrays)	G.R.N.W		
30	Super Décor & Company Limited	Tagore Road	Lallmatie	superdecorltd@hotmail.com/rbabooa@hotmail.com
31	Technosolaire Ltee	28 Gaetan Raynalst	Beau Bassin	sales@technosolaire.mu/direction@technosolaire.mu
32	Techno-Sup Ltd	225 Royal Road	Curepipe	technosup@intnet.mu
33	Yesvintec Co Ltd	Royal Road La Flora	Grand Bois	yesvind@gmail.com/sangunga@gmail.com

SAINT PIERRE – MULTI-PURPOSE SPORTS COMPLEX PROJECT

(No. A/22) Mr P. Jugnauth (First Member for Quartier Militaire & Moka) asked the vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to the Saint Pierre Multi-Purpose Sports Complex Project, he will state where matters stand.

Reply (The Minister of Youth and Sports): Last year, at the request of the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development, four plots of land belonging to Mon Desert Alma Sugar Estate were identified in the vicinity of St. Pierre for the construction of the Multi-Purpose Sports Complex. Site visits were even effected by officers of that Ministry, Ministry of Housing and Lands, Youth and Sports, Moka Flacq District Council and officials of Mon Désert Alma Sugar Estate. During the visits it was agreed that the MOFED would initiate action for the acquisition of the land.

As soon as same is vested in this Ministry, action will be initiated for the construction of the Sports Complex.

BANK FISHERS - GRIEVANCES

(No. A/23) Mr J. C. Barbier (Second Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Fisheries whether, in regard to the bank fishers, he will state if he has been

informed of their grievances and, if so, indicate the remedial actions taken, if any, giving details thereof.

Reply: Following the hunger strike by local bank fishermen, the *Syndicat des Pêcheurs* informed my Ministry on 18 January, 2012 of the grievances of the bank fishermen to the effect that bank fishing operators were recruiting foreign fishermen to work on Mauritian bank fishing vessels, thus, the local bank fishermen were being deprived of employment opportunities. The *Syndicat des Pêcheurs* made the following proposals to address the issue -

- (i) an allowance be granted to the unemployed bank fishermen by the Fishermen Welfare Fund;
- (ii) a tripartite committee be set up to consider the working conditions and the salary of the bank fishermen;
- (iii) a National Maritime Audit Commission be set up to assess the fisheries resources in the EEZ, and
- (iv) the Ministry of Labour, Industrial Relations & Employment undertakes a survey in relation to foreign fishermen employed on board Mauritian fishing vessels as to whether the fishing vessels were compliant with relevant Mauritian laws.

In light of the prevailing situation at that point in time, the following remedial actions were taken -

- (a) my Ministry held a meeting on 17 January 2012 with bank fishing operators to look into the possibility of recruiting local bank fishermen. It was pointed that out of 207 bank fishermen on the record list at my Ministry, only 111 were active as at August 2011. Presently, there are three Mauritian companies involved in the bank fishery, namely -
 - (i) the Sealord Fishing Ltd., owner of three vessels, all flying Mauritian flags;
 - (ii) the Rodia Processing Plant Ltd, owner of one vessel, flying a foreign flag, and
 - (iii) the Pioneer Fishing Co. Ltd., owner of one vessel, flying a foreign flag.

The Sealord Fishing Ltd. and the Pioneer Fishing Co. Ltd. were employing 30 and 15 local bank fishermen respectively, while the Rodia Processing Plant Ltd. was not employing local fishermen.

My Ministry requested Sealord Fishing Ltd. and the Pioneer Fishing Co. Ltd. to each consider the employment of an additional fifteen (15) local fishermen. The Rodia Processing Plant Ltd was also requested to employ fifteen (15) local bank fishermen.

- (b) The Minister of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment chaired a meeting on 09 February 2012, with the *Syndicat des Pêcheurs*, representatives of my Ministry, and the Shipping Division of the Ministry of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping. The issues discussed and recommendations made were as follows -
 - (i) a one-off financial assistance to the unemployed bank fishermen be paid;
 - (ii) a committee be set up with concerned stakeholders for a collective agreement to employ local bank fishermen and to revise the rate payable to bank fishermen for their catch;
 - (iii) the case be referred to the Permanent Arbitration Tribunal, if no agreement is reached, and
 - (iv) in case of non-compliance of bank fishing operators with the terms of the agreement that local bank fishermen be recruited primordially, the fishing licence condition could be amended to employ local bank fishermen.
- (c) A meeting was held at the National Remuneration Board (NRB) on 04 February 2012 to take stock of the nature and conditions of work done by the bank fishermen. The recommendations of the NRB are awaited with regard to the salary and conditions of work of the bank fishermen.
- (d) The Ministry of Social Security, National Solidarity and Reform Institutions paid a one-off financial assistance of Rs5,000, on 15 February 2012, to each unemployed bank fisherman.
- (e) A Tripartite Committee has been set up at the Ministry of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment and the first Meeting of the Tripartite Committee was held on 24 April 2012. However, in view of the fact that all the bank fishing operators were not present on 24 April 2012, the meeting was postponed to 09 May 2012.

The House may further note that my Ministry has set up a Bank Fishery Consultative Committee comprising bank fishing operators, bank fishermen and other relevant Ministries and stakeholders to discuss issues in respect of bank fishing activities and operations.

In addition, my Ministry is currently preparing a bank fishery management plan, which will become operational in 2013. Two workshops and three meetings have been organised to take stock of issues and problems relating to the bank fishery.

CALODYNE - LAGOON - WORKS

(No. A/24) Mr J. C. Barbier (Second Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Environment and Sustainable Development whether, in regard to works presently being carried out in the lagoon of Calodyne, he will state if he has received representations concerning the damage being caused to the lagoon and, if so, if urgent remedial measures has been or will be taken.

Reply: An anonymous telephone call was received at the *Police de L'Environnement* on 25 November 2011, regarding interference with the shoreline at Calodyne.

The *Police de L'Environnement* requested the National Coast Guard post at Grand'Gauve to look into the matter and also informed the Pollution Prevention and Control Division of my Ministry accordingly. The latter effected a site visit on 28 November 2011 and subsequent site visits to ensure compliance with the conditions of the EIA licence issued to Le Creolias (Hotel Management) Ltd which was carrying lagoon rehabilitation works.

A court case has also been lodged before the Supreme Court on 12 January 2012, by one Tandeey Nayegam Narainsamy and 21 other persons against Les Creolias (Hotel Management) Ltd in connection with the works carried out by the hotel in the lagoon of Calodyne. The case has been fixed for 06 June 2012.

GLOBAL FORUM PEER REVIEW REPORT - RECOMMENDATIONS

(No. A/25) Mr R. Uteem (Second Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central) asked the vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to the Global Forum Peer Review Report on Mauritius published by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, he will, state if Government

proposes to implement the recommendations contained therein and, if so, indicate the time frame set therefor.

Reply: Mauritius was selected by the Global Forum on Transparency and Exchange of Information for Tax Purposes, in 2010, to undergo a combined Phase I and II Peer Review of its system to exchange tax information with its treaty partners.

Phase I Peer Review examines the legal and regulatory framework put in place by a jurisdiction for exchange of tax information while Phase II assesses the effectiveness of the system in implementing information exchange to international standard.

The Mauritius Peer Review was carried out as from June 2010 by an assessment team made up of officials from US and Malaysia. The team made a site visit in Mauritius to assess the effectiveness of our information exchange system.

The assessment was made in accordance with the Global Forum methodology on basis of 10 essential elements, under 3 broad categories consisting of availability of information, access to information and exchange of information. The determination for each essential element is categorised as to whether -

- (i) the element is in place
- (ii) the element is in place but improvement is required, or
- (iii) the element is not in place.

Mauritius review report was published in January 2011. Only one element was determined as not in place. The issue concerned the absence of a legal requirement for Global Business Companies holding a category 2 licence (GBC2) to keep accounting records. To remedy the situation the Companies Act was amended in July 2011 to require GBC2 companies to keep full accounting records as well as underlying documentation for at least 7 years.

Mauritius thereafter made a request to the Global Forum for a supplementary report. After a full review of our system by the Global Forum assessors, a Supplementary Peer Review Report was published in October 2011, determining all elements to be in place while some need improvements.

This Supplementary Report supplants the January 2011 report and contains 13 recommendations. Eleven of the recommendations concern measures that have already been

implemented by Mauritius but require continuous monitoring to ensure that they are being adhered to.

The remaining 2 recommendations, concern nominee shareholding and the keeping of identity information and underlying documentation by non-resident foreign trusts not carrying on business in Mauritius. The House may wish to note that certain developed countries, such as Canada, New Zealand and Singapore, have similar recommendations like Mauritius on the issue of nominee shareholders.

The two recommendations relate to a very small number of entities and discussions are underway with all relevant stakeholders with a view to determining the best way to implement them.

PORT LOUIS FIRE STATION - RELOCATION

(No. A/26) Mr D. Nagalingum (Second Member for Stanley & Rose Hill) asked the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the proposed relocation of the Port Louis Fire Station and the Head Office of the Government Fire Services, he will state -

- (a) if the views of the Traffic Management and Road Safety Unit has been sought and obtained for the plot of land identified therefor, and if so, indicate the outcome thereof, and
- (b) where matters stand.

Reply: I am informed by the Fire Services Department that since the project for the relocation of the Port Louis Fire Station is still at its preliminary stage it is premature to seek the views of the Traffic Management and Road Safety Unit.

As regards part (b) of the Question, I am informed that the Ex-Sea Training School site at Victoria Square, Port Louis has been earmarked for the relocation of the Port Louis Fire Station and the Head Office of the Fire Services Department. The Ministry of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping is currently working on the preliminary drawings as well as the estimated cost of the project.

PLAINE VERTE GARDEN - BENCHES & LAMP POSTS

(No. A/27) 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 Plaine Verte Garden, at the level of the Paul & Virginie Street to the Diego Garcia Street, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Municipal Council of Port Louis, information as to where matters stand in relation to the -

- (a) replacement of the damaged bollards by post-top spherical luminaries;
- (b) installation of additional benches, and
- (c) repairs to the present defective lamp posts.

Reply: I am informed by the City Council of Port Louis that twenty bollards were fixed in year 2010 at Plaine Verte Garden between Paul et Virginie and Diego Garcia Street. These bollards were shortly afterwards damaged by vandals.

I am informed that the Council does not propose to replace the damaged bollards by post-top spherical luminaries as this part of the garden is well lit as it is provided with twenty-two poles with double spherical luminaries.

As regards part (b) of the Question, I am informed that there is no need for installation of additional benches as there are already twenty benches in this part of the garden.

As far as part (c) of the Question is concerned, I am informed that there are no defective lamp posts as at date and all damaged bulbs are immediately replaced.

**MINISTRY OF PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE, NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT UNIT,
LAND TRANSPORT AND SHIPPING - CONTRACTS - CONDITIONS**

(No. A/28) Mr K. Li Kwong Wing (Second Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the vice-Prime Minister, Ministry of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to the contracts above the value of Rs15 m. awarded, since 2005 to date, he will give the list thereof, indicating in each case the -

- (a) nature of the contract;
- (b) name of the contractor;
- (c) value of the contract on acceptance;
- (d) conditions of the contract;
- (e) contractual date of completion, indicating extension of time, if any, and if so the -
 - (i) reasons therefor;
 - (ii) consequences thereof, and

(iii) actions taken, and

(f) actual value paid on completion or being claimed under process and, if not fully paid.

Reply: The information is being compiled and will be tabled at the earliest.

CHARITABLE INSTITUTIONS/SHELTERS – INMATES

(No. A/30) **Mrs F. Labelle (Third Member for Vacoas & Floreal)** asked the Minister of Social Security, National Solidarity and Reform Institutions whether, in regard to the charitable institutions/shelters, she will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to the number of inmates thereof who left same, since 2006 to April 2012, on a yearly basis, indicating the reasons therefor, in each case.

Reply: I wish to inform the House that my Ministry is not responsible for shelters.

However, as far as charitable institutions which are subsidised by my Ministry by way of capitation grant are concerned, the information asked for is being compiled and will be laid on the Table of the National Assembly.

BEAU BASSIN MUNICIPAL COUNCIL – MAYORS - OVERSEAS MISSIONS

(No. A/31) **Mr F. Quirin (Third Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière)** asked the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether, in regards to the Municipal Council of Beau Bassin/Rose Hill, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Council, information as to the number of overseas missions undertaken by each Mayor thereof, since November 2005 to date, giving a breakdown of the expenses incurred, in each case.

Reply: The information requested by the hon. Member and submitted by the Municipal Council of Beau Bassin/Rose Hill is being placed in the Library of the National Assembly.

BEAU BASSIN - UNMAINTAINED BARE LANDS

(No. A/32) **Mr F. Quirin (Third Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière)** asked the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the unmaintained bare lands in the region of Beau Bassin, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Municipal Council of Beau Bassin/Rose Hill, information as to the actions taken against the owners thereof, since January 2011 to date, giving a list thereof who have been booked therefor.

Reply: I am informed by the Municipal Council of Beau Bassin/Rose Hill that the following actions have been taken at its end against owners of unmaintained bare lands since January 2011 to date -

1. (a) No. of request of notices issued in respect of bare lands: 384
 (b) No. of notices complied with: 360
 (c) No. of notices whose delay have been expired: 22
2. List of notices of contravention issued in respect of bare lands.

SN	Name of owner	Address of owner	Address of bareland	Notice of contravention	Date issued
(a)	Mrs Maguidah Ameerally	SSR Road, Quatre Bornes	C/r Panchoo & Ste Anne, Stanley, Rose Hill	3255	20.03.12
(b)	Irfaan Jaulim	Vavid House Vacoas	Royal Road Rose Hill opp. Lourdes Church	9180	06.03.12

3. (a) No. of eyesore abatement notices: 10
 (b) No. of notices compiled with: All
4. No. of barelands (unknown/untraceable) cleaned by the Council: 416

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APPENDIX I

NATIONAL SPORTS AWARD 2011 - EXPENDITURE

	PAYMENTS	Amount Rs.
1	Hoisting- Swami Vivekanada Int. Convention Centre	287,500.00
2	Catering Services SVICC	310,500.00
3	Shields/Trophies -Metal Casting	71,460.00
4	Shields for invitees icw Silver Jubilee &	
	trophies for chief guests,Sponsors (Glass Gallery)	113,315.00
5	Plates for life time achievement Award	5,400.00
6	Invitation Cards	10,000.00
7	Programmes	11,475.00
8	Cash Prizes	
8.1	Sportsman of the year	75,000.00
8.2	Sportswoman of the year	75,000.00
8.3	Junior sportsman of the year	50,000.00
8.4	Junior sportswoman of the year	50,000.00
8.5	Most Promising Sportsman	40,000.00
8.6	Most Promising Sportswoman	40,000.00
8.7	Coach of the year - individual sports	40,000.00
8.8	Coach of the year - team sports	40,000.00
8.9	Team of the year - individual sports	50,000.00
8.10	Team of the year - team sports	50,000.00
8.11	2 Special Prizes Handisports	20,000.00
9	Stage Set-up & Logistics	
9.1	Production of clips for nominees	MBC
9.2	Live Telecast	MBC

9.3	Projectors,screens & mic. incl.technician	MBC	337,500.00
9.4	Stage and Orchestra lighting incl. technician	MBC	
9.5	Stage decoration	MBC	
9.6	Follow Spots	MBC	
9.7	clip production of silver Jubilee MSC - DISC US production		25,000.00
9.8	Dresses & stipend for Hostesses		21,300.00
9.9	Heads of Hostesses(2)		5,000.00
9.10	Master of ceremony (2)		12,000.00
9.11	Banners & Giant Cheque		23,800.00
10	Balloons		14,000.00
11	Pack Lunch for Rehearsal etc		16,720.00
12	Press Conference-Signature of Contract Sponsors		17,250.00
13	Cultural Show & Music		
13.1	Services for conception, preparation & "mise en place"		65,000.00
13.2	Gala show NSA (Five Groups)		100,400.00
14	Prize for "Jeu-Concours" winner		10,000.00
15	Miscellaneous Expenses		130,000.00
16	Overtime Expenses		75,000.00
	Total		2,192,620.00

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APPENDIX II

Composition of the Panel who finalised the nominees

1. Mr Jacques Malié, MSK, Chairperson
2. Mr Tapeshwar Lollchand, representative of High Level Sports Unit
3. Mr Elvis Bonne, representative of Mauritius National Olympic Committee
4. Mr Daniel Capiron, Independent Member
5. Mrs Neeta Persand, Independent Member
6. Mr Goolam Cader Ally, representative of Non Olympic Committee
7. Mr Eshaan Muturza, representative of Press (Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation)
8. Mr Stany Maurice, representative of Press (*l'Express*)

Criteria used for short listing

- International performances of athletes and the level attained at International competitions (Number of participants and countries also taken into consideration)
- National performances
- Regularity in training sessions and competitions

Categories of awards

1. Sportsman of the year 2011
2. Sportswoman of the year 2011
3. Junior Sportsman of the year 2011
4. Junior Sportswoman of the year 2011
5. Most Promising Sportsman of the year 2011
6. Most Promising Sportswoman of the year 2011
7. Team of the Year 2011 "*Sports Individuels*"
8. Team of the Year 2011 "*Sports Collectifs*"
9. Coach of the Year 2011 "*Sports Individuels*"
10. Coach of the Year 2011 "*Sports Collectifs*"