



**FIFTH NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**PARLIAMENTARY**

**DEBATES**

**(HANSARD)**

**SECOND SESSION**

**MONDAY 26 NOVEMBER 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
Hon. Louis Joseph Von-Mally, GOSK	Minister of Fisheries
Hon. Satyaprakash Ritoo	Minister of Youth and Sports
Hon. Louis Hervé Aimée	Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands

Hon. Mookhesswur Choonee	Minister of Arts and Culture
Hon. Shakeel Ahmed Yousuf Abdul Razack Mohamed	Minister of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment
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
Hon. Surendra Dayal	Minister of Social Integration and Economic Empowerment
Hon. Jangbahadoorsing Iswurdeo Mola Roopchand Seetaram	Minister of Business, Enterprise and Cooperatives
Hon. Mrs Maria Francesca Mireille Martin	Minister of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare
Hon. Sutyadeo Moutia	Minister of Civil Service and Administrative Reforms

Members

Members

## PRINCIPAL OFFICERS AND OFFICIALS

*Mr Speaker*Peeroo, Hon. Abdool Razack M.A., SC,  
GOSK*Deputy Speaker*

Peetumber, Hon. Maneswar

*Deputy Chairperson of Committees*

Deerpalsing, Hon. Ms Kumaree Rajeshree

*Clerk of the National Assembly*

Dowlutta, Mr R. Ranjit

*Deputy Clerk*

Lotun, Mrs B. Safeena

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**MAURITIUS**

**Fifth National Assembly**

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**SECOND SESSION**

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**Debate No. 28 of 2012**

**Sitting of 26 November 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. Ministry of Finance and Economic Development –**

The Annual Report 2011 of the Mauritius Revenue Authority.

**B. Ministry of Education and Human Resources –**

The Annual Report of the Mauritius Qualifications Authority for the period 01 July 2009 to 31 December 2010.

**ORAL ANSWER TO QUESTION**  
**GROS DEREK DRUG RING**

**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 *Gros Derek* case, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to –

- (a) if the Anti Drug & Smuggling Unit, the National Security Service, the National Coast Guard, the Mauritius Revenue Authority or the Financial Intelligence Unit had detected the existence of the *Gros Derek* drug ring over the recent years and, if so, the actions taken, if any, and, if not, why not;
- (b) the names of the persons arrested in relation thereto as at to date, indicating their previous convictions, if any, and
- (c) if the scrutinizing of the cellular phones of Rudolphe Dereck Jean-Jacques, of Ashish Dayal and of Moossa Beeharry has revealed any political and banking contacts and, if so, give details thereof.

**The Prime Minister:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I have, several times stated in the House that Government is firmly committed to tackling the drug problem in our country, and that the fight against the drug scourge remains one of the priority issues. I also mentioned that the problem is not unique to Mauritius.

Drug abuse, in fact, concerns the whole society, and it has a profound and negative effect on communities, families and individuals. We all recognise the complexity of the drug problem and that's why I always say that each one of us has a role to play in the fight against the drug scourge and contribute to build a better society for all.

The measures taken by the law enforcement agencies coupled with intelligence-led approach are clearly yielding positive results. I should and I am sure hon. Members and the population at large concur with me that the ADSU team and other sections of the Police as well as other law enforcement agencies are doing excellent work and need to be congratulated.

The number of persons arrested in connection with drug related offences has increased from 1,504 in 2000 to 1,899 in 2010, 1,910 in 2011, and for this year, up to mid November, the figure is 1921.



In regard to part(a) of the question, the Gros Derek drug ring has, in fact, been under close but discreet surveillance for quite some time as there was strong suspicion that the sea route was being used for drug trafficking. The vessel ZAYN II was intercepted and searched on 13 November, 2010 in which the following persons were on board -

Mr Anthony Begue

Mr Dereck Jean-Jacques

Mr Ashish Dayal

Mr Jeetendra Addaya

However, no drug was found. Their residences were searched on the same day and nothing incriminating was found. However, their monitoring was continuing and this is what led to the arrest of Mr Ashish Dayal on 12 July 2012 which in turn led to the arrest of Gros Derek.

Mr Speaker, Sir, surveillance is vital in the operations of ADSU as it leads to the busting of drug networks. The National Security Service has also contributed in sharing intelligence with ADSU. While the National Coast Guard worked secretly with ADSU to keep the sea route under watch, that is, it monitors suspicious vessels and including boarding of such vessels.

As the House is aware, enquiry in the Gros Derek case is not completed. It would, therefore, not be in order for me to give specific details so as not to jeopardise the ongoing enquiry.

However, Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Director General of the Mauritius Revenue Authority that the financial affairs of Mr Rudolphe Dereck Jean-Jacques and all the members of his ring so far arrested are being scrutinised by the authority and assessments have been raised and inscriptions made against their property.

As regards the Financial Intelligence Unit, I am informed that following three defensive reporting, that is, (reporting based on press articles) the financial trail of all the accused in the Gros Derek case are being undertaken by the FIU. The FIU disseminated two Intelligence reports to two investigatory bodies, in Mauritius, namely ICAC and the Enforcement Authority under the Assets Recovery Act. In fact, I am further informed that the FIU has received a large amount of financial information from a number of banks and one financial institution and further detailed, complex and intricate financial investigation analysis is well under way.

Mr Speaker, Sir, apart from the Institutions I have just referred to, the Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC) has already taken the following measures -

- (i) it has served attachment orders on all the 132 vehicles registered in the name of Mr Dharamdev Balkissur, attachment orders on 4 vehicles on the name of Bramer Banking Corporation, 4 vehicles in the name of Barclays Leasing Company Ltd including the BMW used by *Gros Derek* and 2 vehicles in the name of ABC Banking Corporation Ltd;
- (ii) it carried out investigation on the house of *Gros Derek* and has served an attachment order on this house at Cité Richelieu which is owned by his father, Mr Louis Roger Jean-Jacques;
- (iii) it has served an attachment order on the house of Mr Ashish Dayal at Ollier Avenue, Quatre Bornes as well as on the house of Mr David Alexandre Jean-Jacques at Cité Richelieu.

ICAC is pursuing its enquiry.

In regard to part (b) of the question, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that so far, 11 persons have been arrested in connection with this case. They are as follows -

<u>SN</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Date of Arrest</u>	<u>Charge</u>
1.	Seewoosing DAYAL alias Ashish	12 July 2012	Drug Dealing
2.	Rudolf Dereck JEAN-JACQUES	27 July 2012	Drug Dealing
3.	Bruno Wesley CASIMIR	04 August 2012	Drug Dealing
4.	Hayesan MADARBACUS	24 August 2012	Drug Dealing
5.	Moossa BEEHARRY	31 August 2012	Drug Dealing
6.	Antoine Desire Fricheler AZIE	04 September 2012	Money Laundering
7.	Jean Jimmy ALEXIS	11 September 2012	Drug Dealing
8.	Louis Jimmy MARTHE alias Colosso	11 September 2012	Drug Dealing
9.	Roukesh HEMRAJ	07 October 2012	Money Laundering
10.	Dharamdeo BALKISSUR alias Soojeet	15 October 2012	Money Laundering

11. Jean Danilo Fabrice FRANÇOIS 25 October 2012 Money Laundering

Mr Speaker, Sir, of the 11 persons arrested so far, 8 of them have previous convictions as follows –

<u>SN</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Previous Conviction</u>
1.	JEAN-JACQUES Rudolf Dereck	02 April 2009 for possession of cannabis. He was sentenced for Rs1,000 and Rs50 costs He was again convicted on 24 June 2009 for possession of stolen property.
2.	DAYAL Seewoosing (Ashish)	He was convicted on 17 August 2000 for larceny two in number and possession of stolen property. He was given 2 years probation and Rs100 costs. He was again convicted on 29 January 2009 for possession of stolen property. He was given a conditional discharge to furnish a surety of Rs10,000 and to be of good behaviour for 2 years in default to undergo 9 months imprisonment and Rs300 costs.
3.	MADARBACUS Hayesan	21 July 2009 for possession of cannabis. The sentence was Rs1,400 and Rs100 costs.
4.	MARTHE Louis Jimmy	Convicted on 29 April 2009 – Count 1 Possession of Subutex; Count 2 giving false evidence He was sentenced on Count 1: 2 years imprisonment Sentenced on Count 2: 2 years of imprisonment + Rs10,000 + Rs500 cost.
5.	HEMRAJ Roukesh	Convicted on 04 May 2007 for distributing work of a copying owner without his express authorisation (5 counts) Sentence: Rs10,000 on each count + Rs300 cost

6. ALEXIS Jean Jimmy    Convicted on 25 July 2006 for damaging enclosure.  
                                   He was sentenced for Rs500 and Rs100 costs.  
                                   He was again sentenced on 19 January 2007 for assaulting Agent of the  
                                   Civil Authority.  
                                   He was sentenced Rs2,500 and Rs100 costs.  
                                   He was again convicted on 20 November 2007 on assault for 3 counts.  
                                   His sentence was Rs2,000 on each count + Rs100 costs  
                                   On 20 November 2007 he was again convicted on assault (3 counts)  
                                   Sentence for Rs2,500 + Rs100 costs
7. AZIE Antoine            On 27 July 2010 for blows on 2 counts.  
     Desire Fricheler        He was Sentenced Rs 800 + Rs 500 + Rs 100 costs
8. CASIMIR                On 15 March 2012 for insult  
     Bruno                    He was sentenced Rs800 and Rs100 costs.  
     Wesley

Mr Speaker, Sir, Mr Rudolf Dereck Jean-Jacques was arrested for the offence of Rebellion on 19 August 2008. He was bailed out on 08 September 2008 after providing a surety of Rs 10,000 and a recognizance of Rs50,000 and also to report to Barkly Police Station on every Tuesdays, Fridays and Sundays between 06.00 hours and 18.00 hours. The case has been lodged before the Intermediate Court and the trial has been fixed for 15 February 2013.

Mr Dereck was further arrested on 17 June 2010, for the offence of drug dealing, that is, possession of heroin for the purpose of distributing. He was bailed out on 16 July 2010 after providing a surety of Rs50,000 and a recognizance of Rs 200,000 and to report daily to Petite Rivière Police Station between 06.00 hours and 18.00 hours. The case has been lodged before the Intermediate Court and trial has been fixed for 29 November of this year.

As regards part (c) of the question, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that all the mobile phones of all the persons arrested have been secured. Police has applied for a Judge's Order to obtain -

- (a) the registered name and address/es of the subscriber to the above mentioned telephone number;
- (b) a list of all incoming and outgoing calls, including International calls, as well as SMS, including International SMS made to and from the abovementioned telephone number as from 1 July 2012 to 12 July 2012;
- (c) the registered names and addresses of the recipients with their respective IMEI number/s, and
- (d) the locations from where the phone calls were made and received.

Mr Speaker, Sir, at this stage of the inquiry, as at today, I am advised that there is no information showing any person as being the political or banking contacts of the Mr Rudolphe Dereck Jean-Jacques, Mr Ashish Dayal and Mr Moussa Beeharry as well as the others.

**Mr Bérenger:** Mr Speaker, Sir, the hon. Prime Minister has provided us with 11 names of persons who have been arrested and, if I heard him correctly, 8 had previous convictions. I also heard him say that *Gros Derek* was already on bail. Can I know apart from *Gros Derek*, out of the 10 other persons, how many, when they were arrested recently, were already on bail?

**The Prime Minister:** I mentioned the names of those who are on bail, Mr Speaker, Sir; I will just go through it again. Of these 11, many of them have been sentenced already.

*(Interruptions)*

Of the 11 persons who were arrested, how many were also on bail at the time? I will have to go through it all again, Mr Speaker, Sir.

*(Interruptions)*

I can provide, but I think there is only one, from what I see.

**Mr Bérenger:** Precisely, the facility with which *Gros Derek* was able to find bail, has the hon. Prime Minister looked into that, what attitude the Police adopted and how is it that somebody convicted, on bail, reconvicted, gets bail again?

**The Prime Minister:** Two cases are still in front of the Court, Mr Speaker, Sir. It is for the offence of Rebellion that he was arrested on 19 August 2008 and he only received bail on 08 September 2008. Mr Speaker, Sir, I am sure the hon. Leader of the Opposition knows that even though the Police objects to bail, sometimes after a time, they are given bail.

**Mr Bérenger:** I heard the hon. Prime Minister saying that that gang had been under surveillance for some time. Has the hon. Prime Minister looked into the fact - how can we

explain that for years and years - three, four, five years - there had been *signes extérieures de richesse*, houses, luxury cars, luxury motorcycles and so on, before action was taken, including against a businessman who was the proud owner of more than 130 *voitures de location*, supposedly. How can all these have taken place for a number of years?

**The Prime Minister:** In fact, Mr Speaker, Sir, since 2004, on suspicious grounds they were being monitored for what I understand. For example, when they do their search, they see the exterior – as the hon. Leader of Opposition said, to look for the *signes extérieures de richesse* – photographs were taken of the house, of the contents and they were sent to the MRA. The MRA then looks at all the details. As for the case of the cars, the person was doing leasing and rental. He has declared his increase in the amount of money that he was getting from his business and has gradually increased. Therefore, they did not see at this point whether it was something else or was it from his business. Although, I must say that for last year, the return he made was less. It was on an increasing trend but, for last year, it was less, that is why they keep monitoring, Mr Speaker, Sir, until they get to the source.

**Mr Bérenger:** How come, in particular, that an organised gang was able to function on board merchant vessels, *Le Trochetia*, for years again, without the Customs or the Coast Guards or anybody becoming aware of that organised gang on the vessel itself and near the harbour?

**The Prime Minister:** Mr Speaker, Sir, in fact, this is not so. The ADSU has done tremendous work, I must say. They have, in fact, arrested many people on board of the *Trochetia* from time to time. They have arrested people who were throwing drugs on board. I won't go into the details as to how the arrest was made, but they were arrested and brought to court. As I have explained, on 13 November - because they were monitoring, they were suspicious that these are the people who are doing this traffic. They had information from Intelligence. They allowed them to go on the boat. They allowed them to be at sea before arresting them. But, for some reason, they did not have any drugs on them and they have to be released. It could well be that they did not manage – sometimes they tell me that the drugs move away because of the waves and they did not get any of the drugs. But they were arrested. They were searched. Their houses were searched. Photographs were taken and sent to the MRA and monitoring was continuing. This is what led eventually to their arrest.

**Mr Bérenger:** Can I take this opportunity to clarify one point which has shocked quite a number of people, including myself. After having failed to detect to this case *les signes*

*extérieures de richesse* and so on, the MRA, we are given to understand - has now laid a claim against *Gros Derek*, that is, on the proceeds of crime, a Rs20-million claim on *Gros Derek*. Is that the situation that the MRA, after having failed to do its work for all this time, is now claiming for *Gros Derek* to pay income tax, out of the proceeds of crime?

**The Prime Minister:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I am not aware of this. What I have been told by the MRA is that they were paying their taxes. I must check whether, in fact, now that they are asking for back pay of money. Sometimes it may happen that they take time, I am not defending them - but it takes time to put in the assessment. I am not aware of this information.

**Mr Bérenger:** Can I know whether - since we are taking about the MRA - hon. Minister Boolell, on 07 September, in a public meeting took to task both the MRA and the FIU? Has the hon. Prime Minister been provided information as to what led him to publicly criticise both the MRA and the FIU?

**The Prime Minister:** I did not ask him. I am not sure why that is. But I must say, Mr Speaker, Sir, the hon. Leader of the Opposition has been Prime Minister and some of the information is not given to anyone else. So, it could be well be that.

**Mr Bérenger:** If I can move on, we have been informed that the Police have secured the portable phones of the persons concerned and have asked for Judge's Order. Can we know the date on which - because this thing has been going on for a long time - the Police sought that Judge's Order and what is taking place now?

**The Prime Minister:** We must bear in mind, Mr Speaker, Sir, when *Gros Derek* was arrested from then on, the Police started the inquiry and they eventually came to the conclusion that they must get to the telephones and, of course, they have to go for Judge's Order, which was asked on 23 November, if I am not mistaken, but they are still waiting for the Judge's Order.

**Mr Bérenger:** How are we proceeding? Has it been brought to the Judge's attention that time is of the essence, that this is absolutely urgent? Have the Police, at least, done that?

**The Prime Minister:** Yes, I am told. I have asked that question too, Mr Speaker, Sir, and I am told yes. We can't do otherwise. The Judge has to give the Order. I have also asked the question: why could not we get it? That is the way the procedures are.

**Mr Bérenger:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I heard the hon. Prime Minister say that to date there is no evidence of political contacts between *Gros Derek*, Ashish Dayal and Moossa Beeharry. I am myself surprised, but pending the Judge's Order and the portable phones being scrutinised, has it

been looked into, especially the allegations of political contacts of three hon. Members of this Legislative Assembly with Mr Ashish Dayal and Mr Moossa Beeharry, has this specifically been looked into?

**The Prime Minister:** Yes, Mr Speaker, Sir, it has been looked into and there is no political contact between them. In fact, one of them lives in Richelieu and the other one in Quatre Bornes, but there is no evidence of political contact. I must say things as they are!

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Speaker:** Silence, please!

**Mr Bérenger:** There has also been a public reporting of a Minister having intervened with a banker to obtain banking facilities for *Gros Derek*. Has this specifically been looked into?

**The Prime Minister:** Again, Mr Speaker, Sir, a lot of allegations have been made, but there is no evidence as at today, if there are, we will find out. But, as at today, there is none.

**Mr Bérenger:** There were press reports also that a foreigner, convicted some ten years ago for drug trafficking and, therefore, has been in Beau Bassin prison for that long, played a key role in organising this ring with its international ramifications. Has this been looked into?

**The Prime Minister:** In fact, Mr Speaker, Sir, this is being looked into. I can't say more, but this is being looked into.

**Mr Bérenger:** In fact, the report was that he was taking part in organising this ring from inside the prison, again with the use of portable phones. Now, we know, Mr Speaker, Sir, that recently this was terrible; *comme des petits pâtés*, portable phones in prison of Beau Bassin. Can I ask the hon. Prime Minister, especially now that we are dealing with these 11 arrested persons, whether now measures are being taken for none of them starting with *Gros Derek*, to be in possession of portable phones as he was allowed to when he was arrested and kept in a Police station at Moka?

**The Prime Minister:** In fact, they have no telephone with them at the moment. That is what I have been informed, Mr Speaker, Sir.

**Mr Ganoo:** Is the hon. Prime Minister aware that some suspects or their Counsels started to bargain with the ADSU for non-prosecution or immunity be granted to them and has the DPP given any directive to that bargaining process between the suspect and the ADSU?

**The Prime Minister:** I am not aware of any bargaining. I can't say for the DPP, but all I know is that Mr Ashish Dayal, when he was caught, started giving evidence.



**Mr Bhagwan:** Can I ask the hon. Prime Minister whether his attention has been drawn to the fact that one of the suspects who has been arrested and is on bail, is being given special treatment on, supposedly, medical grounds and that he is having a VIP treatment at the Brown Sequard Hospital? Can the hon. Prime Minister look into that and inform the House?

**The Prime Minister:** In fact that is not the case, Mr Speaker, Sir, and I have said to the Commissioner of Police that I can give him just general directions. I am of the view that those people arrested should be kept in prison and if they are not well, a doctor should come and see them. Because it is too easy, so many times you see that, they say that they have a heart problem, they should have dealt with this in the first place. My view is that they should be kept in prison; get a doctor to see them there and not transferred to anywhere else, that is my view.

**Mr Jugnauth:** Is the hon. Prime Minister aware that political meetings have been held at the residence of Mr Dayal and whether the police is enquiring into whether the proceeds of this drug transaction have been used for political purposes?

**The Prime Minister:** Again Mr Speaker, Sir, the hon. Member is just throwing mud, never, we've checked on this, never.

**Mr Fakeemeeah:** Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir, is the hon. Prime Minister aware that huge sum of money ...

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Speaker:** Silence!

**Mr Fakeemeeah:** That huge sum of money has been transferred only two days after the arrest of Gros Derek from well known banks, money either belonging or involving Members of your Government and I would like to know what will be your stand if I come forward directly to you in the soonest possible meeting with genuine evidences.

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Speaker:** Silence!

*(Interruptions)*

I say order!

**The Prime Minister:** I must say to the hon. Member that there is no evidence of what he is alleging, but if he has evidence, I will welcome him to come to me and also going to the Police. He has to do both.

**Mr Uteem:** Mr Speaker, Sir, one of the elements of the *Gros Derek* case was Mr Moossa Beeharry who was allowed access to the prison and back to transact money. May I know from the hon. Prime Minister whether an investigation has been carried out to find out why he was not being searched and what remedial measures have now been taken at the level of the prison?

**The Prime Minister:** Mr Iman Beehary is officiating at the prison since 1989 and not because of this case, but some time ago we had an order telling them that everybody has to be searched including the Iman.

**Mr Baloomoody:** This is a very serious matter indeed with regard to the judge's order. Can I ask the hon. Prime Minister to inform the House who swear the affidavit, on behalf of the police, in that case and the exact date that the requests were lodged?

**The Prime Minister:** I have just set the example - I would not know who would swear the Affidavit for the Police, but I know that the order was - I just mentioned the date I think the 23. I just mentioned the date, the hon. Leader of the Opposition heard it, the 23 of November of this year.

**Mr Speaker:** Last question!

**Mr Bérenger:** To conclude, can I know what measures have been taken concerning especially customs, ADSU and coastguards to prevent recurrence of that kind of ring of *réseau* outside Mauritius, inside Mauritius just outside the harbour and whether the authorities concerned will be allowed to go to the bottom of things as far as political and banking contacts are concerned.

**The Prime Minister:** I can assure the hon. Leader of the Opposition nobody is going to be spared in this because this is a matter of national security, it is a national issue and it is not in the public interest to do so. In fact, because we have been giving them additional resources, they are able to do more, that is why that also explains the determination of ADSU which I again congratulate and I've also mentioned in the Government Programme that we are going to get really high-tech technology which does not cost a lot of money. In fact, next time I go abroad, may be this would be arranged for me to look at before we buy it and I will take some people with me from the Police and this should be able to cover a wild area of our exclusive economic zone.

**MOTION**

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

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

**The Deputy Prime Minister rose and seconded.**

*Question put and agreed to.*

(12.05 p.m.)

*Second Reading*

**THE APPROPRIATION (2013) BILL**

**(No. XXVII of 2012)**

*Order read for resuming adjourned debate on the Second Reading of the Appropriation (2013) Bill (No. XXVII of 2012).*

*Question again proposed.*

**The Minister of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment (Mr S. Mohamed):** Mr Speaker, Sir, I would like to take this opportunity at the outset to congratulate the hon. Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance. The other issue which I would like immediately to get into is the importance of a budget. At the time when there is a budget that is drafted by the Vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, a very important element of a budget is law and order and I am happy to see that there is this *remue-ménage* among the Members of the Opposition as I am standing up to address this august Assembly. In fact, may be, without them knowing it is necessary for them to have such a *remue-ménage* among themselves and what I am going to say here is, in fact, connected to how important it is ...

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Speaker:** Silence!

**Mr Mohamed:** To provide for in budgetary measures for good measures to be taken for law and order in a country. We have just heard the hon. Prime Minister talking about the question which the Leader of the Opposition put to him and the necessity of tracking and finding out who is the wrongdoer and when one listens to the hon. Leader of the Opposition it is clear that for him one must keep away from wrongdoers. One should have le *discernement* to find out who is the wrongdoer, one should keep away from such wrongdoers and keep right straight path.

He is totally right, if only what he said - if only what he has just been saying, he could put it into practice that would be much better.

I would like here to talk about why I agree with the hon. Leader of the Opposition, keeping away from *les malfaiteurs*, but what I will do here today is not what the Opposition does, it is easy to paint a dark black picture of the situation, it is easy to throw mud, it is easy to embark upon mudslinging, to create some perception that something is wrong - like they have tried to do with this Budget. But here I'm going to talk on facts. In 2004, there was a hajj mission that went to Saudi Arabia and that Official Hajj mission like any hajj mission has to be approved at some stage by the head of Government and the head of Government in those days; in 2004 was Prime Minister Bérenger. Moossa Beeharry was approved by him.

*(Interruptions)*

Moossa Beeharry whom he just talked about a few seconds ago, was approved by Government to go on a hajj mission and he is number 14 on that list.

*(Interruptions)*

I have heard of people seeking atonement and forgiveness after sinning, here what I find shocking and what is really sad because very often in the whole trend and in this whole movement of throwing mud on everyone, one forgets about one's own sins and the Opposition must remember : how is it that they could not track this person then? How is it that number 14 on that list - the hon. Leader of the Opposition has chosen to walk out today – he is in his right, I duly respect him, but then again I hope that Members of his Opposition today will go and tell him that list that you approved to send to Hajj for a pre-seeking of atonement before sinning, that is on that list, that Moossa Beeharry. But then again it has always been in the habit of the Leader of the Opposition to mingle with wrongdoers, hasn't it?

*(Interruptions)*

I hear the hon. Uteem trying to defend his master ...

**Mr Speaker:** Order!

**Mr Mohamed:** I heard hon. Uteem trying to defend his master. Who was the head of the ICC then, wasn't it an Uteem?

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Uteem:** Mr Speaker, Sir ...

**Mr Speaker:** There is a point of order please!

**Mr Uteem:** On a point of order ...

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Speaker:** There is a point of order, please order!

**Mr Uteem:** On a point of order, is it parliamentary for the hon. Minister to allege that I listen to my master? I am not a slave Mr Speaker, Sir, I would want him to immediately withdraw it because what applies to him does not apply to me. He used the word master.

**Mr Speaker:** Well, the hon. Minister is in order, carry on!

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Mohamed:** Thank you. Then again, are not we all here, in this august Assembly, to try to debate a Budget? A Budget that is for the future of the citizens of this country, the children of this country, measures that have to be undertaken in order to protect the future, and law and order happens to be one of them. I will not waste the time of this august Assembly to come up with another document in my possession that shows that the hon. Leader of the Opposition, once upon a time, even was asked by Mr Toorab Bissessur whether he had his permission to go on holiday when he was in Madagascar. I have a document on me right now, but since he has chosen to run off, I will not give it. But, the day he comes here, I will table that document. I have it, and he has apologised afterwards. I have the handwriting of your master on record, where he gives permission for a holiday. I have that written document in my possession.

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Speaker:** Hon. Minister, please!

*(Interruptions)*

Give way. Silence! I would suggest that you speak on the Budget!

**Mr Mohamed:** On the Budget, there is something else which I have. It is important that when any government passes a Budget - any government - there must be a *ligne de conduite* by all hon. Ministers and all hon. Members of Parliament with regard to that Budget. For example, the fact that *les tablettes tactiles* will be delivered next year is a good measure. Congratulations! But, one should never, in any way whatsoever, try to influence how it is delivered next year, and by whom it is delivered next year. That is very important. This is also how you preserve the sanctity of any decision-making process and the debates in this Parliament. But, unfortunately, when I hear hon. Members of the Opposition, including now the MSM, criticising measures that have been taken by this government, I come across also what has happened only in a recent past,

when the hon. Minister of Finance in those days was hon. Pravind Jugnauth. He had taken some measures that would influence whatever is decided, at some stage, with regard to purchases of buildings. I am not here going to talk about Med Point, because this does not concern the Budget. But, I am going to talk about what concerns the way of reacting and, once again, it concerns the importance of law and order. It is wrong for any hon. Minister to write a letter to a notary public to tell him to rush matters because a building has to be bought before 31 December 2010.

*(Interruptions)*

It concerns Ébène Heights and Altima by the National Pensions Fund.

*(Interruptions)*

I have a document here, signed by the then hon. Minister of Social Security, on 27 December 2010, where she personally writes to the notary public and basically says: ‘you are, therefore, requested to finalise all relevant documents at the earliest for completion of sale before 31 December 2010.’

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Speaker:** Is the hon. Minister producing the document?

**Mr Mohamed** And that is hon. Mrs L. D. Dookun-Luchoomun, Minister. I produce this. Now,...

*(Interruptions)*

I have never heard of a Minister writing a letter. People have been Ministers here, and they know that a letter must be written by the Permanent Secretary. To the effect here of giving instructions, to requesting a notary public! I see the aghast look, shocked look of the hon. Member in the front bench of the Opposition of the MSM, and I totally understand why she is shocked. I totally understand.

**Mr Speaker:** I see that she is smiling.

*(Interruptions)*

Order!

**Mr Mohamed:** If I could give this letter here, I would table this. Because the hon. Member, then Minister, wrote a letter to the notary public, do you know how much money did not enter the coffers of government? Rs57 m. Do you know how much money the country lost because of this letter? Rs57 m. Whenever we listen to the hon. Members of the Opposition criticising us as Members of government, we have talk to the people out there and say: ‘Are you

credible in your criticism? What credibility do you have?' It is my humble duty; I am humbled when I look at documents like this. I say to myself - through a simple signature of a Member of the Opposition, then in government; *ils ont la mémoire très, très, très courte* - 'how would I react if I was a Member of the Opposition in a team, knowing that a budgetary measure of a former Minister of Finance was taken advantage of in such a manner by a Minister, and that the coffers of the State had a *manque à gagner*, a loss of Rs57 m?' If I was a Member of that Opposition, I would dissociate myself from such a measure, and I would dissociate myself from anyone who had done such a measure. I would do it publicly. I would not sit down quietly and pretend that I was hearing nothing, and pretend that I was going to read into my books in front of me, as though what I am saying is wrong because I would not even ask that the Clerk brings this document that has been just been tabled! Let us look at it! Let us see; maybe it's true. Since we are all here to defend the interest of the Nation, the interest of the people, we are duty-bound not to, in any way, cover up any wrongdoing.

What I also find sad is that, for political gain, a lot of Members of this Opposition *vont simplement prendre ce qui a été fait, et ce qui peut être prouvé dans un document que je viens de déposer, et le mettre de côté ; simplement* sweep it under the carpet. And they are supposed to be an Opposition with credibility, whom we have to listen to when they criticise this Budget. That is the sad part.

I have heard the Members of the Opposition such as hon. Li Kwong Wing, and I am happy that he is here. I am happy, Mr Speaker, Sir, because when one listens to him and one listens to his plea when he talks about the plight of the workers of this country that allegedly my good friend, the hon. Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development, did not, according to him, give enough in terms of compensation to the workers of this country, we know what difficulties there are in Europe. The Opposition is oblivious. We do not have people among our ranks who think that the Euro crisis is just part of the figment of someone's imagination. There are people leading that alliance today that, once upon a time - only recently - thought that the Euro crisis did not exist. It suits their interests to put it aside. It does not exist. It cannot be. It's not possible. They will continue telling the people outside that it does not exist but, at the same time, what is conflictual in their approach, Mr Speaker, Sir, is the following. They say *qu'on avait une marge de manœuvre très conséquente et qu'on n'a pas pris avantage* of this *marge de manœuvre*. Which is which? You have a *marge de manœuvre* or you don't have a

*marge de manœuvre*? What is the truth? This is what we must tell people. This is what we all must tell people: the truth. Is it so difficult for the Opposition to come and tell people, yes, there is a euro crisis? Yes, the United States of America have gone through difficult time! Yes, in South Africa, next door, the unemployment rate is at 25%, let alone Europe, where some of the 20 biggest economies have unemployment rates in double digits and Finland is one of them. Who expected Finland would have a double digits unemployment rate? Who would have expected that? But the Opposition in their vocabulary, it does not suit their interest to come and say it to the people. It does not suit the interest of hon. Li Kwong Wing to come and admit that this is an actual fact. But let me tell hon. Li Kwong Wing through you, Mr Speaker, Sir, the following: he does not belong to the Government. He belongs to an Opposition, in partnership with this alleged remake of 2000 or whatever - him and his partners - and that once upon a time there was that same Government between 2000 and 2004, when they had the opportunity to listen to the National Remuneration Board, Mr Speaker, Sir. The National Remuneration Board was asked to look into some Remuneration Orders concerning employees in the hotel sector, in the tourism sector and restaurant sector. When the National Remuneration Board came up and said that 48 hours of work in the industry are too much and must be reduced, when the National Remuneration Board came up and said that there should be at least a 40% increase in salary of these poor workers in that sector -and it is because of them, thanks to those workers that our tourist industry is thriving. We have to pay homage to them. I take advantage of this opportunity to pay homage to all the workers of this country, the 570,000 or so workers of this country. We must pay homage to them, but we do not just come up with empty words. When the MSM/MMM Government had an opportunity of looking into the recommendations of the National Remuneration Board for that particular sector, there was a Minister of that Government; they called a meeting with *les propriétaires des hôtels, les grands patrons* alone and decided, while sitting together with employers, that the 48 hours work will stick to 48 hours. They would not reduce it to 45 hours, the 40% increase in salary would be only 15%. That decision was taken behind the back of trade unionists.

Mr Speaker, Sir, you have been Minister of Labour; and as a Minister of Labour, everyone knows that when you are a Minister of Labour we have tripartite constitutes. Everything is done with the trade unionists, workers, employers and us, Government. We do not go behind the back of trade unionists. We do not go behind the back of trade unionists in order to negotiate better



terms for the employers. That we never do in this Government! Whereas the Government of the MSM/MMM, they did it in a meeting held on 28<sup>th</sup> July 2004.

M. Le président, le représentant du gouvernement qui était alors ministre du travail a rencontré le patronat responsable du secteur hôtelier et de la restauration, et a décidé, en leur présence, sans consultation au préalable avec les syndicalistes et les travailleurs, qu'il était nécessaire de faire en sorte qu'ils continuent à travailler pour les 48 heures, allant de ce fait contre une des recommandations du *NRB*.

To add insult to injury, Mr Speaker, Sir, *ce même gouvernement MSM/MMM, en 2004, avec à la tête un ministre qui a rencontré les propriétaires des hôtels behind the back of the workers, behind the back of the trade unionists rejected in the back of the those workers, but agreed with the patronat alone that les 40% augmentation salariale will not be agreed to. It was decided in their back that it would be only 15%. Mr Speaker, Sir, 25% was removed in terms of salary compensation by the unilateral decision of a Member of Government. What really adds insult to injury to the poor workers is that, finally, when one looks at the remuneration order - I don't have to go into decision making process as to who decided what - that came out afterwards, it is clear that a remuneration order does not come out unless it has the approval of Government! Everyone knows that! A remuneration order ne peut pas être rendu officiel ou être officialisé et ne peut pas former parti de nos lois si cela n'a pas la probation au préalable du gouvernement du jour. Tout ce que le ministre du MSM/MMM avait fait dans le dos des travailleurs a été approuvé par le gouvernement d'alors et tous ceux qui étaient ministres, en d'autres mots à cette époque, étaient au courant. Ce qui est choquant !*

*Et aujourd'hui ils viennent ici, à l'Assemblée Nationale et dans les meetings publics et dans les journaux, et viennent dire qu'ils sont les sauveurs des travailleurs. Ce sont eux qui soi-disant vont défendre l'intérêt des travailleurs de ce pays. Ce sont eux qui soi-disant viennent dire qu'on doit protéger les syndicalistes. Mais qu'est-ce qu'ils ont fait pour les syndicalistes? Ce qui ne me choque pas, M le président, c'est que cette Opposition MSM/MMM - encore une fois, dieu merci, ils sont rassemblés pour une défaite historique - est la même Opposition avec à la tête l'honorable Paul Bérenger qui avait dit que, "les syndicalistes pas bann dimoun qui bwar dan biberon", en donnant les ordres aux officiers, gardes bâtons, aux riots d'aller intervenir quand les ouvrières avaient le droit démocratique de faire une manifestation. C'était à une époque où l'Opposition - en 2006, si je ne me trompe pas - est même allée aussi loin pour dire - soi-disant*

*pour rendre la pareille à nous, le gouvernement, cela tout le monde s'en souvient – qu'un marchand ambulancier (une femme) qui avait fait une manifestation a été malmenée soi-disant par la police et la femme avait dit qu'elle était enceinte et avait fait une perte. Quand on l'a amenée à l'hôpital, on a vu qu'elle n'avait jamais été enceinte. M. le président, rien n'échappe à mon attention, parce que cette Opposition, they will do everything in their interest, not in the interest of the people.*

Mr Speaker, Sir, let us go back to the hon. Leader of the Opposition and the budgetary measures. People in the Opposition are allegedly criticising hon. Minister Bachoo. Hon. Dr. Sorefan is not here now - he is purporting himself to be an expert and, maybe, he is an expert in the infrastructure, which I am not. What I do know is that, at this moment, - and I thank the hon. Vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Infrastructure for that - in Roche Bois you have *la passerelle* that is being converted into ramps, as we speak, to facilitate the pedestrians who cross the highway. There have been requests made by the inhabitants of that particular area that it should be converted and those requests dated back to 2000, 2002/2003 when, once again, hon. Bérenger was in Government. Hon. Jugnauth was in Government. That same Opposition was in Government. They portray themselves as being people who want the interest of road users? The Opposition portrays itself as having solutions to all the traffic problems of this country? I will now give an example of what hon. Bérenger did when he was Minister of Finance and Vice-Prime Minister. Hon. Bérenger had a meeting.

*(Interruptions)*

Totally true! He presided the meeting in those days as Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance and I will give the date: 19 March 2003 at 14.00 hours. He presided the meeting, and what was the subject matter of the meeting? It was upgrading of Roche Bois footbridge and handrails. Why was there the need? Because precisely people crossing the road there, were being involved in accidents, people were dying, Mr Speaker, Sir. *Les piétons se faisaient renverser sur l'autoroute. Les gens trouvaient la mort. Alors c'était quoi la réaction du chef de l'époque, le ministre des finances, celui qui a l'argent, qui peut décider de faire une allocation budgétaire pour la construction de ce ramp pour sauver des vies.* It is simple as that. Let's call it to save lives in Roche Bois. Did the hon. Leader of the Opposition today, as he is now, when he was Minister of Finance, what was his reaction? He chaired that meeting. And when he called that meeting, what did he say? He said: the Chairperson requested Mr Dorsamy to ask - if I am not

mistaken - late Mr Morea to look for funds and to do the work in the present financial year. A Minister of Finance asking an engineer: look for funds! What was it budgeted for? Rs4,500,000!

Est-ce que le ministre des Finances du jour, en 2004, est-ce que c'était aussi compliqué pour lui qui se dit soi-disant amoureux des citoyens de ce pays qui souffrent, qui se dit soi-disant le grand défenseur des cités ouvrières? Est-ce que c'était aussi compliqué et difficile pour que Monsieur Bérenger alors *Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance...*

**Mr Speaker:** Honourable!

**Mr Mohamed:** Hon. Bérenger to find Rs4,500,000. He simply sent the message to Mr Morea and Mr Dorsamy: ask Mr Morea to find the funds and do it. Was it done? No!

*(Interruptions)*

*Hon. Bérenger, as Minister of Finance, said: lack of funds, la somme de Rs4,500,000 c'était trop pour sauver des vies à Roche Bois. C'était trop pour sauver les citoyens de Roche Bois qui devaient traverser l'autoroute.*

*(Interruptions)*

Et là dans les réunions que l'honorable Bérenger a présidées, il nous a donné la nouvelle génération, une preuve qu'on ne peut pas dire qu'il avait même à cœur les intérêts des habitants de Roche Bois. Et ce que l'honorable Bérenger a aussi fait, en refusant de venir en aide à tous ceux qui souffraient, habitant Roche Bois, en refusant de reconnaître qu'il était nécessaire et impératif de venir en aide à ceux qui devaient traverser l'autoroute, d'aider les pères de famille, les mères de famille, les enfants qui allaient à l'école Emmanuel Anquetil. Il a refusé d'écouter les cris du cœur de la Paroisse de Roche Bois. Et ce qu'il nous démontre en même temps M. le président, pour la jeune génération politicienne c'est qu'est-ce qu'il ne faut pas faire vis-à-vis les pauvres de ce pays.

Nous, ce qu'on a fait, on n'a pas tardé. As I am speaking to you, the work is being done. As I am speaking to you, the cries of all those who have called for solutions, have been heard. It is being done. And then you have Members of the Opposition who will say, after seven years. Mr Speaker, Sir, we are doing it; they did not do it. Let's compare! Who is doing it? We are doing it. I heard hon. Ameer Meea, in his Budget Speech, talking about drugs. And maybe hon. Uteem, I didn't follow.

So, hon. Ameer Meea talked about drugs in Roche Bois and Plaine Verte.

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Speaker:** Silence!

**Mr Mohamed:** Let me assure him! He talked about la Rue Abattoir; he also talked about the SDF, the *Sans Domicile fixe*, lodging accommodation. But I had the idea for it. I am sorry, I had the idea for it! And I don't have to apologise for that and it was a good idea. I stand by that idea. We have to find a Government accommodation and Government has to show its responsibility *pour tous les Sans Domiciles Fixes dans la capitale et dans ce pays*. And this is the first time that Government is going to put up an official building, Government-owned in the capital, *pour les Sans Domiciles Fixes*. The sum of Rs13.5 m. is what has been spent already. And hon. Ameer Meea comes to this august Assembly and says nothing has been done! It seems as though that hon. Ameer Meea has not been in the past year in La Route Abattoir because it is being done there in La Route Abattoir for everyone to see and how is it therefore that he says that nothing has been done? Is there another Route Abattoir or are they going towards their political abattoir? Is that possible?

*(Interruptions)*

But one has to be straight about it. Work is being done by this Government in the centre, not only that, the *ex-bâtiment du Docteur Rishi*, that is the building where one whole floor is being converted into lodging accommodation open for all the homeless people or living on the streets of the capital. And it is being done in a partnership with NGOs. The Ministry responsible for this project is the Ministry of Social Integration and hon. Minister Dayal is working very hard on it. But, at the same time, we have an SME park there, being built by the Ministry of Finance and opposite we have the old Police flats that have been converted into a centre for what? What centre? We want to build a centre *pour la désintoxication*.

*(Interruptions)*

And who was together with the inhabitants there? Qui était là-bas avec les habitants sur la Route Abattoir vis-à-vis de ce bâtiment où se construit en ce moment-ci le centre pour les SDFs que visiblement l'honorable Ameer Meea n'a pas vu? Mais c'était lui qui était là-bas ensemble avec les habitants pour manifester contre la construction d'un centre modern de désintoxication qui a été construit par le gouvernement de Maurice.

As I am speaking to you, we have experts from the World Health Organisation in Mauritius at the moment, who are here to look into the methadone delivery method, to modernise it, to upgrade it and to advise us as to how to do a better job. This shows commitment. This

shows honesty in intention. Not only intention, but we are acting upon what we have decided to do and the Opposition keeps on saying we have done nothing. But I do not belong to that Opposition where once upon a time in this august Assembly - I said it last year and I will say it again, because people seem to have a very, very short memory.

I will refer here to Hansard, Constitution of Mauritius (Amendment) Bill, No. VI of 1995. I will say it again because people seem to forget. Hon. Bérenger addresses to this august Assembly at 3.43 p.m., he says and I quote -

“ The time is important. Let us take note and not forget *c’était l’époque où les trafiquants de drogue disaient : ‘gouvernement dans nu la main.’ C’était l’époque où les policiers surintendants se faisaient gifler en ma présence et en la présence de l’honorable Bashir Khodabux et d’autres »*

What is the hon. Leader of the Opposition talking about here? *Il parle de l’époque où le Premier ministre était Sir Anerood Jugnauth. Il parle de l’époque où le Premier ministre était nul autre que the Head of this remake 2000.* He says : des policiers étaient transférés à l’autre bout de l’île parce qu’ils osaient s’opposer aux trafiquants de drogue. Who was the Minister responsible for the Police? He says: des policiers étaient transférés à l’autre bout de l’île parce qu’ils osaient s’opposer aux trafiquants de drogue. Who was the Minister responsible for the Police? Wasn’t it Sir Anerood Jugnauth, Prime Minister and hon. Ameer Meea talks about our commitment to fight drug abuse; our commitment to rehabilitate drug addicts. Maybe he does not remember or maybe he was not then, I don’t know. I don’t know why, but he does not know. This is what his own Leader said about Sir Anerood Jugnauth. As I said last year, my sin is: I didn’t know all this at that time when I joined the MSM in 1995. I made a real mistake, a blunder because I acted as a young Turk of 26 years old who refused to listen to the advice of my own father because I thought I knew everything. Haven’t we all gone through that stage? Well I’m saying that in my defence in actual fact where we think we know everything. I didn’t listen to my father then because he had told me not to do that, not to go with the MSM. Si j’avais pris la peine de lire what is on record, lire Hansard, I would not have gone with the MSM. I have to confess that I have seemed by going with the MSM. I was wrong to go with the MSM dirigé par Sir Anerood Jugnauth because the same Sir Anerood Jugnauth and what hon. Bérenger said here, I’ll go on. He talks about how, at the time, les policiers étaient transférés. Ils se faisaient en Plaine Verte parce qu’ils essayaient de s’opposer aux trafiquants de drogue. Hon. Bérenger goes on to say, Mr

Speaker, Sir: c'était l'époque où le service d'ordre du MSM était organisé par les trafiquants de drogue pour le 01 mai, pour les élections à chaque occasion. Today the hon. Leader of the Opposition – I am referring to Hansard – le même chef de l'opposition, l'honorable Bérenger s'associe avec ce même Sir Anerood Jugnauth que lui-même avait critiqué et avait appelé *all types of names*. Then again, what I want to know is, is it what he said there – and our good Lord would ask, was he telling the truth then?

*(Interruptions)*

Today hon. Obeegadoo comes up à *la rescousse pour défendre l'invitation d'Anerood Jugnauth*....

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Speaker:** Silence!

**Mr Mohamed:** So, what I would like to ask through you, Mr Speaker, Sir, is the following: is it true what hon. Bérenger had said in 1995. I hope it was true and I have no reason to doubt that he was telling the truth. There is no reason to say that hon. Bérenger was not telling the truth especially in Parliament since I find hon. Obeegadoo gesticulating and having a problem to assimilate. Well I am saying, maybe he knows otherwise that I am not saying it. Why does it make the Opposition so uncomfortable to, at least, realise and admit that they did say that against Sir Anerood Jugnauth and I'll go on: *C'était l'époque où les trafiquants avaient* taken over words of hon. Bérenger, Leader of the Opposition, hijacked des compagnies comme UBS et d'autres compagnies de cette importance. I'll go on: Je n'ai pas de raison pour douter de la véracité des mots prononcés par le Leader de l'opposition, l'honorable Bérenger. C'était l'époque où Sir Anerood Jugnauth prenait de l'argent dans son bureau pour le passer à d'autres, supposément – dans une tente, un attaché de case ou un briefcase.

Now I would like to know from any Member of the Opposition here: is what was said by hon. Bérenger true? Does it show a commitment on his part to associate himself with people who have a vision and a will to fight against the scourge that is drug trafficking and drug addiction? Which is which? Is it that he did not say that? Are we saying that this is not on Hansard? What is really shocking? It shows an Opposition whom we have to believe today. On doit être à l'écoute de cette opposition et croire que ce qu'ils disent aujourd'hui est vrai. It cannot be that what was said en 1995 était vrai et qu'en 2012, ce n'est plus vrai. There is only one truth. There are no two or three or four types of truth unless the Opposition has their own version of truth which is not

shared by the majority of people of this whole planet. What is now amazing is how can one come and believe an Opposition? They would tell us that we do nothing about drugs like hon. Ameer Meea said. We do nothing about drug addiction, but he associates himself knowingly, with knowledge often thought; with someone whom his own Leader – I don't want to say Master again - said that this person *prenait de l'argent dans son bureau dans une tente ou un attaché de case ou un brief case*. Had it this been in any other country of the developed world; had this been in the United States of America, had this been in the United Kingdom; had this been in any other country, we would never have had *une alliance aussi malsaine* than the alliance of the Opposition where they seem to really what: they want to change the course of history and say that they never said it; they never said that. No one can come and challenge the good work of the hon. Prime Minister, Dr. Navin Ramgoolam on the fight against drugs. No one can do it because he was the one who brought in methadone programme in Mauritius, no one else. This shows his commitment. One looks at the Budget; one looks at all the major measures that have been undertaken; one looks at the personal commitment of our Prime Minister in France, in the United States, in the United Kingdom, in India for the collaboration with *les forces de l'ordre* and expertise being brought to our country. It is through his expertise, through his help, his commitment that the Police has managed to detect cases like *Gros Derek*. This country is a bizarre country in actual fact with an Opposition like this, that the Police have done their job and actually arrested someone involved allegedly in drug trafficking, the Opposition are still not satisfied. Had the Police not done it, they would still criticise – left you are wrong; right you are wrong; centre you are wrong. They will just give it to you until hell comes because for them they do not care that good work is being done. They just are happy when people suffer.

Hon. Ameer Meea talked about *marchands ambulants*. Let's talk about *marchands ambulants*. Mr Speaker, Sir, hon. Hossen will have to forgive me, but I'll say what I have to say. Hon. Ameer Meea talks about *marchands ambulants*; he talks about hawkers' palace. There, at the time, when the hawkers palace was going to be built. Au moment où le hawkers' palace allait être construit et au moment où on devait faire la livraison, il y avait environ 1300 à 1500 marchands ambulants dans les rues de la capitale. Il y avait de la place dans ce hawkers' palace que pour 600 marchands ambulants. Pourquoi alors avoir oublié la grande majorité des autres marchands qui devaient rester sur la rue. Ce n'est pas dans l'habitude et ce n'est pas dans nos cordes de trouver des solutions half-cooked and half-baked. In this Government under the

leadership of our Prime Minister, we have to find solutions and we always find solutions that are long-term solutions for all. We do not forget people on the side roads. We have spent money and the Vice Prime Minister and Minister of Public Infrastructure has headed committees where now we have two places: la gare du nord et la gare du sud; where in a few days to come, those *marchands ambulants* - all of them in Port-Louis - will be having space where they will no longer be illegal operators. They will no longer be operating without permit. They will no longer have to run because the Police has to seize their goods because they are operating illegally. But what the Opposition also should do is not to hide the truth. The Opposition has to at least remind the people that it was not Government that has stopped the *marchands ambulants* to work on the roads, it is not Government that entered a case before the Supreme Court. It is not the Labour Party, it is not the PMSD that entered a case before the Court, it is *certainement pas le ministre des Administrations Régionales*. It is private operators that entered a case and they won their case. But what did Government do? Did Government set up another committee like hon. Bérenger used to do? Just committees on committees, even set committees to kill birds! We acted with resolve, we acted immediately, we acted showing that we are serious in our resolve and in less than a month, we have done what had to be done and in a few days' time, all those *marchands* of Port Louis - priority given to the people of Port Louis. But what the Opposition does not say? Why is it that they do not come and tell all those *marchands ambulants* why is it only 600 spaces were available in Hawkers Palace? How much would they pay as rent monthly? It was in thousands of rupees which they were going to pay as rent. There is a figure that came up recently in my last conversation with the Lord-Mayor: Rs11,000 monthly.

*Ce que le MMM et le MSM voulaient, c'était 600 marchands ambulants seulement avec la grande majorité encore à la rue et payaient presque R 11,000 par mois pour des étals dans le Hawkers Palace. Mais qu'est-ce que le gouvernement du Dr. Ramgoolam faisait? We have a heart, we know what the solution is. So, enough is enough!*

Hon. Obeegadoo will talk just after me, if I am not mistaken. One issue which I would like to talk about right now is education. *Qui ne se souvient pas des grandes réformes de Obeegadoo*, as they call it? Who does not remember the billions of rupees that were allocated to the Ministry of Education in those days pour la *réforme*, for construction of schools all around the island? But I would like hon. Obeegadoo to do is to tell why is it *que le gouvernement MMM/MSM*, under



the Prime ministership of Anerood Jugnauth and the Prime ministership of Bérenger, did not build a single school in Constituency No. 3 when he spent billions all around the island?

*(Interruptions)*

Not one! In Constituency No. 3! Maybe the hon. Member does not know that constituency! Monneron is not in Constituency No. 3.

*(Interruptions)*

*Pas vine défende l'indéfendable !* Not one! As I said, last year, billions were spent on social housing. He now simply and typically throws the blame on the Minister of the day: *'réponde li, réponde li'*. But what did he do as Minister? Did he come up and listen to Sam Lauthan? Sam Lauthan asked for schools, Hon. Obeegadoo did not build a single school in his Ministry, he did not chair a single meeting where he said it was *impératif* to build schools for the constituency, *pour les gens de la Plaine Verte et les gens de Roche Bois? Pourquoi? Et je vous dis pourquoi, M. le président. C'est parce que c'est l'habitude du gouvernement MSM/MMM de ne rien construire en termes de logement, aussi pour les pauvres de Roche Bois et de Plaine Verte.* Why is it that they had billions spent all around the island, but not a single cent was spent for social housing in Plaine Verte and Roche Bois? Look at the Budget this year for education! Abdool Rahman Abdool: Rs87 m. provided for construction starting in January. Mr Speaker, Sir, as hon. Obeegadoo tried to *vider le problème sur son prochain* and not take responsibility, I will say thank God that we have hon. Dr. Bunwaree and the Vice-Prime Minister, hon. Bachoo, because, as a partnership, they work very well for my constituency and, at the end of our mandate, we would have rebuilt three schools - not one, not two! Dr. Idriss Goumany Government School and Jean Lebrun Government School have almost been completed Phase II for Rs79 m.; Rs87 m. for Abdool Raman Abdool; extension works and upgrading in Emmanuel Anquetil Government School. This is commitment. But instead of owning up and saying: "yes, this is what an Opposition should do; yes, we failed the people of Plaine Verte, we failed to people of Roche Bois." They have failed the people of Roche Bois and Plaine Verte. Say it, tell the truth! Here, today, I hear people talking about unemployment. In one year, Mr Speaker, Sir...

**Mr Speaker:** How many minutes will the hon. Member take?

**Mr Mohamed:** I'll have another 20 minutes to go.

**Mr Speaker:** So, this is the proper time to suspend the sitting for one and a half hours.

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

*On resuming at 2.34 p.m with the Deputy Speaker in the Chair*

**Mr Mohamed:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it is nice to see you in the Chair. With your permission, I shall continue with my intervention. What are the issues that the youths of this country are really concerned about? I cannot say that the youths of the country have the same concerns as the Opposition because I believe that the Opposition are in total *déphasage* with what the youths want. Because the Opposition really wants to be in power, and at all cost whereas the youths of the country want things that are really meaningful, and word which has no meaning as far as the Opposition is concerned.

The Opposition, once again, are very able, capable in letting out a web of untruths. They go on and on about this alleged problem of nowadays that the youth unemployment has reached such figures that are really alarming Unemployment for those aged between 16 and 25, another untruth! One simply has to look at the figures, and once again I would like here to say that it is important that we assess the credibility of that supposed Opposition that is supposedly ready to take over from us and come into power. They must be really barking up the wrong tree. Really, they have got it wrong somewhere. Because if they are totally oblivious to what the Central Statistics Office has as figures, how can we, therefore, say that they are a responsible Opposition? How can they be said to be *une alternance responsable*? Let's look at the figures of unemployment for persons aged 16 to 25. In 2001, it was 25.6%. I say it again, unemployment for people aged between 16 and 25, in 2001 it was 25.6%; today it is below 20%. In 2012 who is in power? It is the Labour Party/PMSD. What is the rate of unemployment for youngsters aged 16 to 25? It is below 20%. In 2001 when they were in power, it was 25.6%. But they will say: we had just come into power and the Labour Party was in power. I am ready for all their lame and very empty excuses. In actual fact, in 2002, it was 23.4%; in 2005, when they were still in power, it was 24.2%. It increased. So, they have always been above the figure of 24% whenever they have been in power.

Not only that, but they hold the record for something under the Prime-Ministership of hon. Bérenger. And what is that? In only one year, in 2004, the country saw a loss of 16,100 jobs in export-oriented sector. I am not going into all the other sectors. Let me limit myself to only one sector, the export-oriented sector. In one year, under *la direction du Premier ministre d'alors qui était nul autre que le chef de l'opposition d'aujourd'hui, l'honorable Bérenger, 16,100*

*personnes ont perdu leur emploi. Et aujourd'hui, les membres de cette opposition viennent nous dire que du fait que depuis 2006 jusqu'aujourd'hui, on a eu 18,000 personnes qui ont perdu leur emploi pour des raisons économiques, depuis 2006 jusqu'à 2012, almost seven years, 18,000. They have broken that record in only one year, 16,100. And I would like the next orator from the Opposition not to simply come here to this august Assembly and just read the speech that is being prewritten, not only does it go against the very essence of what is provided for in the Standing Orders, but I would like to see a real debate here. Let them come and counter the arguments that I am putting forward. Let them come and explain why is it and how is it that they have managed to muster with a lot of effort. I gather 16,100 people losing their jobs and who was there as Prime Minister? Hon. Paul Raymond Bérenger. That is, in fact, an evidence of his ability not to create jobs, but to make people lose jobs. He is good at it. And I bow to him for his ability to create unemployment. I bow to him for his ability to create havoc in the economy. He is very good at it. And I am very, very poor compared to him. This Government and all of us are really nothing compared to this man's ability to make people lose jobs. What is 2001 to 2005? They go on about the seven years, 18,000 people have lost jobs. *Que les Mauriciens, les Mauriciennes et les gens des îles de Rodrigues, d'Agalega et de St. Brandon* be informed. *Ils doivent être informés que nous, en six ans, il y a eu perte d'emploi pour seulement 18,000 personnes mais qu'eux, en moins de quatre ans, il y a eu 57,593 personnes qui ont perdu leur emploi entre 2000 et 2005.* Let the people know the truth! Let the message reach them! But then, again, we are very weak. We haven't got the ability of this miraculous competent team of hon. Jugnauth and hon. Bérenger. We are nothing compared to them. *Nous ne sommes que des poussières.* Because they have certain abilities that even money can't buy. They have certain abilities that are not even taught in the best of Universities. They have certain abilities that show its dirty face and its dirty presence in the worst of nightmares of every Mauritian household and they have that ability. But why is it that they hide this from people? And I would like to see another Member of the Opposition rise up from his seat and tell us how did they manage to make 57,000 people, heads of household, lose their jobs and give us some excuse. Let us hear the *mea culpa* of the Opposition! But they will keep away from that. Why will they keep away from that? Because it is not in the interest of the Opposition to come up with the truth. It is not in the interest of the Opposition to tell us facts. Let us not forget. And they talk about job creation, facts and figures. And I always rely on figures not like certain people in the Opposition who are excellent at*

mudslinging based on nothing else, but baseless accusations. I will talk about it. I have the figures for creation of employment when they were in power between 2001 to 2005. Creation of employment never went above 26,000 to 26,200 per annum. Vacancies that were published in the press, everything is computed and noted, statistics take them into account. What were the vacancies when they were there? The creation of employment was abysmal, *c'était une honte tellement l'équipe du MMM/MSM est bonne à ne rien faire en terme de création d'emplois et autres*. When you look at the figures, as opposed to them, I come up with figures, they cannot come up with figures. When they come up with figures, they will choose the figures that satisfy them, but they will never even go into comparative study because it will really make them go astray and make them sit down in shame. From January to October 2012 - 27,715 vacancies were published in the press; in 2011 - 33,897 vacancies were published in the press; in 2010 - 44,425 vacancies were published in the press, and I go on and on. But when they were in power 8,000 vacancies were published in the press; in 2002 - 10,000, and they don't even reach at half the figures that our performance is. But they are very good at making people lose their jobs, and I challenge every single Member of the Opposition to come here today and explain to me how come more than 57,000 people lost their jobs in the time that they were in power. In one year, *sous le contrôle de l'honorable Bérenger, il y a eu plus de 16100 personnes qui ont perdu leur boulot. Je les mets au défi de venir ici expliquer pourquoi on devrait leur faire confiance eux quand ils ne sont même pas capables de gérer une économie comme des gens responsables*.

I would like to pay homage here to the people of my Ministry, homage to the hundreds of Civil Servants working in my Ministry, the Ministry of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment. I would like to pay to homage to them because when we look at the work that has been accomplished at the level of this Ministry, namely 1678 inspections, 850 enquiries, more than 70 or so million rupees that our officers, through mediation, conciliation, and the courts have managed to get for the workers of this country.

As far as Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) is concerned, we have managed up to today - one death is one too many - to half the number of deaths, half the number of occupational safety and health accidents compared to last year. I admit we are very far from the time when MSM/MMM were in power, and they had above 20 deaths a year. This year, unfortunately, we are only at eight and I pray - I hope everyone will agree - that there will be less and less deaths.

In this Budget, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we have done everything that can be done in order to create employment for the youth. Most importantly, the Decent Work Country Programme is going to be signed before the end of the month. There are measures that are in there that will generate employment that will create a pool of employment, pool of youngsters who are ready to work and face the challenges that all adults should face. But, we can only do so as a team, and we are doing so as a team. We can only speak the truth because lies and untruth will not take anyone much ahead. This country has been built on the sweat and hard work of our forefathers who did not think about their own, who did not spoil the reputation of people to satisfy their own interests, who did not go on with mudslinging, who concentrated on facts because it is only the truth that can make you reach salvation. But, the salvation we try to achieve will be reached together with the people and for the people, under the Primeministership of Dr. Navin Ramgoolam, our Prime Minister. The Opposition can say nothing about it because those are facts and truths. I know I have taken a lot of time of the House, but let me just conclude by saying the following.

On the one hand, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, you have an Opposition that I demonstrated in detail has done really fishy things with regard to a letter sent by a Minister to a notary - Mrs Dookun - and anyone who has an iota of dignity cannot sit next to anyone who does something like that. No one! Because they will have to go outside and explain to all the people. If we have written evidence here of a woman Minister signing a document, giving instructions that have made the country lose Rs57 m. or so, you cannot sit next to her. On the other hand, you have a Deputy Prime Minister, at that time hon. Paul Raymond Bérenger, because of Rs4.5 m., thought it was too expensive to save the lives of people crossing the road of Roche Bois. Rs4.5 m.! But we do not forget the hundreds of millions that that government gave away in the Illovo deal! We do not forget how legal advice was changed at the last minute; the SLO was not happy with it, and they went to see someone else, Garrioch. We do not forget. On the one hand you have a Prime Minister who is continuously working for the improvement of the livelihoods of every single Mauritian and, on the other hand, you have a government that approved Mr Moossa Beeharry going to Hajj on the official Mauritian mission delegation, approved by government, with Prime Minister Bérenger being there, and with hon. Pravind Jugnauth being there!

Now that all the Members of the Opposition have heard this, if they have an iota of any responsibility, if every single Member of the Opposition has an iota of knowledge of what means

dignity and honour, I challenge every single Member of the Opposition to answer me on this! I challenge every single Member of the Opposition to come and ask for forgiveness with regard to this because that is the truth. The truth hurts! But you will not see any reaction from them. What you will see in lieu and instead of an honest reaction is simply a perfect disregard for what the people wish. The people want the truth. The truth is on this side of the House, and we will consistently continue to work for the truth.

Thank you.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Hon. Minister, during the course of your intervention, you said that you challenge anyone on the Opposition side. I believe that ‘challenge’ is an unparliamentary word, and it would be more appropriate and proper to say ‘I invite’.

**Mr Mohamed:** May I, therefore, rephrase it for the purposes of the record. I bow to your decision. I forcefully invite them to do so.

Thank you.

(2.47 p.m.)

**The Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands (Mr H. Aimée):** Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would like first of all to place on record my appreciation for the dexterity and ability with which yourself and Mr Speaker have been presiding over the budgetary debates. I know that this is not always an easy task, especially when, on some occasions, the House has been a little bit disturbing and unruly. I would like to join all the other speakers who before me have been very much appreciative of the Budget Speech presented to the House, and of the various bold and intelligent measures offered to the country by the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development.

This present Budget Speech is the second one delivered by our colleague, the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development. You will remember, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that he delivered his first Budget Speech last year, only three months after he assumed the responsibilities of the portfolio of Finance and Economic Development. His first Budget Speech was excellent, and consisted of measures to ensure that Mauritius continues to be a resilient country. The Budget Speech of this year is a continuation of last year’s Budget, and contains budgetary and fiscal measures that constitute a further step to continue building Mauritius, and promote economic growth and social development.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this year, in the Budget, and last year also, there was provision for the new Local Government Bill, particularly for the creation of eight new Village Councils and of the creation of three new District Councils. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, one or two weeks ago, one of the Members of the Opposition said in Parliament: 'where are the new District Councils?' - whether they exist. One is situated at Pamplémousses, the other one in Flacq and the third one is in Souillac ready to take over for the operation of District Council after the 3<sup>rd</sup> of December this year.

As you are aware, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this year's Budget debates are taking place exceptionally at the same time as Municipal and Village Council elections and there have been a lot of criticisms coming from the Opposition about the state of affairs. However, if events have turned out like they have, the blame falls squarely on the shoulders of both parties of the Opposition, as I will now explain.

First of all, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it was never the intention of the Government to delay Local Government elections. The draft Local Government Bill was ready in July 2010, but required clearance from the then Minister of Finance, hon. Jugnauth. Even though I continually urged him for a reply, it was only in February 2011, that he finally replied in the negative. Because of his slow reaction, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we had to push back the Local Government elections for the first time in 2010. It was only after the departure of the MSM from the Government, and the nomination of hon. Xavier-Luc Duval as the Minister of Finance, that funds were made available for the modification of the Local Government Act, which was presented to Parliament a few months later in October 2011. The final version was passed in the National Assembly in December 2011 but, unfortunately, the elections had to be postponed again.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, Government had the firm intention of holding the Municipal and Village elections early this year, as promised by the hon. Prime Minister in this august House during the debates. But, once again, the MSM created an unnecessary delay, casting communal aspersions on me and by making far-fetched claims of gerrymandering. All this because, at that time, the MMM were not willing to give them any tickets for the Municipal elections. The son was able to get the father in the State House to commence proceedings to amend the boundaries of the local wards.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the actions of the then President were completely out of order. Not only had he just signed the Local Government Act the month before, the provisions of the

Act allow the President to make alterations for administrative purposes - not at the request of a political party. The power of the President for this exercise is subject to sub-section 64(1) of the Constitution, that is, he shall act -

“in accordance with the advice of the Cabinet or of a Minister acting under the general authority of Cabinet”.

That is why I refused to go and see him when he convened me. The moment the MMM agreed to give tickets for the Municipal Council elections to the MSM, they immediately withdrew their complaint; the then President informed the Electoral Supervisory Commission that he was not going to proceed further, although he had said that if there is any resistance he will even go to the Supreme Court for that. After that, more months were wasted over the question of sanctions with regard to the gender balance provision in the Act.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I think that the MMM party - which is here for more than 35 years - have always talked about gender and they have even mentioned on many occasions that they would come to Parliament to correct the issue of gender. But I must say that it is in this Government, with hon. Dr Navin Ramgoolam and all my friends in Cabinet, and I, as the Local Government Minister who have taken the first step. I repeatedly stated that there was no need to take any further action on this matter, but my words fell on deaf ears. Finally, things turned out as I had expected and the result is that Budget and elections have to take place simultaneously.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, since the debates on the Local Government Bill in this House last December, and during the two episodes dealing with boundaries and gender balance, both parties of the Opposition threatened to go to the Supreme Court. Were those vain threats? I do not hear them anymore. Suddenly, there is nothing wrong with the law. Once again, we have to thank the Opposition for the mess we are in today with regard to the Budget and elections calendar.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, a National Budget is not at all a juxtaposition of measures announced to the population. A National Budget is a holistic exercise in which all the parts are closely inter-related and serve to reach one common goal. A national Budget is the result of consultations with all partners in development, as just mentioned by my colleague, hon. Minister Shakeel Mohamed, with the public and private sector, the various Non-Governmental Organisations, the trade unions and other socio-economic groups.

I know that the hon. Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development held these consultations during the last few months. He has met me personally along with my



collaborators in my Ministry; he has met the Chief Executives of the various Municipalities and District Councils and has been very much attentive to their needs, expectations and requirements.

The hon. Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development not only has held extensive consultations to prepare the Budget, but he has had also to assess the present and past situation of the Mauritian economy, the economic and financial trend worldwide, how the international situation is likely to evolve, and what would be the likely impact of the international situation on the economy of Mauritius. He has had, in his budgetary exercise, to introduce some precautionary measures, in order to ensure that Mauritius is not excessively affected by the world economy. At the same time, he has had to ensure that the budgetary measures and policies continue to be in line with the vision of Government and with its fundamental philosophy.

There are up to now no clear signs that the world economy is recovering. Some of the European countries have even downgraded their growth forecast; others have introduced unpopular measures in order to prevent further economic decline; some have even reduced public sector spending and even salaries cut to public officials. Fortunately, here, in Mauritius, this is not the case. On the contrary, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, because of the efforts of the Government to build and maintain a resilient economy and because we have been able to make judicious spending, we are still able to sustain social and economic growth.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, whereas in other countries, job opportunities have declined and salaries have been reduced, here we are in a position to continue offering employment and more than that, we are able to offer the PRB rise in salary which will cost around Rs4 billion to the country.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we will be able to do that, not at the expense of other essential services like health, education, social security and basic infrastructures, etc. In some countries, Mr Deputy Speaker Sir, Local Government has suffered a blow by ailing national economies. I am a Board Member of the CLGF and I know that some local authorities in some Commonwealth countries are unable or find it hard to make both ends meet and to execute their basic duties and functions. I know of some councils which because of severe budgetary costs have no choice but to share resources with other neighbouring councils. The councils share the services of Chief Executive and other physical resources.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we should be fortunate that this is not the case in Mauritius. Instead of laying off staff and Chief Executives, we are able to do precisely the opposite. Soon, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we will have in Mauritius three new District Councils, with the three new Chief Executives and additional staff to serve the newly created District Councils. And you know, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, how much the splitting of the twin District Councils will cost. It will cost every year to Government more than Rs107 m.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in the face of the known world crisis, this Government has acted prudently. We have been able to contain expenditure and to place our resources there where they are really important during this time of crisis and this has enabled us to continue developing key sectors.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, what is it that we see happening in our various sectors? We can see results after results. For example, in the sectors that fall under my responsibility, this Government has earmarked a sum of Rs500 m. for urban and rural renovation projects. We shall be able to invest Rs100 m. for the purchase of compactor lorries to improve the collection and removal of wastes.

We have been able to set up the Local Authorities Governance Unit to assist the local authorities in meeting the higher levels of requirements of the population and to be still more efficient and effective in the delivery of services.

We have been able to pursue efforts and we shall continue to do so in the field of the environment and of solid waste management.

The land filling operations, the conversion of landfill gas into energy and the proper storage and treatment of all types of wastes, particularly hazardous waste, will be pursued.

The composting activities, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, will be encouraged and strategies to promote the use of compost to enrich our soil will continue. The Minister of Finance has actually announced measures in support of the new and growing composting plant at La Chaumière.

Hazardous waste management facilities will be set in place and the trans-boundary movement of hazardous waste will continue to be monitored in accordance with the international conventions and protocol to which Mauritius is signatory.

Recycling and treatment of electronic wastes, used paper, used oil and old tyres will be pursued.

Promoting local infrastructure development, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. In June 2008, the Government had set up the Local Infrastructure Fund to enhance the capacity of local authorities to play a major role in local economic development by providing them the financial means to invest in the provision of key infrastructure to our citizens.

The Government has empowered the local authorities to prepare and implement infrastructural investment programmes, which will suit the local needs. This is another way of promoting sustainable development, where the citizens' needs are considered so that they benefit the maximum, both in social and economic terms, from the investment being made in the amenities such as markets/fairs, sports complexes, multipurpose complexes, green spaces/leisure parks and others.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it is essential to build a strong local Government sector in view of delivering a quality and cost-effective service to the community. In this regard, the Local Government Act 2011 is being fully implemented not as the one that had passed with the previous Government in 2003 where half of it was proclaimed and half had remained in the cupboard.

As Members of this House know, the forthcoming elections will see a greater participation of women in politics and in decision-making process. This is an event happening in the political scene for the first time in Mauritius and I must say, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this is the first time that we have participation of more than 1500 ladies taking part in the Village Council Election and for local authorities also.

Further, the three twinned district councils will be split. This will bring the services of local government nearer to the community.

Other projects being implemented are -

- (i) The Unified Local Government Service Board (ULGSB) to enable soft management;
- (ii) Grant in Aid Formula (GIA) to know exactly the need per head financially around local authorities;
- (iii) Building and Land Use to deliver permits more quicker than it used to be;
- (iv) E-Governance, and
- (v) ISO Certification.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it is good to mention that the new Local Government Bill, for me and for all my friends here, is a success in itself. Can you imagine, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that

many people called the capital of Port Louis as City of Port Louis. It is true that the status of City was conferred on Port Louis by the Royal Decree of Queen Elizabeth II, validated on 12 August 1966 before independence. The official conferment took place on 25 August 1966 when the Governor-General, Sir John Shaw Rennie presented the Letter of Patent to the Municipality. However, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the recognition of the City of Port Louis was never couched in any Mauritian law since that date, which means the City of Port Louis was mentioned during the colonial system. There are so many Ministers that have been there before me, even those who pretend that they have been controlling the Local Government for 25 years. But I must say they have failed there. The Local Government 2011 officially conferred the status of City of Port Louis; now we can address the Mayor as Lord-Mayor. At the same time, the law gives official and legal recognition to the Lord-Mayor of the City of Port Louis.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, can you believe that in all these previous legislations since that date, everybody has been talking about the creation of the Association of Local Authorities. Under section 78 of the Local Government Bill 2011, an Association of Urban Authorities, an Association of District Councils, have been established with the following objectives.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am going to quote section 79 (1). Can you believe, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the conference that has taken place in Mauritius, which we usually call IULA, where millions of rupees have been spent, without any auditing system, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. In fact, section 79 (1) says -

“The expenses incurred by an Association referred to in section 78(1) shall be defrayed by the relevant local authorities, in such proportions as they may agree upon or, in case of disagreement, in the proportions which the Minister may determine.”

It says in section 79(2) -

“The accounts of an Association referred to in section 78(1) shall be made up yearly to the end of the financial year and thereafter submitted within 4 months for audit by the Director of Audit.”

They are blaming us now that we are spending money here and there without proper control. But let me tell you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, there was not even any law that covers the AUA at that period and they have done a conference without proper provision in law. The law does not exist.

How can we have provisions? Millions of rupees which have been spent on flowers, toilet paper and so on -people have talked about it - have not been even audited.

So, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, they have been...

*(Interruptions)*

The hon. Member is laughing!

**The Deputy Speaker:** Hon. Minister, please, carry on!

**Mr Aimée:** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, they feel proud to have been in the Municipal Councils for 25 years and more, and they are expecting to come back. But, believe me, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, when you spend money without any proper legislation, there is no provision at all. They spent taxpayers' money and now they come here and blame us. They are supposed to be the best concerning Local Authorities. I say: 'no, *arrête rêvé!*'

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I can see from what I have that in March they have spent more than Rs22 m. for that conference and, believe me, whenever you hear that somebody was going abroad to assist a conference or for training, an attribution of the AUA and the Association of District Councils, this was done illegally up to the law of Local Government in December 2011.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would now say a few words on Beach Authority. The Beach Authority is fully committed to attain its objectives in the conservation, protection and preservation of the public beaches and accordingly a full-fledged programme has been developed for the protection and preservation of our beaches, including -

- Sensitisation campaign;
- Parking and trading zones;
- Beach reprofiling and protection works;
- Tree planting exercise;
- Infrastructural development/provision of amenities;
- Security & Safety measures on public beaches;

Concerning the Fire Department, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the capacity of the Fire Services Department to attend to new types of fire break out and emergencies is being upgraded. A new Fire and Rescue Bill is also being prepared. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as I mentioned last year in the Budget, sometimes it is very difficult for the Fire officers to attain fire, particularly, when you have high-rise buildings. Next February, there would be one lorry ladder that would go up to 32 metres height to attain the fire rescue.

Concerning the O IDC, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, let us now turn ourselves to the Outer Islands, in particular, Agalega, which is the homeland of some 300 Mauritian citizens, just like you and me, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, and who should not be out of mind because they are out of sight. Government is sparing no effort to bring basic facilities and infrastructure to the Agaleans to improve the quality of life of our brothers and sisters who are separated from the mainland Mauritius by some 1000 kms of sea. Projects being pursued are as follows -

1. Food Security - plantations to have vegetables on the island. As you probably know, it's far distant from Mauritius and we have mostly dry food from Mauritius that we ship to Agalega.
2. Construction of Refugee Centre at the South Island; one has already been built on the North Island for precautionary measures in case of high-rise of water, tsunami, cyclones.
3. Construction of Quarters for the staff and delegates from any country that would go to Agalega
4. Upgrading of Agalega airstrip. There also, provision is in the Budget since last year and now the tender document is ready and we will very soon after the New Year, start the Agalega airstrip.
5. Fire Fighting Vehicle for Agalega airstrip. Today, the 'Dornier' frequently flies to Agalega, but also we have the new coming airport.
6. Rehabilitation of the coconut plantation which has already started.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, if we listen to the Opposition, our hon. Minister of Finance is incompetent and has presented an anti-social Budget. Yet hon. Duval is not only a professional accountant with a long career behind him, he has been awarded the title of best Minister of Finance in Africa not once, but twice and particularly in that the situation where the world is, that is, the financial crisis. Furthermore, after his remarkable term of office as hon. Minister for Social Integration, what better person is there who really understands the situation of the poor and the needy. It is in this respect that the hon. Minister of Finance has not limited himself to the usual handouts, but has also looked into the future for the next generation, especially in preparing them to deal with the challenges of IT (Information Technology).

The Opposition also targeted the Governor of the Bank of Mauritius. Here again, the incumbent has won awards as best Governor in Africa. Together, both hon. Duval and Manou

Bheenick have ensured that the credit rating of Mauritius has improved when those of more developed countries around the world have deteriorated.

The hon. Minister of Finance has, furthermore, reduced the Budget deficit to a level not seen for years. If not for the PRB, it would have been only just over 1%. All these attacks are not innocent, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

The Opposition would have us believe that only they have the competencies to deal with the economic situation as they have mentioned for local authority and many other Ministries in this House. Let us hope that the population does not have a short memory.

Just after the Budget speech, the hon. Leader of the Opposition wondered why hon. Duval did not lower VAT. He forgets that he, himself is the father of Sales Tax, and that in his last term as hon. Minister of Finance, he increased VAT from 10% to 15% in only three years, at a time when there was no economic crisis. Not to mention the introduction of rural tax through the Local Government Bill of 2003. His colleague, the Leader of the MSM, did no better in his two Budgets. He is the only hon. Minister of Finance in the last 30 years who has increased income tax.

In his first Budget in 2004, he also instituted means-tests for old age pensioners, while in his second Budget in 2010, he introduced Capital Gains Tax for the whole population, except for the Medpoint deal, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. We know what the remedies of the Opposition will be; they have tricked the electorate in the past. Who can forget!

- (1) In 1982, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, hon. Bérenger's famous 30% compensation - my colleague before me mentioned that - and after the 60-0, there was only 8% compensation. If I am not mistaken, that was the time he snatched the microphone away from Sir Anerood Jugnauth in a press conference.
- (2) In 2000, the first act of the new MSM-MMM Government was to increase the price of gas;
- (3) The "*micro-deal*" Illovo, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, where hundreds of millions of rupees of Capital Gains Tax were waived for five individual investors, to be followed by a 25% increase in VAT for the rest of the population in the next Budget, a few months later, and
- (4) During 2000-2003, hon. Bérenger became the only Minister of Finance to date to refuse to chair the tripartite committee for wage compensation.

In conclusion, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have a few very simple questions to put to the Opposition, which will be of interest to the population. In the unlikely event that they should win the next general elections, will they guarantee the following -

*(Interruptions)*

I said in the unlikely event!

- (1) First of all, whether they will not touch the free transport facilities given to students and old age pensioners;
- (2) Whether they will not touch the subsidies on rice and flour;
- (3) They will not institute means-test for old age pensions and health care;
- (4) They will not institute rural tax which they are afraid. They always talk about the Municipal Council as if 489 people living around rural authorities do not exist. It is only Municipal, Municipal!
- (5) Also, they will not finally pay for Medpoint, as they did when they allowed the Sun Trust to win their case against Government during their last mandate, and
- (6) They will not again re-introduce Capital Gains Tax.

But of course, Mr Deputy Speaker, they will never give such guarantees, because their solution is to make vague promises, and then squeeze the population afterwards.

With these few words, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I thank you for your attention.

(3.27 p.m.)

**Mr S. Obeegadoo (Third Member for Curepipe & Midlands):** M. le président, je voudrais tout d'abord m'excuser auprès de la Chambre d'intervenir plus tard que prévu ayant été pris à la Commission Electorale où nous avons dû, au nom de l'alliance MMM/MSM, protester énergiquement contre les dernières directives de l'IBA, d'obédience travailliste, qui a cherché à interdire pour la première fois de l'histoire de notre pays depuis que les radios privées existent - les radios sont interdites de *phone-in programmes* à deux semaines des élections. Même pour les élections générales, cela n'a jamais été le cas d'où cette protestation énergique que nous avons logée cet après-midi même contre cette tentative de fausser, dès à présent, les élections municipales dans notre pays.



M. le président, je disais que c'est une mesure sans précédent. Mais il prévaut au sein de cette Assemblée, une atmosphère sans précédent pour les débats budgétaires et c'est la faute du gouvernement.

*(Interruptions)*

C'est la faute du gouvernement et je vais vous expliquer pourquoi. Je prierai les collègues de la Chambre de se comporter en démocrates.

*(Interruptions)*

En démocrates ! De pouvoir écouter. Le sens de la démocratie, c'est de savoir écouter les critiques.

**The Deputy Speaker:** I am sorry. I kindly request the hon. Members not to interrupt the hon. Member, please!

**Mr Obegadoo:** Merci, M. le président. Si seulement le parti du gouvernement pouvait aussi en prendre de l'esprit démocratique et savoir écouter comme nous avons patiemment écouté l'honorable ministre Aimée ...

*(Interruptions)*

...qui n'a pas l'élégance d'écouter celui qui vient après lui. Je disais, M. le président, et je regrette que se soit ainsi, que l'atmosphère, cette année, est une atmosphère sans précédent depuis l'indépendance. Jamais n'avons-nous eu droit à des débats budgétaires dans cette situation. Je dis que c'est la faute du gouvernement et pourquoi? Parce que c'est la première fois qu'un budget national est présenté en pleine campagne électorale, et c'est la première fois que des élections vont avoir lieu en même temps que les débats budgétaires en cours. C'est dommage ; c'est regrettable pour l'Assemblée nationale ; c'est regrettable pour notre pays. Pourtant, il aurait pu...

**The Deputy Speaker:** Hon. Henry, no interruption, please!

**Mr Obegadoo:** ... en avoir été autrement. Les élections, par exemple, auraient pu avoir eu lieu depuis très longtemps. Je me souviens encore des débats budgétaires de l'an dernier où, lors de l'examen en comité, l'honorable Baloomoody, l'honorable Lesjongard et moi avons demandé que le Premier ministre s'engage à ce que les élections aient lieu au plus tôt en 2013, dès les premiers mois. Il avait dit pas le premier trimestre à cause des fêtes religieuses mais, tout de suite après, au plus vite, et nous avons dû attendre décembre. Cela aurait certainement pu être évité, mais je comprends que ce sont des élections non souhaitées, non voulues, que le

gouvernement a cherché à éviter par tous les moyens depuis deux, trois ans, mais que finalement il n'y avait pas d'autre choix que de tenir ces élections à la fin de l'année.

Quel était donc le calcul? Était-ce de détourner l'attention de la campagne électorale, qui va très mal pour le Parti travailliste-PMSD-transfuges, ou bien est-ce que le calcul c'était de détourner l'attention du budget? Parce que nous avons eu droit, comme nous l'avions prévu, à un budget sans âme, à un budget sans idées fortes, un budget fade, sans imagination, et qui ne changera rien à rien. Vous avez tout à fait raison ; comme l'année dernière, c'est un budget qui ne changera rien à rien au vécu quotidien de nos compatriotes.

Si l'on songe aux problèmes auxquels sont confrontés nos compatriotes au jour le jour, tels que la question sécuritaire, ce budget n'apporte rien de nouveau. Les problèmes économiques vus par la population c'est d'abord et avant tout le chômage, qui ne cesse de croître, l'inflation en hausse constante, et la vie chère. Et là aussi, à la fois les statistiques de 2012 et les prévisions annoncées par le budget ou par les experts à l'extérieur nous promettent une année 2013 particulièrement difficile sur le plan économique. Quant aux secteurs des services sociaux, il est clair que ce budget n'apportera rien de nouveau. Dans le secteur de l'éducation, si les problèmes fondamentaux sont l'iniquité du système, l'échec scolaire, l'inadéquation avec le marché du travail, ce n'est pas ce budget qui y changera grand-chose. Au niveau de la santé, si nous considérons notre position comme champions mondiaux dans le domaine des maladies non transmissibles, ce n'est pas ce budget qui y changera quelque chose. Et dans le domaine du logement, où il y a une demande cruelle et insatisfaite de maisons à bas prix pour les plus pauvres et même les classes moyennes, ce n'est pas ce budget qui changera quelque chose.

Jamais, donc, un budget aura suscité aussi peu d'intérêt. Jamais, donc, les membres de la Chambre auront eu, en même temps que les débats budgétaires, avoir à mener campagne sur le terrain. C'est difficile à la fois pour ceux de la majorité, mais bien sûr qui ont l'obligation d'être présents parce que finalement c'est leur budget ; c'est difficile pour les membres de l'opposition. Il aurait mieux fallu que nous ayons ces débats budgétaires à un autre moment. Je crois que tout le monde en conviendra, d'autant plus que les nerfs sont à vif, les accrochages plus fréquents. Il en aurait autrement si nous avions pu débattre sereinement de ce budget qui n'est pas qu'un exercice comptable, qui est censé définir les grands axes stratégiques du gouvernement pour l'année à venir.

L'autre aspect regrettable, M. le président, qui explique aussi l'absence de nombreux députés de ce côté de la Chambre, c'est l'attitude du ministre des Finances, que j'ai eu l'occasion de déplorer l'an dernier déjà. L'île Maurice a connu beaucoup de ministres des Finances depuis l'indépendance, et il y a eu une convention au sein de parlement : c'est que lorsqu'un ministre présente son budget, et il sait que la loi des finances va venir tout de suite après, c'est tout comme un ministre qui présente son projet de loi. Il en fait la présentation, et puis il écoute attentivement à la fois ces collègues qui lui viennent en soutien et qui parfois ont des suggestions, mais il écoute aussi l'opposition, car il y a toujours des arguments auxquels il faut répondre peut-être, ou des idées quelquefois acceptées. Pour la deuxième année consécutive, nous avons un ministre des Finances qui est totalement absent, y compris lorsque ces collègues du Cabinet s'expriment devant cette Chambre, et même lorsqu'il est là, a des difficultés à écouter les critiques. Je le regardais l'autre jour lorsque l'honorable Li Kwong Wing répondait officiellement.

Donc, au niveau de l'opposition, il y a une convention. C'est que lorsque le ministre des finances présente son budget, nous devons tous être là pour l'écouter, et nous avons observé cette convention. Nous étions tous là cette année comme toute opposition ; lorsque le Parti travailliste était dans l'opposition, le PMSD, ils ont fait de même. On observe cette convention ; on écoute le ministre des Finances lorsqu'il présente son budget. C'est un des temps forts de l'année parlementaire et, en contrepartie, le ministre des Finances lui aussi écoute. Il écoute ces collègues, les *backbenchers*, et il écoute l'opposition.

Je me souviendrai toujours des ministres des Finances précédents qui se sont excusés devant la Chambre lorsqu'ils devaient aller à la télévision pour une émission sur le budget. Mais sinon, ils étaient toujours là. Donc, pour l'opposition, vous comprendrez combien est insultante cette attitude, M. le président, ce qui explique, dans beaucoup de cas, notre absence nous aussi durant ces débats.

Dans ce budget, M. le président, que je ne vais pas commenter en longueur, le temps ferait défaut, je voudrais m'arrêter, puisque j'ai la responsabilité du dossier éducation au sein de l'opposition, à trois mesures. Trois mesures que je considère comme des mesures populistes. Il n'y avait pas de mesures populaires, donc on a substitué des mesures populistes mais qui concernent le domaine éducatif. Le premier c'est le repas chaud pour les écoles ZEP. Le

deuxième c'est les *tablet computers*, les tablettes à écran tactile, et le troisième c'est les mesures pour combattre le chômage parmi les jeunes.

Commençons, donc, par les ZEP. Moi, je suis très heureux, je me réjouis de la soudaine sollicitude du gouvernement pour le projet des ZEP. Souvenons-nous, ce projet trouve ses origines dans les tentatives de l'ancien ministre Parsuramen, avant 1995, d'introduire des mesures spéciales pour les écoles défavorisées. Si je ne me trompe, le ministre Bachoo était au sein de ce gouvernement. Il a été presque de tous les gouvernements, n'est-ce pas ! Donc, il se souviendra de ces mesures. Après, il y a eu le ministre Pillay, sous le gouvernement travailliste de 1997 à 2000, qui avait fait des choses intéressantes en introduisant le concept de *Special Support Schools*. Il avait essayé d'améliorer sur ce qu'avait fait le ministre Parsuramen. Ensuite, est venu le MMM/MSM, et nous avons introduit le concept des ZEP. Le concept des ZEP, ce n'était pas que des mesures additionnelles pour certaines écoles ; c'était tout un projet pédagogique. Je rappellerai que le seul gouvernement à avoir produit un document de travail explicitant la stratégie des ZEP en tant que stratégie pédagogique, fut le nôtre. Et, par rapport à l'alimentation, il faut se souvenir que, dans le temps, quand moi j'étais à l'école, on recevait un pain, du fromage et un fruit sec. A mon époque ; je suis peut être légèrement un peu plus jeune que le ministre. Ensuite cela a cessé parce que l'Australie a supprimé son aide. Donc, on a enlevé cela. Donc, quand nous arrivons au gouvernement en 2000 - mes collègues me corrigeront si je fais erreur - je crois qu'il n'y avait plus rien qui était offert en terme de suppléments alimentaires dans les écoles. Donc nous introduisons pour les ZEPs dans le cadre de ce projet pédagogique puisqu'on avait identifié l'alimentation comme un facteur fondamental qui expliquait aussi la mauvaise performance des élèves en provenance des familles les plus pauvres et nous avions aussi en tête ce que disait le ministre de l'éducation l'autre jour : l'absentéisme, combien l'alimentation peut être efficace. La promesse d'un repas peut être efficace pour les plus pauvres pour les amener à l'école et nous avons donc introduit un repas – pas un repas chaud, un repas nutritif décidé avec le ministère de la santé de l'époque: un pain fourré, un fruit, un yaourt. Nous eûmes des difficultés énormes M. le président. Malgré toute notre bonne volonté, nous rencontrâmes des difficultés extraordinaires. Pour trouver des fournisseurs dont on pouvait assurer la qualité, nous avons procédé par tender, par attribution de marché transparent mais cela avait été très difficile; ensuite comment transporter ces éléments de nutrition, d'alimentation à l'école; comment les préserver au sein de l'école et il y avait eu des cas répétés

d'empoisonnement et l'opposition d'alors ne nous avait pas fait de cadeau pour dénoncer ces épisodes. Nous avons fait ce qu'on pouvait jusqu'en 2005 et puis arrive le nouveau gouvernement. Le nouveau gouvernement, dans un premier temps, essaie de tuer tout le projet de ZEPs. Il y avait eu une campagne violente, virulente contre les ZEPs avec des suggestions, je préfère ne pas rentrer dans les détails, que le gouvernement MSM/MMM ne se préoccupait que des écoles ZEPs. Vous comprendrez par là ce qui était sous-entendu mais bon. En 2005 arrivé au gouvernement, le Parti travailliste essaie de supprimer, de tuer le projet des ZEPs, et ceux qui arrivent à s'y opposer efficacement ce sont les partenaires au développement comme l'union européenne qui dise non, non. Si vous avez une autre stratégie pour combattre la pauvreté, dites nous ce qu'elle est sinon il faut préserver les ZEPs. Donc les ZEPs arrivent à survivre mais rien que survivre. De 2005 à 2012, j'affirme, M. le président, que le projet des ZEPs est allé à l'abandon à tel point que l'an dernier lorsque j'interrogerai le ministre de l'éducation, il admettait que les allocations payées à ceux qui portent son bébé à lui: le *enhancement programme* sont plus conséquentes que les allocations versées aux enseignants des ZEPs. Donc, je suis on ne peut plus heureux que soudain le gouvernement arrive à prioriser les ZEPs. Tant mieux mais la façon dont on annonce ce projet ne présage rien de bon. Le budget annonce un repas chaud tous les jours dans toutes les écoles ZEPs. Bravo, trente écoles, il faut bien commencer quelque part. Les ZEPs, ce sont les plus pauvres et contrairement à ce que voulait insinuer un peu plus tôt le ministre Shakil Mohamed, quand nous regardons les enfants de notre pays et j'espère que c'est le cas ; je crois que c'est le cas aussi pour le ministre présent, nous ne voyons pas dans ces enfants des communautés, des couleurs, des races, des circonscriptions mais tous les enfants sont avant tout des enfants. Donc, je disais que le projet avec les écoles ZEP - c'est très bien si on commence par les écoles ZEPs mais comment faire? Qui sait qui va préparer ces repas chauds pour les trente écoles. J'ai relu le discours du ministre de l'éducation, je n'ai pas trouvé de réponse. J'ai entendu le ministre des finances à la radio et j'ai eu très peur M. le président, parce qu'il a dit que ce serait confié aux PTAs et qu'il trouverait un parent moins fortuné qui va préparer les repas chauds. Une école primaire, c'est 200, 300, 400, 500 enfants – 500 repas chauds à livrer tous les jours. On va chercher un parent pauvre qui n'a pas aucune expérience dans le domaine et on va lui confier ce contrat. C'est ce qu'a dit le ministre des finances à la radio qui confirme notre impression que c'est un projet qui n'a pas été mûrement réfléchi. Deuxième question: qui va porter ces repas à l'école, dans quel délai et comment? Il faudrait des

firmes spécialisées qui aient une expertise. Personne n'en parle certainement pas le ministre de l'éducation dont j'ai lu et relu le discours. Je peux comprendre qu'il ait eu à intervenir tout de suite après le budget, qu'il était pris peut être par surprise et que le ministre des finances ne lui avait pas parlé de ce projet. Troisième question: une fois que les 500 repas chauds dans une école X arrivent à l'école, où est-ce qu'on va déposer ces repas? Pendant combien de temps va-t-on avoir à les garder, les stocker en attendant de servir le repas? Personne ne le sait. Quatrième question, c'est où va-t-on servir à manger aux enfants? Aucune de nos écoles n'a une salle à manger. Autant que je sache pratiquement aucune de nos écoles primaires n'a un hall, une grande salle qui pourrait être convertie en salle de déjeuner. Donc où ça, dans les classes; avec quel couvert? On ne parle pas d'un pain fourré, on parle d'un repas chaud. Il faut donc des couverts. Qui va assurer la distribution? Qui ensuite va faire le nettoyage - si cela se fait dans toutes les salles de classe - et éliminer les restes. Il y a là, M. le président, à mon sens et je parle en connaissance de cause ayant été ministre de l'éducation; ayant éprouvé d'énormes problèmes tout en disant que c'est un projet louable en lui-même et qu'il serait souhaitable que demain nous puissions offrir un repas chaud à tous nos enfants. Je dis qu'un tel projet ne peut pas se faire à la va-vite. Voyez notre expérience. Malgré toute notre bonne volonté, cela n'a pas marché et donc, il y a là un problème fondamental. J'aurais suggère à l'État de procéder différemment, de procéder par étapes, d'avoir une première année où l'on construit de grandes salles pour chaque école primaire. C'est un travail immense - 250 chantiers à ouvrir et le ministre Bachoo ne me contredira pas. Toutes ces ressources sont utilisées à plein temps sur tous les différents projets. Donc, dans un premier temps, construire les salles de déjeuner; dans un deuxième temps pouvoir les écoles en terme de facilité de réfrigération par exemple; réfléchir, penser, planifier pour tout ce qui est du service et dans la deuxième ou la troisième année commencer à servir les repas chauds...

*(Interruptions)*

Mon collègue me dit cinq ans mais vous êtes au gouvernement depuis deux ans. On aurait pu y penser depuis 2 ans. Vous êtes au gouvernement depuis sept ans, vous auriez pu y penser depuis sept ans, l'essentiel si on ne veut pas faire dans le populisme, c'est de bien faire les choses et d'inscrire, d'insérer cette initiative dans un projet pédagogique: servir des repas chauds. Le ministre de la santé n'est pas là mais je sais que le ministre de l'enseignement supérieur est un de ceux au sein de cette Chambre qui partage mes convictions en terme de la priorisation de

l'alimentation saine. Je dis qu'il faut déjà réfléchir à quoi servir à ces enfants. Il faut s'écarter malheureusement de ce que nous mangeons traditionnellement à Maurice et qui nous a mené en si mauvais chemin en terme de diététique et en terme de notre profil de santé. Personne n'en parle et je suis donc inquiet, M. le président. Ce n'est pas moi qui souhaiterais que ce projet n'aboutisse pas. Je souhaite que ce projet aboutisse mais je demande à ce qu'il soit planifié. Les échos que nous avons en ce moment du ministère de l'éducation c'est que rien n'a été fait jusqu'à présent ni au niveau du CTB ni en terme de planification. Deuxième initiative c'est cette initiative des tablettes computers. Alors là encore, j'ai voulu en savoir plus. Le ministre des finances n'en a pas parlé depuis la présentation du budget. J'ai écouté le discours du ministre des TIC, l'honorable Pillay Chedumbrum, il avait quelques lignes, trois à quatre lignes, pour dire combien nous étions idiots de ce côté de la Chambre de ne pas savoir que les *tablet computers* c'est un pas en avant par rapport aux laptops. Nous sommes des parfaits idiots, très bien ! Mais, cela ne nous renseigne pas plus sur le projet. J'ai écouté le ministre Dr. Bunwaree, c'est pareil, quelques phrases pour dire que des classes interactives avec le tableau noir disparu, remplacé par des écrans, les laptops, les projecteurs, le professeur venant avec son stilet. Tout cela, c'est très bien ! C'est une vision dont tout le monde parle depuis des années. Je me souviens de mon collègue, l'ancien ministre Jeeha parler de la même chose. Nous partageons tous ce rêve. N'est-ce pas ! Mais, le problème c'est le concret. Vous n'avez pas pu offrir des ordinateurs en Forme VI, c'est dommage. Nous l'aurions souhaité. Mais maintenant des *tablet computers* en Forme IV ! Pourquoi la Forme IV ? En quoi est-ce que cela nous avantagerait ? Il n'y a aucune information disponible en ce moment. Et je répète, ne tombons pas dans le populisme. Pourvoir nos collégiens des *tablet computers*, encore une fois, il s'agit d'insérer tout cela dans un projet pédagogique. Cela va servir à quoi ? En quoi serait-ce compatible avec les curricula existants ? Comment est-ce que les enseignants seront formés ? Mais le plus important c'est le *software*. Dans d'autres pays, l'honorable Li Kwong Wing me ne rappelait l'autre jour, comme en Turquie - il me donnait l'exemple de La Turquie - le matériel pédagogique, les manuels étaient déjà disponibles en forme digitale pour être accédés à partir des *tablet computers*. Ce n'est pas le cas à Maurice. Donc, encore une fois...

*(Interruptions)*

Mais si, les manuels ne sont pas disponibles. M. le ministre, j'ai des enfants à l'école, les manuels ne sont pas disponibles.

*(Interruptions)*

L'année prochaine on verra. Espérons, tant mieux ! Mais il ne faudrait pas...

**The Deputy Speaker:** Hon. Minister, please, do not interrupt the hon. Member!

**Mr Obeegadoo:** Soyons des démocrates. Vous avez eu l'occasion, vous avez parlé autant que vous vouliez.

Donc, je disais, qu'encore une fois, cela devrait s'insérer dans un projet pédagogique, être bien préparé et non pas venir avec des mesures populistes pour la galerie sans que ces projets aient été murement réfléchis. Tout cela va coûter beaucoup d'argent. Nous voulons tous le bien de nos enfants. Mais réfléchissons bien à l'efficacité de l'utilisation de l'argent public.

Troisième élément, c'est le chômage parmi les jeunes. Pardon, M. le président, j'attendais de voir si le ministre Shakeel Mohamed était de retour, parce qu'il s'était livré tout à l'heure à une virulente attaque, avec des sous-entendus communalistes contre le MMM/MSM et j'avais souhaité qu'il soit là pour que je puisse lui répondre, mais bon, on verra tout à l'heure, espérons encore qu'il nous reviendra.

Je voudrais parler de la troisième question qui me préoccupe, c'est celle du chômage parmi les jeunes. Ce budget, encore une fois, comme l'an dernier, vient avec des mesures. Je voudrais rappeler que cette forme de chômage, M. le président, est en hausse. Il y a un taux de 8% de chômeurs au sien de la population active. 44,000 chômeurs - dont 17,500 - 40% de nos chômeurs ont entre 16 et 24 ans. De cela, 17% sont à la recherche de leur premier emploi. Vu sous un angle différent, 38% de nos jeunes de moins de 20 ans, sont au chômage. Tout le monde sait que presque deux tiers des sans-emploi ne détiennent pas le *School Certificate* et un cinquième ne détient pas le CPE. Mais ce qui ne se dit pas, ce qui se sait moins, c'est le chômage parmi les diplômés. Nous sommes dans une situation où presque dans chaque famille - je parle de la famille élargie - il y a au moins un diplômé d'université qui est au chômage. Il y a là une tendance à la hausse qui est non reflétée dans les statistiques officielles, parce que des chômeurs répertoriés par *Statistics Mauritius*, seuls 37% disent qu'ils vont se faire inscrire. Je parle des chômeurs diplômés. A peine un tiers va se faire inscrire au bureau de l'emploi. 7,000 diplômés de l'enseignement supérieur, selon les statistiques officielles, sont sans emploi, représentant 16% des chômeurs au total. C'est un chiffre qui devrait interpeller à la fois le ministre de l'éducation primaire et secondaire et aussi le ministre de l'enseignement supérieur. 16% de nos chômeurs sont des diplômés de l'enseignement supérieur. Nous savons tous que de 1995 à 2010, il y a eu



une transition économique. N'est-ce pas? La transition des secteurs primaires et secondaires vers le secteur tertiaire qui se reflète aussi dans les tendances fortes sur le marché du travail, c'est-à-dire, qu'aujourd'hui les catégories socioprofessionnelles supérieures représentent 18% des actifs et les postes à ce niveau requièrent un niveau d'instruction beaucoup plus élevé correspondant au *Higher School Certificate* ou plus. Donc, plus on est jeune et moins on est instruit, plus grand est le risque de se retrouver sans emploi ; cela on le sait tous. Mais maintenant, alors que l'insertion économique en 2012 se fait plus difficilement qu'il y a 20 ans ou 30 ans, mais maintenant même les diplômés d'université se retrouvent au chômage. Donc, cela pose le problème de l'adéquation de l'éducation et de la formation avec les exigences de notre marché du travail.

M. le président, il n'est nul besoin de vous dire combien le chômage chez les jeunes est aujourd'hui un drame vécu au quotidien. Je crois que c'était le ministre des finances, lui-même, dans la présentation du budget, qui se référait au fait que lorsque les jeunes arrivent sur le marché du travail il y a un cercle vicieux. Si on n'a pas d'expérience on n'a pas d'emploi et si on n'a pas d'emploi, on n'obtient pas d'expérience. C'est le problème classique. Mais le problème c'est que l'incapacité croissante du marché du travail à Maurice d'intégrer ces vagues successives de jeunes sortant de l'école et nous aurons une autre vague dans quelques mois, en février/mars, fait que nous constatons de plus en plus des emplois à temps partiel, des emplois mal rémunérés, des emplois avec contrat à durée déterminée ou alors le sous-emploi ou bien le chômage de courte durée mais répétitif. Quelqu'un obtient de l'emploi pour six mois, après il va se retrouver trois/quatre mois au chômage et puis il retrouve un petit travail à temps partiel. Ce sont les tendances actuelles et ce qui est dommage - j'espère que la ministre de la sécurité sociale m'entend - alors qu'une personne de plus de soixante ans qui a déjà, sans doute, ses économies, cette personne a un revenu garanti en termes de pension de vieillesse, en sus du patrimoine qu'il aura accumulé durant ces années de travail, un jeune, lui, s'il est célibataire, s'il est bien-portant et qu'il cherche de l'emploi et n'en trouve pas, il n'a droit ni au *social aid* ni à ce qu'on appelle au *transitional unemployment benefit* qui requiert six mois de contribution préalable au *NPS*. C'est une énorme injustice dont les dimensions ne cessent de croître et qui est très inquiétante. C'est un drame qui peut tourner à la tragédie. Vous savez, comme moi, M. le président, combien le mal-être chez les jeunes peut mener au suicide. Nous savons tous qu'aujourd'hui, l'on s'inquiète du nombre croissant de suicide, 102 en 2011. Chaque trois jours ou presque, il y a un mauricien qui se suicide et le groupe d'âge le plus à risque, c'est le groupe d'âge de 15 ans à 24

ans, M. le président. Je me réfère à une étude du *Mauritius Institute of Health* qui date de sept ans déjà et qui constatait que la moitié des suicidaires, de ceux qui tentent de se suicider, sont âgés de 15 à 24 ans. Cela témoigne de ce qu'on appelle une crise de la construction de soi chez notre jeunesse qui est liée à l'incertitude croissante quant aux perspectives d'avenir.

Aujourd'hui, la jeunesse se retrouve sujette à une discrimination fondée sur l'âge. Et les rapports entre les classes d'âges deviennent de vrais rapports sociaux et se développent un sous conflit d'intérêt entre les générations, à laquelle il faut impérativement substituer un pacte intergénérationnel. Et je souhaite que le ministre de l'éducation, le ministre du travail et la ministre de la sécurité sociale y réfléchissent. Nous demandons que l'ensemble des politiques publiques à Maurice accordent la priorité à la jeunesse et que chaque jeune puisse être jusqu'à l'âge de 20 ans soit en emploi soit en formation. Il ne doit pas y avoir de chômeurs jusqu'à l'âge de 20 ans. C'est cela l'obligation qui pèse sur le gouvernement aujourd'hui, M. le président, c'est de s'assurer qu'un jeune soit toujours dans un parcours professionnel et ait donc droit à une allocation de formation s'il se trouve sans emploi. Comprenez-moi bien. Les jeunes qui ont de meilleurs résultats au collège, généralement, il y a une corrélation avec l'appartenance sociale. Donc, les jeunes les plus fortunés, qui font le plus bien au collège ont l'éducation gratuite jusqu'à l'âge de 20 ans et au-delà. Nous savons que l'Université de Maurice est hautement subventionnée. Par contre, le jeune, issu du milieu ouvrier, d'une famille pauvre qui n'obtient pas les diplômes et qui s'arrête à 15, 16 ou 17 ans, lui est laissé à lui-même. Il n'a droit à aucune allocation, aucun crédit de formation et c'est ça, c'est ce qui explique le nombre de chômeurs de moins de 20 ans. Donc, la demande que nous formulons puisque le gouvernement dit que le travail pour les jeunes est une priorité, c'est de s'assurer qu'il n'y ait pas de chômeurs jusqu'à l'âge de 20 ans, ou l'on est en formation ou l'on est dans l'emploi.

Les enjeux économiques, M. le président, sont énormes. Le chômage, en particulier le chômage des jeunes, a un coût économique considérable qui hypothèque à la fois la croissance et le développement. Faible retour sur l'investissement d'éducation pour l'individu comme pour la société, le recours aux étrangers, alors que nous avons des jeunes au chômage, le coût des allocations chômage, la formation additionnelle pour palier à une éducation de base inadéquate, le coût de l'instabilité sociale. M. le président, souvenons-nous du printemps Arabe, combien les jeunes chômeurs étaient à la base des révoltes qui ont eu lieu.

Face à ces nombreuses arrivées sur le marché du travail, le taux de croissance qu'on a connu en 2012 et le taux de croissance qu'on nous promet pour 2013 contient une certitude. Il n'y a pas un économiste qui vous dira qu'avec le taux de croissance que l'on nous promet, nous arriverons à créer des emplois en nombre suffisant, ne serait-ce que pour accueillir les nouveaux diplômés du secondaire qui vont débarquer sur le marché du travail en février/mars.

Le chômage à Maurice est d'ordre structurel, vu l'inadéquation entre l'offre et la demande sur le marché du travail. Tout le monde parle de l'absence de compétence. Plus de 55% des employeurs estiment que Maurice fait face à une pénurie de main-d'œuvre qualifiée au niveau national selon la HRDC. Mais il y a aussi un manque de compétence au sein du secteur public selon la banque mondiale. Et pourtant, ici même, au sein de cette Chambre, nous avons, à maintes reprises demandé qu'on établisse un *skills profile* des étrangers à Maurice en vue de l'élaboration d'une stratégie de formation et de recyclage. Vous me comprenez, M. le président. Nous faisons venir à Maurice beaucoup d'étrangers. Il faut qu'il y ait une étude sérieuse de la part du gouvernement pour connaître le profile en terme de compétence de ces étrangers afin que nous puissions former nos jeunes, nos compatriotes ou les recycler pour que d'ici un an, deux ans ou trois ans, eux peuvent faire le travail pour lequel on fait venir aujourd'hui des étrangers. Mais à chaque fois que l'on soulève la question cela ne retient pas semble-t-il l'attention du gouvernement. De même, il faut un suivi rapproché de l'évolution du marché du travail à Maurice. Et, actuellement, qui à la charge de l'analyse des grandes tendances sur le marché du travail. Tout le monde fait un petit quelque chose. Le CSO qui s'appelle maintenant *Statistics Mauritius* fait une collecte de données mais assez superficielles. Le ministère du Travail enregistre les demandes d'emplois selon ceux qui se rapportent. La *Mauritius Employers Federation* fait le relevé des demandes de main-d'œuvre qui paraissent dans les journaux. Le HRDC, je ne sais pas. Je crois qu'ils ont commencé à faire des études sectorielles. Et nous savons que le *Labour Market Information System* (LMIS), la gestion informatisée de la demande et de l'offre pour le travail dans les différents secteurs de l'économie, n'est toujours pas une réalité. Et donc, l'urgence d'avoir une instance, M. le président, qui se chargerait de la collecte des données, du traitement des données, de l'analyse, pour ce qui est du marché du travail se fait toujours attendre. Les initiatives de ce budget fait soi-disant la part belle aux initiatives pour l'emploi des jeunes, M. le président. Mais avant de considérer ce que propose le budget cette année, je voudrais, si vous le permettez, rappeler ce qui nous avait été dit l'an dernier. L'an

dernier, je cite le Budget 2012. Le ministre des finances nous annonce le *Sponsored Pre-job Training Initiative*. Je cite –

“I am introducing an innovative measure – the Sponsored Pre-job Training Initiative, which I hope will be used extensively by employers. Their contributions to the HRDC will henceforth be available not only to train existing employees but to prepare our youth for employment. The following conditions will apply -

- the duration of training should not exceed 6 months;
- HRDC will pay 60 percent and the prospective employer 40 percent of the training costs, and
- a stipend of 6,000 rupees per month per trainee will be paid on a 50:50 cost sharing basis.

In addition, delivery of all training schemes for the unemployed by HRDC, NEF and MITD will be consolidated along the above lines. It is expected that in 2012, some 8,000 unemployed will be covered by these schemes.”

M. le président, savez-vous que ces intentions annoncées en décembre, 2012 n’ont connu aucune suite et cette initiative ne fut lancée qu’au mois de septembre de cette année. Pourquoi? Ni le ministre des Finances ni le ministre du Travail, ni l’un de nos deux ministres de l’Education n’aura osé faire le bilan de cette initiative annoncée l’an dernier dans le budget. Et c’est pour cela que je me permets de demander si les engagements de cette année comme les engagements de l’an dernier ne sont pas des promesses qui n’engagent que ceux qui y croient.

Mon collègue, j’allais dire le future ministre, l’honorable Li Kwong Wing, parlait de l’apparition ...

*(Interruptions)*

Je ne comprends pas en quoi cela vous gêne ! Je souris parce que j’attends impatiemment ce jour où mon collègue sera ministre des finances. Certainement oui !

M. le président, je disais que mon collègue se référait à la *niet*. Vous savez qu’en Russe, *niet* c’est ‘non’, un ‘non’ catégorique. La *niet generation not in employment or in training*. La *niet génération*, c’est le spectre de cette *niet generation* qui nous guette aujourd’hui en 2012. Ni formation, ni apprentissage, ni compétence, ni expérience, ni opportunité d’emplois, ni travail

décent, ni prestation sociale, ni accès aux crédits, ni logement, voilà à quoi équivaut la *niet generation* aujourd'hui, M. le président. Le risque est là, que l'incapacité des jeunes accédés à l'emploi aujourd'hui ne devienne demain un chômage durable, c'est-à-dire structurel. C'est pour cela que nous insistons que la relance économique doit passer par une croissance génératrice de création d'emplois et il faut placer la création d'emplois jeunes au cœur de la politique macroéconomique en identifiant de nouveaux pôles d'investissements et en favorisant l'entrepreneuriat des jeunes. La responsabilité est d'abord celle du ministère de l'éducation, M. le président. Tous ces grands projets de tablettes, repas chauds dans les ZEP, les grands projets que l'on nous annonce ne s'attaquent pas aux problèmes fondamentaux de l'éducation. Comme tout ce n'est pas la mise sur pied après sept ans d'un *skills working group* avec le secteur privé qui va résoudre des problèmes qui durent et qui s'aggravent depuis des années.

Les problèmes fondamentaux, M. le président, c'est quoi? C'est d'abord une éducation de base de qualité, mais qui comprend par l'acquisition des compétences essentielles, la préparation au monde du travail. Que tous les enfants soient à l'école de cinq à quinze ans ! Le budget nous dit qu'il y a cinq mille enfants - j'ai trouvé cela éloquent - qui ne vont pas à l'école ou qui ne vont pas régulièrement à l'école. C'est une admission de taille du gouvernement ! Mais que faisons-nous? On va offrir de l'argent en échange d'une présence à l'école. C'est très bien. Mais pourquoi pas le suivi au sein de chaque école? L'Ile Maurice n'a pas une population énorme. Toutes les naissances sont déclarées et enregistrées, M. le président. Il ne devrait pas être trop compliqué de s'assurer que tous les enfants de cinq ans sont inscrits à l'école et une fois inscrit à l'école, il est relativement aisé pour une école de prendre note d'un élève qui s'absente régulièrement ou qui disparaît. Mais qu'il y ait la mise sur pied d'un mécanisme de suivi avec la police et les ministères concernés pour aller chercher les enfants qui disparaissent de l'école. Mais il n'y a eu aucune annonce ; cela fait des années que je lance des appels en ce sens au gouvernement et pourtant il n'y a aucune initiative, M. le président.

Après l'éducation de base, savez-vous qu'on nous avait promis pour 2010 le *National Human Resources Development Plan* qui devait être actualisé? Nous sommes arrivés à la fin de 2012. Il y a une absence totale de vision et de stratégie globale avec pour résultat, une approche fragmentée pour ce qui est de la prestation. Le MITD, le NEF, le ministère du travail - il y a selon le NEF l'urgence d'une approche globale aux développements des ressources humaines. *Les middle level skills*, M. le président - les seuls deux polytechniques que nous avons ont

disparu et ont été convertis en université. Qui va s'occuper des jeunes après le *School Certificate*? C'est de cela que je parle.

Nous constatons tous les jours la dérive de l'Université de Technologie qui, aujourd'hui, fait n'importe quoi et entre en compétition avec l'Université de Maurice alors que c'était censé justement pallier au manquement de l'Université de Maurice et être très à cheval par rapport aux besoins de notre économie, des entrepreneurs. La réalité est simple. L'école ne favorise pas l'insertion économique des jeunes et, pourtant, je le dis aux deux ministres de l'Education qui me font l'honneur de m'écouter et j'en suis reconnaissant vu l'attitude du ministre du Travail et du ministre des Finances, je disais que l'éducation doit être comptable de ses actes envers la nation et doit reconnaître non seulement sa responsabilité d'accueillir les jeunes à écoles, non seulement sa responsabilité de faire réussir un petit pourcentage de plus chaque année aux CPE, *School Certificate* et HSC, mais sa responsabilité à combattre le chômage parmi les jeunes. Faire de l'employabilité et de l'entrepreneuriat des objectifs phares du système d'éducation et mesurer l'efficacité externe, comme l'appellent les spécialistes, pour rassurer l'adéquation éducation/travail. Voilà ce qui devrait être une des priorités, un des objectifs phares en 2013.

M. le président, nous avons fait nos recommandations et elles sont connues. Je ne viens pas ici, je ne me mets jamais debout ici, uniquement, pour critiquer. Nos propositions sont connues. Une allocation formation pour les 16 à 20 ans sans emploi pour qu'il n'y ait plus de chômage avant l'âge de 21 ans. Que l'ensemble des politiques publiques accorde la priorité à la jeunesse, qu'il s'agisse de l'emploi, du logement, de l'éducation/formation, de l'accès aux crédits bancaires ou les jeunes sont défavorisés, qu'il s'agisse des petites et moyennes entreprises, donner la priorité dans les politiques publiques à la jeunesse, placer la création d'emploi jeunes au cœur de la politique macroéconomique à travers des incitations fiscales, des industries créatives et innovantes, faire de l'entrepreneuriat jeune une priorité de l'Etat. Le ministre de l'Education nous annonce '*entrepreneurial studies*', je crois que c'est comme cela qu'il l'appelle, pour l'an prochain.

Qu'est-ce qu'on nous raconte? C'est que cela va devenir, premièrement, une matière, deuxièmement obligatoire et, donc, sujette à des examens. M. le président, j'ai beaucoup étudié les systèmes éducatifs à travers le monde. J'ai eu la chance de travailler à l'international. Je n'ai pas vu un tel système. L'entrepreneuriat ne peut s'apprendre et s'étudier comme toute autre matière. L'entrepreneuriat est des compétences vivantes qui s'apprennent avec les opérateurs. Ce

n'est pas une formation théorique. Ce n'est pas en apprenant des concepts de comptabilité que l'on va devenir entrepreneur, M. le président. L'on fait fausse route. Et pourtant, c'est tellement important. Le ministre de l'Education a raison lorsqu'il veut introduire une culture de l'entrepreneuriat à l'école, mais ce n'est pas le bon moyen de le faire. Ce n'est certainement pas en rendant cette matière obligatoire. Il faut encourager les *start-ups* parmi les jeunes. Il faut changer l'attitude du système bancaire. Mais le ministre des Finances n'est jamais là pour nous écouter même quand nous venons avec des propositions. Il faut surtout, M. le président, un observatoire du marché du travail et je suggère qu'il soit créé à l'Université de Maurice. Il faut que nos meilleurs cerveaux s'intéressent, qu'on leur confie cette mission du suivi rapproché du marché du travail.

M. le président, je voudrais, avant de terminer, dire quelques remarques par rapport à notre système légal, le judiciaire, puisque je suis avocat pratiquant et je voudrais compléter ce que disait mon collègue, lui aussi, futur ministre Baloomoody...

*(Interruptions)*

...je disais donc d'abord, et je suis sûr que le ministre de la Justice transmettra...

*(Interruptions)*

...mes suggestions. D'abord les infrastructures. Il est inconcevable, M. le président, que la justice soit dispensée dans les conditions que l'on connaît au Tribunal de Souillac...

*(Interruptions)*

...au Tribunal de Mapou, au Tribunal de Pamplémousses, au Tribunal de Curepipe. C'est inacceptable, M. le président. Pour Mahebourg, c'est correcte, à voir encore le bâtiment qui n'est pas correctement entretenu et qui cause déjà des soucis à ceux qui l'utilisent tout les jours. Joli bâtiment, certes, mais ce n'est pas le joli bâtiment qui aide à la justice. Deuxième proposition, c'est ce qu'on appelle en anglais le *customer care*. Evidemment, c'est un problème qui s'oppose partout dans le secteur public. Mais, en particulier, au niveau de nos tribunaux, cette situation ne peut plus perdurer. Il faut qu'il y ait pour chaque tribunal un *customer care desk*. Il faut qu'il y ait un standard téléphonique qui fonctionne. Il faut qu'il y ait un service de renseignement. Ce sont toujours les moins éduqués et les moins fortunés qui font les frais de ce manque de notre service d'orientation, M. le président. J'en appelle au ministre de la justice, pour qu'il soulève la question et en fasse une urgence d'avoir un service d'orientation; un *customer care desk*, un

standard qui fonctionne, des téléphonistes formés en nombre adéquat, pour orienter les gens quand ils ont des démarches à entreprendre au niveau des tribunaux.

Troisièmement, l'assistance juridique : le *legal aid*. On en a débattu au sein de cette Assemblée. Nous avons fait des propositions qui n'ont connu aucune suite. Aujourd'hui encore nous n'avons que deux vaillantes dames qui s'occupent de toutes les demandes de *legal aid*. Mme Bappoo devrait en être consciente, elle a été pendant longtemps ministre de la condition féminine et cela ne peut plus continuer, M. le président. Deux vaillantes dames; lorsqu'une est absente, elle n'est pas remplacée. Un planton qui reçoit tous les jours des dizaines sinon des centaines de demandes. L'on dépend toujours du bon vouloir des avoués qui sont mal rémunérés. Aujourd'hui nous sommes dans des situations incroyables, M. le président. Une dame qui demande une assistance légale pour obtenir la garde de son enfant, on lui refuse cette assistance sous prétexte que l'enfant est déjà avec elle. Alors qu'elle vit sous une menace permanente que le père vient enlever l'enfant. Des enfants au-delà d'un certain âge; au-delà de 12 ans et l'honorable Baloomoody, sait de quoi je parle. Les avoués refuseront une assistance juridique parce qu'ils sont mal rémunérés. Il faut revoir ce système. Il faut des avoués à plein temps pour traiter des cas urgents au niveau de la demande de *legal aid*.

Je m'arrêteraï là. Je suis heureux d'avoir eu l'écoute attentive du ministre de la justice et je lui fais confiance pour donner suite à ces demandes.

M. le président, je vais conclure en disant que nous le regrettons sincèrement, mais ce budget - du point de vue économique alors que la priorité c'est la relance de la croissance à travers l'investissement pour la création d'emplois que ce budget sera - pour citer l'honorable Leader de l'Opposition –

« un coup d'épée dans l'eau ».

Nous le regrettons sincèrement, mais tel qu'il se présente, il ne sera qu'un coup d'épée dans l'eau. Nous regrettons que sur le plan du social, ce budget n'équipe pas notre nation, pour relever les défis qui s'opposent au quotidien dans le secteur éducatif, celui de la santé et du logement. Nous regrettons les mesures populistes et j'en ai donné trois exemples, et j'espère que ces mesures ne vont pas nous faire plus de tort que de bien dans le moyen terme.

L'exercice budgétaire de cette année se résume en un exercice comptable. Je ne veux pas être méchant. C'est l'honorable ministre Aimée qui parlait du ministre des Finances comme un



comptable, mais le budget se résume, malheureusement, à cet exercice comptable alors qu'il aurait dû dessiner la voie à suivre pour l'année à venir.

M. le président, je vais terminer en vous disant que ce budget ne va pas servir à grand chose, mais je ne vais pas, moi, porter le jugement. Ce jugement je le laisse à la population des villes, qui seront appelées aux urnes le 09 décembre, en étant tout à fait certain, qu'elles donneront la correction très méritée à ce gouvernement par les résultats aux municipales du 09 décembre.

J'en ai terminé. Merci.

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

*At 4.29 p.m. the sitting was suspended.*

*On resuming at 5.05 p.m. with the Deputy Speaker in the Chair.*

**The Attorney General (Mr Y. Varma):** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I wish at the outset to congratulate the hon. Vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, and the hon. Prime Minister for this Budget.

In fact, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the theme of the Budget is 'Rising to the challenges of a world in transition.' This explains clearly the international economic climate, and the context in which this Budget has been presented. The economic situation in Mauritius is envied by many on the international scene. We will have an inflation of around 4.1%, growth will be 3.4%, and we have seen big economies of the world not doing well at all.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, all Members of this House are paid out of public funds. Whether we have got elections or not, whether we've got personal commitments or not, the supreme duty is towards our parliamentary practice, towards this House, towards this august Assembly because we sit here as the representatives of the people of this country. And what do we see today? The Opposition benches are empty. The same people who shout on roof tops that they are there to promote democracy, they are there for good governance, they criticise the Government, are today absent at this very important juncture, when we are on the point of concluding the debates on the Appropriation Bill.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as the practice goes, I will rebut a few points which have been raised, though not present in the House today, by the Members of the Opposition. The hon. Second Member for Constituency No. 2 stated in his speech that there was an era of prosperity

after 1982. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we are all aware that in 1982 there was a government – an alliance of the MMM and PSM. In that same government, the now Leader of the Opposition was the Finance Minister. He, at a certain point in time, even resigned, following a row that he had with late Kader Bhayat, and that also at a very critical point, when experts from the IMF were supposed to be coming to Mauritius. There was the split of the then government, which lasted only nine months. What happened after that, the then Prime Minister had to seek support from the Mauritius Labour Party to be able to come back to power. The same Labour Party supported him throughout till 1990 and then, again, there was *la trahison*.

The point was raised about the youth migrating. We have to look at the local context. You think the youth of this country are happy with the way the Opposition has behaved over the past months? The MSM was in government, and they decided to quit at a point when the hon. Prime Minister was not in the country. Six MSM Ministers resigned and, a few days after that, there was a joint press conference with the Leader of the Opposition. Had something been planned? With that ease, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, foes of yesterday or yesteryears become friends just like that, in a few days, sit down together and have a press conference! Again I say: was anything planned beforehand?

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we still recall the words that were uttered by the then Minister of Finance when the debates were on the budget in 2010, and again the political situation that has been created by the Opposition. Someone who had to resign from a very high position to come back into the arena! Well, we don't know with what purpose exactly, but this is what happened. On the international scene, they will ask: 'what is this? Someone resigning, and not being the leader of the Party will lead the alliance!' You think the youth of this country like these types of arrangements? These are the things, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that the youth do not like. What the youth want is to be inspired by their leaders, and this is shown by the present government. The confidence that they have in the present Prime Minister is unparalleled.

The point was raised that this government is turning this island into the Philippines of Africa instead of the Singapore of Africa. Are these people aware of the praise that has been made of the Prime Minister, of the Minister of Finance, of the government doing so well in such difficult circumstances? And we are a small country; we should not forget that, and our only resources are our people. Our only resources are the people of this country, and we have been able, through turbulent times, difficult times, to maintain the social benefits that we have

promised over the years. We have Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, been able to sustain free health care, free education, pension to the elderly and the handicapped, free transport. In how many countries have they been able to do that?

The point was raised as to why we should get foreign lawyers to come to Mauritius. Why foreign lawyers? We should not pretend that we know everything. We should be humble in our approach. We are all there to learn, and we have got very good lawyers, very good experts who are helping us. Why not get their assistance, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir?

The point was raised as to why we need foreign lawyers for electoral reform. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this House should be aware that, between 2000 and 2005, the MSM/MMM Government were in power. They had as programme the electoral reform. Didn't they call experts from abroad? With all due respect, Albie Sachs is well known, but he is not Mauritian, and the other expert that was brought was not Mauritian, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. We have to learn from them, from their expertise but, again, we should not stand up in this House and say that we do not need foreigners to come for the electoral reform. They themselves had recourse to foreign experts when they were in power.

A few points were raised by the hon. Third Member for Grand River North West and Port Louis West as regards whether the Government is marginalising the PMSD. In fact, we should congratulate, we should thank the present Minister of Finance for the support, the commitment and the competence with which he is conducting the affairs of this very important and delicate Ministry. There is a sharp contrast to the approach that he has adopted since his assumption of office and the former Minister of Finance who is now, fortunately, in the Opposition.

There are a few points were raised on the legal field which I feel that I should reply to and one is access to justice. Well, legal aid, the point was raised by the hon. Third Member for Curepipe and Midlands as well. The House voted the Legal Aid (Amendment) Act earlier this year and the piece of legislation got the support even of the Opposition when it was voted. We should not lose sight of the fundamentals, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. This Legal Aid (Amendment) Act was prepared after extensive consultations; taking from the Mackay Report, coming down to the Green Paper which was prepared by Professor Torul.

We had extensive consultations. The Bill was prepared and it was introduced in the National Assembly. For the first time, we have introduced legal assistance at police enquiry stage. It means that once a person is arrested for a serious offence and he meets the requirements

of the law, he can ask for legal assistance; that means that he can be assisted by a lawyer at that point. That means, since arrest he has the right to seek legal assistance. This is not a small step, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in access to justice. When we go in conferences abroad, the point is raised whether we have a system of legal aid at police enquiry stage. We did not have it. The first time that we introduced it is through the Legal Aid (Amendment) Act. The ceiling to qualify for legal aid has been increased. The income ceiling was Rs5,000 and it has been raised to Rs10,000. The value of property has been increased from Rs75,000 to Rs500,000. How many people are benefitting from this legal aid now!

We wanted to make the system fair and more accessible. We have even introduced in that law that it does not necessarily depend on a means test; a merits test as well can be used. We have simplified the way in which you apply for legal aid. We have now got prescribed forms. I would have appreciated if the hon. Third Member for Curepipe and Midlands and the hon. Third Member for Grand River North West and Port Louis West would have highlighted these items before coming to small administrative arrangements that should be made at the level of the Supreme Court. I have had the opportunity to speak to the hon. gentlemen on the other side of the House and I can assure them that when this law was discussed with the relevant stakeholders, this matter was fully canvassed and the relevant stakeholders are fully aware that they need to have more people to work in that department.

Another point was raised about the Bail and Remand Court. This House should be aware that since January, the Bail and Remand Court is open even during weekends and on public holidays. It means that the Bail and Remand Court is open seven days a week irrespective of whether there is a public holiday. This should have been recognised. For the first time, we have been able to introduce that system in Mauritius. Why have we done it? Because, we have been hearing for years since the time I was at the bar - the hon. gentleman on the other side of the House knows it fully well - that people used to be arrested on Fridays, kept in custody till Monday, because there was a big problem, administrative problem, and also, there was no court open; no bail motion could be made. There was a system in place, but it was not working. Through consultations and through, of course, the Bail Amendment Act which was voted by this House last year, this system has been put in place.

But, as regards the criticisms, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that a bail motion made before the Bail and Remand Court is heard in eight days at the earliest, I have been able to gather some

information which I intend to impart to the House. About 15 bail hearings are being fixed to be heard on a daily basis. On Fridays, priority is given to cases where detainees are in police cells in order to avoid further detention during the weekend and normally, bail hearings are fixed within a delay of four days where the detainee is in jail and two days when the detainee is in police cell. Furthermore, it is interesting to note that, as per information I have gathered, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, recently some Counsel have been taken up with the Parliamentary sessions and the elections, and the bail hearings have had to be fixed anew when Counsel is free. Well, I know that barristers on this side of the House are not backbenches who are able to practice. We have all been privileged to be part of Cabinet and I guess the other barristers being referred to, are on the other side of the House.

As regards the draft rules, which the hon. Third Member for Grand River North West and Port Louis West raised, he raised the same point, by coincidence or not, I don't know how. I have made it clear in this House last year, and I repeat what I said: the draft rules as regards costs and fees prepared by the Rules Committee have been circulated. I have made my point clear to the Judiciary that I am not agreeable to the propositions made therein and I have said that the point is that this will hinder access to justice. Let that go on record. The point has already been made. I said it last year, and I repeat it again in the House today. The Judiciary has been sympathetic to the point which was made and, as we all know, the fees have not been increased. There are consultations ongoing and everyone knows the commitment of the hon. Prime Minister of this Government towards access to justice, and we will not accept anything that will be done to hinder that access.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, again another point was raised by the hon. Third Member for Grand River North West and Port Louis West as regards the new courses which will be run as from next year by the University of Mauritius for prospective barristers, attorneys and notaries. But before coming to that point, it is unfortunate, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that I read in last Friday's edition of '*Le Mauricien*' – "*un faible taux d'inscription enregistrée*" as regards the course which would be run by the University of Mauritius. I spoke to them this morning, I said: there was that article in '*Le Mauricien*'; what is the position? Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, 86 students have already registered themselves to follow the course next year and I don't know where that information came from. I think that I will invite the journalist concerned, the newspaper concerned to verify the information before they publish such an article because they

can't mislead the population. What does that mean? That people are not interested! People are no longer interested to become Barristers, Attorneys and Notaries! They should check the information before publication. There were criticisms raised about the course.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, since I don't know how many years people have been expressing views about the way the courses were being run, we don't criticise the Council of Legal Education. They have done a wonderful job over the years and they came into existence at a very critical point of our history and they have been chaired by very competent people, but we decided, in our wisdom, that it was time to change, but since a number of years we are all aware that there has been a number of issues raised. Even the Opposition on a number of occasions has put questions on that. Even when I was a Government backbencher, I used to raise the point in the National Assembly. We wanted a course that is structured, that is run full-time, that is practice-based with a proper infrastructure; the mock court room, a proper library. This is what we wanted, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir and this is exactly what we have introduced in the law which we voted in the National Assembly, last year. The University of Mauritius, as per the law, is an authorised person and as from next year the courses will be run by the University of Mauritius.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, a few points were raised by the hon. third Member for Curepipe and Midlands which, I think, I am bound to reply to. He stated in his intervention that this is the first time since Independence that we are having elections at the same time as we are having debates on the Budget, but he should remember that his now ally, the MSM, they contested the law when the present Leader of the –I don't know how to call that - remake 2000 was at Le Réduit, he started talking to the stakeholders. They started contesting the law. They wanted to go to court. This was explained at length by the hon. Minister of Local Government. They delayed the elections! We should be clear. The population should know that the MSM delayed the Municipal Elections and no one else. The hon. Prime Minister replied, last year, that it was the intention of Government to hold the Municipal Elections at an early date.

And then there was the point raised that we wanted to skip the elections. We should be aware, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that in 2005, we won all the five municipalities.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this Government has been for around two and half years in office and in power and in the legal and judicial fields, a number of reforms have been undertaken. A number of issues and suggestions which have been put forward since a number of years have been accomplished by this present Government. We have been hearing about divorce by mutual

consent since a number of years. The issue was raised, canvassed, mooted and debated on a number of occasions and the Government, at the end of its mandate in 2009, the Law Reform Commission – in its last mandate, I meant - prepared a report on divorce by mutual consent. We even prepared a draft Bill which was circulated and we came to the House with a Bill after having listened and received representations from all the major stakeholders. And, today, divorce by mutual consent is a reality without undermining the institution of marriage which is very important. Why have we introduced this law? Because there was that practice that before the Family Division of the Supreme Court, parties would come together and accept their shared responsibility in the breakdown of marriage. We have only two grounds for divorce: *faute* or separation. Now, we have introduced divorce by mutual consent which is a big step forward, but this can only be done if financial arrangements have already been made between the parties.

The second point: *déclaration d'absence*. We have reduced the delay, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. We have been receiving complaints about fishermen; people going at sea and disappearing and we still had to abide to a very long period of time which we have now shortened.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we have come forward with a revolutionary piece of legislation: the Asset Recovery Act. People might not understand the ambit of this law. It means that the State can recover assets which have been obtained through fraudulent means. This gives the power to the Director of Public Prosecutions to institute proceedings against property illegally obtained; obtained by fraudulent means. This is the first time that we have been able to come forward with such a piece of legislation and we have even amended the law to perfect the system. This was done a few weeks back.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we have passed the Revision of Laws (Amendment) Act which puts the onus on Government to have our laws updated officially every year. On top of that, we took the commitment in this House last year that we were going to publish an official version of our subsidiary legislation. We all know that regulations that we have are scattered, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. We don't have an official version of the subsidiary legislation. We had one which was made a few years back, but was not an official version. Last year, we received a budgetary allocation for that and I am pleased to inform the House that a tender has already been launched and the process is ongoing which means that in the near future we will be having an official version of our subsidiary legislation.

In this Government, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we have been able to give free online access to the laws of Mauritius online. It means that you go on the website of the Attorney General's office, you click and you get all the laws of the land on that website, free of charge. The Law Practitioners (Amendment) Act was passed last year as I mentioned earlier on and it is the first time that we have introduced continuing professional development for the legal profession. It means that all Barristers, Attorneys and all Notaries will need to do 12 hours of CPD per year and a course is ran by the Institute for Judicial and Legal Studies. On top of that judicial training is now compulsory. It means to become a Judge, a Magistrate you need to follow a course being run by the institute for judicial and legal studies.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the provision was made last year for electronic bracelets to be made available so that this can be a condition for a person to be released on bail, that is, he wears the electronic bracelets. I am pleased to inform the House again that the procedure has already been started and the projection time is June of next year for the electronic bracelets to be made available.

*(Interruptions)*

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we have been able to achieve another big project this year as regards the liberalisation of the profession of Usher. Again, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, for years we have been talking about the liberalisation of the profession of Usher. And as per information I have gathered, we have now eight Ushers who are operating in private.

Last year in the Budget, the Minister of Finance stated that he will consolidate tribunals, that is, we have a number of tribunals in Mauritius and the project was to consolidate most of the tribunals on the three tribunals, that is, the Environment and the Land Use Appeal Tribunal; the Revenue and Valuation Appeal Tribunal, the Regulatory Authorities Appeal Tribunal. And as the House is aware, the Environment and Land Use Appeal Tribunal is now operational; as the law States, the appellation functions of the Town and Country Planning Board and also of the Environment Appeal Tribunal have been grouped under one umbrella, and it now functions on a full-time basis. It has got a Chairperson and a vice Chairperson. The Revenue and Valuation Appeal Tribunal Bill is in the process of being finalised and which will, of course, regroup the Assessment Review Committee, the Board of Assessment and Valuation Tribunal and the big chunk will come with the Regulatory Authorities Appeal Tribunal. Work is under way and will come forward with a draft Bill early next year.



Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in this present Budget, allocation has been made for the creation of the Court of Appeal, that is, the Supreme Court to be divided into the Court of Appeal section and the High Court section as per the recommendations of the Mackay report and why do we need to do that? Because there is a perception that Judges of the Supreme Court cannot themselves be Judges of Appeal. In our Constitution, it is clearly stated that the Judges of the Supreme Court shall, for the time, be Judges of Supreme Court. We had an obligation to bring forward this piece of legislation and, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we also have to review the composition of the Judicial and Legal Services Commission.

I am pleased to inform the House that the Constitution Amendment Bill and the Judicial and Legal Provisions Bill are almost finalised and will be introduced in the National Assembly as soon as Cabinet approval is obtained. I still recall when I spoke to the former Minister of Finance as regards this project and also the project for the Institute for Judicial in Legal Studies, he was not sympathetic to both ideas, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. He told me that it will cost a lot of money and we won't be able to do it. Same thing that happened with the splitting of the district councils, but fortunately we have had the support of the hon. Prime Minister, the hon. Minister of Finance and we are now finalising these two Bills to be able to introduce in the National Assembly.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in this present Budget a couple of provisions had been made as regards the judicial and legal sectors. For the first time we have stated in the Budget Speech that a Judicial and Legal Provisions Bill will be introduced to ensure that judgments will be delivered expeditiously.

This is a revolutionary step. I am pleased to inform the House that this matter has been discussed with the Judiciary and we have been able to find a *modus operandi*. 50 additional Judicial Assistants will be recruited to improve the quality and speed of delivery of justice. What happens for the time being, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir? The Judge or the Magistrate has to hear the case, to write down the notes, has to do the research and deliver judgment. But now with the 50 Judicial Assistants who are going to be recruited, they are the people who will be doing the research and they are the people who will help the Judges the Magistrates to prepare the judgment. It means that judgments will be delivered expeditiously.

We have stated in the Budget Speech that we will have a proper Family Court. The point was raised by Members of the Opposition and I am quite surprised that they didn't praise this

measure which Government is taking. What do we mean by proper Family Court? We do have a family division of the Supreme Court currently but what we are saying is that we need a Family Court with all the necessary facilities and amenities so that people when they go to the Family Court, they're not exactly confronted with the same Court formality and as a system now is, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, say there is a divorce case and one of the parties get a *droit d'hébergement ou droit de visite*. As the system is now, they go and fetch the child either at the Police station or in the yard of the Municipality. This is how it is now. Government is coming forward with this Family Court so that even with the *droit d'hébergement ou droit de visite* they can come and take the child in a proper infrastructure, in a proper forum not in the yard of the Municipality. Not at the Police station and even the system of counseling, the probation office, all these have to be under one umbrella. This is what we mean by a proper Family Court.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have got a few last points to make. The House will appreciate that the Certification of Character Act was passed this year, which undoubtedly facilitates the public at large and we all know that those convicted of minor offences, those who have benefited from an absolute discharge, a conditional discharge will after a number of years get a clean certificate of character and again as regards employees, they will no longer be required as a general rule to produce a certificate of character every year.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, a very big achievement of this Government this year is the Criminal Court (Amendment) Act where we have been able, as a Government that is not afraid of taking decisions, a Government that means business to come forward with a piece of legislation which allows for termination of pregnancy in specified cases. No Government, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, had the courage before that, to come forward with this type of legislation which allows for termination of pregnancy when the continuation of pregnancy will endanger the pregnant person's life, where it will cause great physical or mental incapacity where there is a substantial risk that the child will be seriously handicapped when born and that will affect its compatibility with life and also in case of rape, incest and sexual intercourse under 16.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I will congratulate my officers for this big and arduous task that they have been doing over the last years to be able to bring forward these changes in our system. Another big project that will come next year is the Police and Criminal Evidence Bill. We have had the opportunity of circulating the Bill and even the Members of the Opposition have participated. I am thankful to them for that. They have participated in the consultation process

and this, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, will change radically the way in which Police investigations are carried out and the way evidence is presented before court. This present Budget also makes provision, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, for legal process outsourcing and the House should be aware that this project has been approved by Cabinet. We are working currently on a piece of legislation that will promote and facilitate legal process outsourcing.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, a very important limb of the Attorney General's office is the Law Reform Commission. They have, over years, been doing a wonderful job. I congratulate and thank them for that. It is worth noting that four recommendations of the Law Reform Commission have been implemented.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, one last point that I'll make before resuming my seat is the Affidavit of Prescription Act which has been amended whereby we have suspended the whole process of prescription of land.

As you are aware, there is a Commission of Inquiry that is going on and the Government thought, in its wisdom, that we should, pending the outcome of the Commission of Inquiry, suspend the procedure of land prescription. We are all aware of the hardship that has been caused to a number of people over the years and this is why we came forward with this piece of legislation.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have already addressed a number of issues and again, I wish to congratulate the Vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Finance for his Budget and again all colleagues and stakeholders for their support in the reforms in the legal and judicial fields.

I thank you for your attention.

(5.43 p.m.)

**The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping (Mr A. Bachoo):** Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I heard the interventions of a few Members of the Opposition, the latest one being hon. Steve Obeegadoo. He was deploring the absence of the Minister of Finance on this side of the house, but I would also deplore the absence of Members of the Opposition including, in fact, the Leader of the Opposition.

There have been interesting debates and I get the impression that they have not gone through the Budget. Had they gone through that, I sincerely believe there would have been

constructive criticisms. The words ‘parliamentary democracy’ provide for an Opposition. The role of the Opposition definitely is to criticise and criticism needs to be constructive. It should not be a wilful and deliberate attempt to find fault where fault does not exist. So far, we have hardly heard any constructive criticism coming; any suggestion coming. They had been blackening and tarnishing everything. I am sorry to say so because I cannot understand and patiently I was listening to you. Nothing is good, my dear friend. You just spoke about housing-flop; you spoke about education and I was under the impression that you are going to praise Government for the attempt of offering *repas chauds* to our unprivileged children, but unfortunately, that was not the case. You raised up about hundreds of multiples petty problems, but you failed to understand that those who are members of the PTA are responsible parents. When Government had taken the decision to entrust to them the responsibility, it means they are caring parents who know how to look after their children. Even here also you failed. You spoke about health – who does not know in the whole country the interest that the Prime Minister personally takes, not only that, rarely can you find a Prime Minister in the world who attends conferences and meetings, discussions on health matters. All of us know the efforts which had been made in order to deal with non communicable diseases. You made reference to health, housing and education. Unfortunately there was nothing constructive which came.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, they are complaining that it is the wrong moment to present a Budget but were you not yourself crying from the housetop since so many months that elections need to be held and when elections are in front of you, then you are shrinking from your responsibility and creating all types of excuses. So I consider that to be a bit undemocratic on your side just to complain that you are not able to meet; you’re not able to participate in the debates and, at the same time, participate in the electoral campaign. I find it very, very strange Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. There is a limit to criticise, but what are we having today? What do we see today? I don’t want to pass comments on one, on the other side of the House, who wants to claim my place. That reminds me of the porter’s scene in one of Shakespeare’s dramas that provide some comic relief. This is the impression which I get when I heard the other Member whom I don’t even want to mention.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I sincerely say they are underachievers, mischief makers, gossipmongers, I am very sorry to say that, the harbingers of misfortune *prophètes de malheur* - I get the impression that they feel bad when others feel good, spending their time complaining at

things. They can even put off the light to see how dark it is. Don't try to darken, try to look, at least, at the positive side of life. Life has to be positive and active; it can't be negative and passive, the impression that you give. Whatever you are talking outside, you fail to understand that the Opposition is supposed to be the alternative Government and what impression, what example you are giving to others – demagogues. That reminds me of a breed of vultures and opportunists. They want to make a quick buck and they want to disappear, but this is very, very cheap. This is indecent Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. Close-minded and self-centred politicians, we do have many and we have seen many in the past. I am in politics for the last thirty-five years and I have seen many always making excuses and justifying them, never accepting any responsibility. Have you ever heard; have you ever come across one Opposition Member who accepts responsibility. They always have fatalist attitude and jealousy is the price which they are paying to us today.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I just want to show an article which appeared in the paper, I wanted to comment on that. I am going to lay a copy. Just imagine. Nothing so far I am not aware of anything regarding the *péage*, regarding the PPP project. Everybody knows that Government is investing massively in billions in order to deal with the problem of decongestion and the PPP is still at the PPE level for evaluation. Neither the Road Authority nor the Ministry is aware of anything but the impression that one paper has given, that reminds me of the old paper – Le Cernéen, the same mentality. It is as if it is an incarnation of Le Cernéen newspaper. When Sir Seewoosagar Ramgoolam was busy constructing the highway, the motorway, the same type of criticism was levelled against him. It's the same criticism that we find today. It is a shame particularly for a newspaper to be so irresponsible, so immoral, so unethical. These are all unpatriotic people. They don't even know what they are doing. This also appears to be the mentality of Opposition. It's a shameful act. They should know what they are doing. Every action you take; anything that you do against the interest of your country, you must realise one day people will spit on you. All these should have been written; tomorrow or the day after when the posterity is going to look at these things, they will see what type of cheap people we had in our country. The same way as we spit on Le Cernéen of those days when they were hitting at Sir Seewoosagar Ramgoolam for each and every thing, similarly one day people will spit on these types of newspapers. I just heard my hon. friend Varma also complaining about an article which appeared in the press and you know Opposition like to thrive on such matters. Unfortunately,

these things we just don't care, but, en passant, I just wanted to speak on that because freedom does not mean the licence to do whatever you want. I can assure the House we can take a solemn pledge, the Prime Minister is bent on tackling the issue of congestion. This PPP project is on; nobody is going to touch it. That is the guarantee I can give and by next year once it starts, I hope that it will give a sign of relief to all the people of our country.

Mr Speaker, Sir, as I have just told you, they are the spreader of negative messages, creating an atmosphere which is not conducive to growth. I always say - even last time I remembered I said so - attitude has to be positive. If attitude is negative success is limited, life is restricted. We have to think of the best, work for the best and try to attain the best. This is our responsibility. We are paid from the coffers; we are paid from the taxpayers' money. If tomorrow I want to be in the Opposition, every word which I will utter must be something responsible. You want to discourage the tourists, you want to discourage people who come to our country, because you want to strive on the misfortune of others, you feel good when others feel bad and that is our misery, that is the problem of our Opposition. We cannot survive, Mr Speaker, Sir, on lies and false promises. We cannot survive on emotions and sentiments; we cannot survive on conflicts and confusion. That is what we have to remember. On this side of the House, we have a Prime Minister who is tough, but who is tender. He is courageous, but he is compassionate. He is firm, but he is friendly and he has chosen innovation upon stagnation and that is the cause of our success. Failures are there. At times we retrace our steps, but we do not believe in failures, we believe in results. We do not believe in tragedies, we believe in lessons. We do not believe in problems, we believe in possibilities and that is the reason why we are going ahead. We are not like the Opposition. Unfortunately, I am bound to speak all these things, because we, as politicians, have to be useful, responsible and compassionate. I have just mentioned that we have to transcend these petty things and we have to develop superb values, courage of convictions and we must have self-respect, at least, Mr Speaker, Sir. We should not only try to look good, we have to be good and whatever we say we should mean it, we should think of our achievements. If Opposition wanted to address us, they should have spoken of their achievements, of their contributions, of their success. They claim that they know everything, but once in power, they forget whatever they know; that is the misery for them.

I can conclude on this issue. They know nothing, they try to suspect everything. Mr Speaker, Sir, the cause of success on our side is leadership and that is important. What is a party

without a leader? It is just like a field without water supply. It is just like electric wire without power supply. It is just like a school without a teacher. It is just like a temple without a deity. So, leaderless where will you go? That is the biggest problem if there is no strong leadership. We are successful; at least, we have got a leader, and being a leader does not mean being liked, it is about doing what is right. A good leader is one who serves the nation. A bad leader is one who makes the nation serve him. This is the only difference. We have a leader and that is the cause for our success, he is determined, he is courageous, he is bold, he is brave and he knows how to take his decision. We have got a legacy based leadership and that is the most powerful type of legacy. That creates a successful present and that builds up a brilliant future. That is the cause of success on our side. A visionary leader is one who knows how to focus on the summit while clearing the past. That reminds me of a very interesting anecdote in the Mahabharata. Many of my friends know the story. There were 105 students, a teacher had 105 students and all of them were called for a practical test. They had to look at the water down and they had to fix their arrow up. On the ceiling, there was a golden fish and they had to hit at the eye. So, when the teacher called them and asked them: 'what are you seeing?' They said: 'Sir, I can see a beautiful golden fish'. So, the teacher said: 'out, you have failed'. Second one came, third one, fourth, fifth, sixth, every one describing different things. The last one who came was Arjuna. The teacher asked him: 'what do you see?' He answered: 'Sir, I can see the eye of the fish'. The teacher replied: 'My son, you are successful'. You should know your goal. If we are successful, it is because we know what we have to do. This is very, very important, Mr Speaker, Sir. We have a leader who never allows his lips to betray his heart and he always let his principles guide his action. We have got a principled leader and a man without principles is just like a tree without roots. Without roots, the tree falls. Similarly, without principles, a man falls. Let us not squander our time, Mr Speaker, Sir, on frivolous matters. We are doing good and we will try to live behind a virtue that the storm of time can never destroy, that I am sure and I am certain what we are doing.

I have to congratulate the Vice-Prime Minister and the Minister of Finance, because he has presented a Budget which is impregnated with democratic ideas. It admits the stark realities of economy and, at the same time, it answers to the social and economic needs of the country. I join the Members of this side of the House to congratulate him and to congratulate the Prime Minister. This is not a populist Budget and a Budget which had been presented on the eve of a

municipal election. Despite it, it is a practical and a pragmatic Budget. Everybody knows the economic calamity which the world is facing today. It is turning giant economies topsy-turvy. But what do we see here? We have got a small, tiny country, improving its rank on a range of benchmarks and heading for a comfortable and economic growth. Other countries are practising cuts in the pay packets of salary earners. We are giving significant salary increase to civil servants and other workers. When seasoned Ministers of Finance elsewhere are failing and they are losing their sleep on the economic puzzle, our colleague, the Minister of Finance is earning laurels for steering the country to a safe anchor amidst waves and tides of economic unrest. He is doing his job with tact and ability and he has come up with interesting economic measures to consolidate the economic fundamentals of our country.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, 'Like father like son', goes the adage, while Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam gifted our nation with free education, his son and our present Prime Minister provided free transport to the students. The service to the nation does not stop here. 'There is no free lunch', goes the saying, but this is not true in our case. Free lunch for the needy, for the helpless, for the unprivileged, the destitute is being provided. Nowhere else we have seen such a gesture and particularly in these days of economic crisis. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, not only this, the country has been transformed into a computer land and our Prime Minister will be remembered as a harbinger of the information age. He is bringing ICT facilities at the doorstep of each and every family. He needs to be congratulated for that. Words like internet, facebook, website and chat have become a new use culture; it has become the buzz world of every household. Who could have ever dreamt that over 20,000 students of Mauritius will be blessed with PC tablet with latest state-of-art technology.

Mr Speaker, Sir, over the past few years, we have achieved economic success, because we have taken wise economic decisions. We have invested and we are still investing massively on our human resources, our human capital, our youth with a competitive and high level of education and on the development of our physical infrastructure. Mr Speaker, Sir, in terms of public infrastructure, we have spared no efforts.

As a matter of fact, capital investment in that sector has been to the tune of Rs8.7 billion for buildings and Rs13.5 billion in roads. We are fully conscious that investment in public infrastructure is one of the means to stimulate the economy and to create the necessary growth. Today, we can pride ourselves to have been able to enhance the overall physical public



infrastructure and thus contribute in the development of our country. We have implemented numerous projects, but I will not list all of them, I am going to enumerate a few infrastructural projects which have been implemented in different sectors. Since taking office in 2005, Government, under the leadership of the Prime Minister has been investing massively in infrastructural projects for the benefits of everybody. In education alone, Government has invested Rs5 billion in capital projects and in maintenance works. We are continuing to invest and my Ministry has provided through the MPI technical assistance for architectural design and preparation of bids.

It has also looked after supervision and completion of 700 projects for the Ministry of Education and Human Resources. These projects include upgrading of schools, maintenance, renovation works, minor repairs, fencing, waterproofing, upgrading, construction of toilet blocks, tarring of school yards, construction of drains, boundary walls, extension works, additional classrooms, gymnasiums and new schools.

I can mention a few major projects. Recently, the Moosun Government School was inaugurated at Goodlands. There are extension works at Piton SSS, which is costing us Rs55.1 m.; extension works at Royal College, Port Louis, to the tune of Rs42 m. There are other ongoing works at Hollyhood SSS, phase IV; Colline Monneron, phase IV; Quatre Bornes SSS, MGSS Moka, Flacq, Nouvelle France, and a new gymnasium at John Kennedy. I can go on and on. These are projects which are nearing completion. At the primary level also, a large number of construction works are ongoing. In a nutshell, from 2005 to date, there have been a total of 105 capital projects, each costing above Rs5 m., having been completed in the educational sector. More than 50 big capital projects are ongoing in that sector. All of us know that the educational sector has received the lion's share because Government believes that the development of a country rests on an educated population. Education remains the bedrock of our achievement. By improving school infrastructure, by providing amenities, we want to provide access to education to all our children, and we want to create a proper environment for them.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in the health sector, government has injected Rs2.5 billion for the implementation of over 300 health related projects. That concerns hospitals, area health centres and community health centres. I can give a few examples. We remember a few years back, the Montagne Longue Hospital was closed. This Government has opened up that hospital, and we have injected millions of rupees. In the weeks to come, most probably, the hospital will be

inaugurated. Concerning the Flacq Hospital, government has spent above Rs200 m. for the construction of a new block and, at the same time, other related projects. Probably, next year, we are going to start another block costing Rs250 m.

Concerning the upgrading of Dr. Jeetoo Hospital, government has spent Rs1.5 billion. All of us know that, for the past 20 to 25 years, many times this issue was raised, but nobody had the courage to do it. We have to thank the hon. Prime Minister for, at least, having taken the decision to have a new hospital in Port Louis. At the SSR hospital, we have spent Rs73 m. for the Accident and Emergency Department. Other hospitals, area health centres and community health centres have also witnessed major extensions and expansions. Renovation works have also been carried out. We are trying to modernise all the infrastructure of our hospitals. There is a mediclinic at Plaine Verte which has cost us above Rs50 m. A new mediclinic is under construction at Triolet, which is costing us above Rs53 m., and one at Goodlands. There are other places where such types of works will be conducted.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, at Candos, we are aware that the Cardiac Centre has recently been opened. In addition to this, works have already started for another hospital, which is costing government Rs400 m. I can go on and on, but I do not intend to take the time of the House by listing all the projects. We are confident that we are going to attain our planned objectives.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, before I close this chapter on building projects, I would like to mention some important capital projects other than schools and hospitals. We have got Police stations at Black River, Bel Ombre and Bambous which have already been renovated. New Police stations have already been put in their places. We have got the Flacq market fair, the Lallmatie market fair, a new fisheries post at Trou aux Biches and Bambous virieux. All these are places where work had been conducted. The fish auction market at Les Salines, which has cost government Rs24 m. is ready. A new prison at Melrose is another big infrastructural work which has already started and is nearing completion, costing the country Rs1.5 billion. There is a new Police station at Blue Bay where work is ongoing to the tune of Rs16 m. A new fire station at Tamarin is costing Rs44 m., and works can be completed within a few months.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this is, at least, an indication of the amount of work which is being done in the infrastructural sector. The Building Control Act was passed this year itself and, with the passing of this Act, we are empowering the Local Authorities to ensure that buildings are designed, constructed and maintained in such a way, so as to guarantee people's and

society's wellbeing, protection of environment and the aesthetic value. This is an important landmark in the development of the construction industry. We have made this Act more responsive to new changing technologies and challenges. It is also responsive to the new requirements for the development of high rise buildings, residential projects, hotel resorts, commercial lettings and shopping malls.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the vision of the Prime Minister is to make Mauritius a sustainable island. That is why my Ministry has come up with a series of measures to reduce energy consumption, and enable the putting up of sustainable buildings. These measures include proper orientation of buildings for optimum light and natural ventilation, green roof, rain water harvesting, efficient air conditioning system, and use of new building materials. The Ministry is also already applying the concept of sustainability to some of our infrastructural projects. The requirements of eco-design of buildings have been included in the building documents for the following projects –

- (i) retrofitting of Emmanuel Anquetil building;
- (ii) construction of gymnasiums in six SSS - that will be done next year - and
- (iii) construction of new Sewraz Government School at Triolet;

This concept is being extended to other public buildings. We are expecting that, in the near future, every building will be designed to satisfy the sustainability requirements. We are exploring ways and means to achieve this objective. One of them is to have qualified professionals in the field of design of sustainable building. Twelve officers of my Ministry have also been trained, with the assistance of the French Government, in the design of such buildings. Further training will be dispensed with the assistance of AFD, that is, *l'Agence Française de développement*.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it will take time for people to adapt to those changes, and to change their behaviours. But, as a responsible government, we have to set good examples, for we know that sustainable buildings bring a number of benefits such as reduction of non-renewable energy consumption, reduction in the level of greenhouse gas emissions, reduction in expenditure of energy consumption, and good level of comfort in buildings. Therefore, we have to promote the concept of *Maurice Ile Durable* among our citizens.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, climate change and natural upheavals are real threats. Landslides have become cause of concern for all of us. A number of landslide problems have been

identified. We are trying to identify these problems, with the assistance of Japan International Cooperation Agency, that is, JICA. We have retained three sites, namely at Chitrakoot, Vallée des Prêtres and Quatre Soeurs for the project of landslide on a pilot basis. These sites have been equipped with monitoring devices, and they are under constant supervision and monitoring of JICA expert team.

It was not easy to get the collaboration of everybody in that. For instance, at Chitrakoot, several structural cracks were identified in the primary school. Parents refused to have their children transferred to another school. Fortunately, we managed to have the primary school rehabilitated. In Quatre Soeurs as well, the households concerned are reluctant even now to leave their houses, but we are trying to monitor the situation.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it is the first time in Mauritius that, through the CIDB, we are trying to produce a National schedule of Rates. The Construction Industry Development Board is publishing a National schedule of Rates, that is, the benchmarking tool for construction rates. The document will be updated yearly, and it will be issued to all contractors. The CIDB is also trying to finalise regulations for registration of consultants and contractors. We held many workshops this year, and 200 contractors are attending such training exercises.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, out of Rs28.6 billion earmarked for capital projects for the forthcoming year, a substantial percentage of this amount would go to infrastructural projects, and that will give a boost to the construction sector.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, procurement legislation will also be reviewed to create a level playing field for contractors both local and international. In this respect, government would grant 15% margin of preference to construction companies, employing at least 80% local manpower when competing for public works. These measures will relieve local contractors who have long been complaining of undue advantages their foreign counterparts were enjoying in our country. That could also encourage our local contractors to have recourse to local labour force, thus creating more employment for our citizens and, at the same time, trying to help us to fight the problem of unemployment. Before 2005, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the spending priorities of Government did not include the road network.

If today we have a problem of congestion, it is entirely because of this. I was Minister from 2000 to 2005 and I remember the amount of money which was put in that sector. In the Budget 2005-2006 of the previous Government, only a sum of Rs274 m. was allocated to deal with the

issue of traffic congestion for the enlargement, maintenance and creation of new roads. But in this year's Budget alone, we have Rs4.3 billion. So, from 2006 onwards budget for road work has been increasing by leaps and bounds. This unprecedented budgetary provision demonstrates that our Prime Minister believes in continuous growth, prosperity, higher standards of living, better public services and a more and just society.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, yesterday I got a tract which they are circulating in Quatre Bornes and one of the main accusations that they are levelling against Government is that Government has done nothing in order to deal with the problem of congestion. There is too much of congestion on our roads and they are accusing the Government and they are inviting the people of that region to vote against Government. Nothing can be worse than this untruth! It is worse than anything! If there is any Government which had the courage and had dared to inject money in order to help our people to move in a much better way, it is this Government.

The list which has been completed is so long and whatever work we have done, it is not a question of savage development; we are accused of not properly planning our development. This is the accusation which was being levelled against us repeatedly. I am going to list only a few and I will let the public judge the amount of work that we have done and the way we have done and whether the work has been properly done or not.

I will give you one example, the upgrading of Quartier Militaire Road from Wootun to Belle Rive. Everybody knows when that road was in its original state, the number of accidents that used to occur and the congestion that used to take place. Our Government spent Rs140 m. and I am proud to say: "Thank you, hon. Prime Minister; at least you deserve all our praise for the initiative that you had taken". The upgrading of Camp Thorel road - everybody knows that was a landlocked village. If you go in, it is difficult to come out if there is any problem on the way. We have been able to create a new road that cost the Government Rs42 m. The hon. Prime Minister has the habit of telling that congestion is not only the concern of a handful living in one particular region. Wherever there is congestion, it has to be fought. The people of Camp Thorel thank the Government and they keep on praising us for the good work which has been done.

For Mare D'Albert, Gros Bois Road, my friend, hon. Dr. Bunwaree, knows the problem which people were facing. Government spent Rs60 m. Nobody can say that we had not properly planned. You do not need planners and economists and experts. If you start planning and thinking of X, Y and Z, you will land up just like the Leader of the Opposition. Forty years of

planning and see where he is today! Forty years in politics, only two years in power and that too, misused power! We are not doing that, we mean business and we know how to work.

Goodlands bypass, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir - Rs294.7 m. People who live in Goodlands know what is the importance of that road and if somebody will come and put on paper that all these things were not planned, all these things were savagely acted upon. This is nonsensical! People living in Goodlands know the relief that they get particularly in the morning and in the evening. The Triolet bypass, concerning all the vehicles that flow towards the North, particularly towards Grand' Baie and Trou aux Biches, we know the difficulties people were encountering and today people are free to travel. The percentage of road accidents has also gone down drastically.

Réduit Triangle - just imagine for a single second, all those who have the habit of writing left, right and centre, if we had not constructed the Réduit Triangle Access Road, what would have been the situation in this country today? That cost the Government Rs354 m. They cannot say that we had not properly planned. We are bound to do the work. Any type of planning they would have done would have landed this country into deep problem.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as for the widening of the motorway from Phoenix up till Port Louis, at least, 75% to 80% of the work is over and I know the praise that our Government gets whenever people travel in the morning and evening. There have been many motorways that we have rehabilitated and that has cost a fortune to the Government.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, for Scheonfield at Rivière du Rempart, when the people living there had to move towards the North they had to go through the built-up area and it used to take them about twenty to twenty-five minutes to cross it. Today it takes two and a half minutes. When the second part of the Scheonfield bypass will be constructed, it will take people hardly five minutes from one end of Rivière du Rempart to move towards l'Espérance Trébuchet and Cottage. That is another great work which is being accomplished.

The Phoenix-Beaux Songes Road - just imagine if this work had not been done! That is why at times I wonder what do people write in the papers whenever they write! Those who are sitting on the other side of the House, if they are true to themselves, they are paid from public funds, they have to realise a little bit - the cheap criticism, insulting Government here and there – whatever good has been done. Truth wherever found should be accepted. Truth cannot be two; truth is only one, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

Phoenix-Beaux Songes, - just imagine the relief that our people get! It is not only that, there is one road which is the Hollyrood connection on which Government is spending now. Work is on and we are spending about Rs75 m. to Rs80 m. That was the dream of all those people who are living in Constituencies No. 15 and No. 16. We did not want big experts to come and explore the possibility of how to do the work. We have already started it and I am sure and certain that by March and April the work will be completed. It starts at Pierrefonds and ends at Glen Park. This means that this will provide plenty of relief to people using the Candos Road.

The Grade Separated Junction at Caudan, what did not they say here in this House? There were questions on that and all types of allegations! All types of criticisms were levelled against it! But if they are true to themselves they know the relief that this Grade Separated Junction is providing us today. We are having the third lane. These are two different projects. They cannot be the same. I am not a professional engineer, but I know that we had the Grade Separated Junction which was a turnkey project and it cost a lot of money. We wanted another project which is different. There was more competition, but we got it at a very good and competitive price. We have already started the construction of a third lane.

Then we have got, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the second carriage way which starts at Pamplemousses up till Grand' Baie. That cost us over Rs500 m. This means that the dream of starting from Plaisance Airport up till Grand' Baie has come true. Can anybody show us a finger by telling us that we are not doing anything to deal with the problem of congestion?

I have already spoken about widening; there was a bridge at Pailles which was a big cause of concern for people. We have spent Rs52.2 m. and the bridge is now operational and work is over. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I can go on and on. What about those ongoing projects like Terre Rouge-Verdun? I am aware that we had a problem for the Terre Rouge-Verdun link road because there was a *litige* with the contractor, but I can assure the House that my technicians are following that issue. We are spending above Rs2.2 billion and the work is supposed to end most probably towards the first quarter of next year. From Terre Rouge-Verdun we have got the Verdun-Trianon project and we had a slight problem with it because there has been a challenge in court. But I do hope that in the weeks to come the problem will be solved.

The Port Louis Ring Road Phase I - I heard one comedian on the other side standing and talking nonsense about the Ring Road Phase I as if we have invested uselessly. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, if we have to do a job, we have to start somewhere. We have completed the first

phase and after that we have to move towards the second phase of the Ring Road where a tunnel will be constructed. After the second phase it will lead us to the third phase. We have to go slowly, but we are going surely. Nonsensical statements! Standing in the House and telling that we are spending money uselessly and we have no programme of work! This is the project that dates back to almost ten to fifteen years. They cannot say that we have just started the work. I am happy that the Ring Road Phase I is nearing completion and once the PPP is awarded, the second phase will start.

We have also got the Quartier Militaire Road which will start from Providence, which is the last leg, up till Flacq which is going to cost us above Rs900 m. In fact, most probably the work is going to start next year.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, those people who live in that extremity, that is, the Eastern side of the country, know in the morning as from 0730 up till 0900, the difficulties and hardships that our children face whenever they have to go to school. At times, they get stuck for 45 to 50 minutes and that is the reason why the hon. Prime Minister decided that there must be a bypass from St Pierre to Ebène Triangle. In fact, the work has started and most probably before the end of this year, we are going to inaugurate St Pierre bypass, which is costing Government Rs250 m.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we have the Higginson road. Who do not know the number of people who lost their lives in that road? The Higginson road is the link between Providence to St Julien D'Hotman. I am happy to announce to the House that we are going to inaugurate or open up the road by the end of this year. Regarding the widening of Colville Deverell Bridge, work has already started and we have already completed 50% of the work.

In the South, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, Nouvelle France to Souillac is actually under study. We have already appointed consultants to work. There must be a motorway in the South, starting from Nouvelle France that will end up in Souillac. The consultant is working and I do hope that the report will be available as early as possible. At the same time, in the South, from Nouvelle France up till Beau Climat, we are enlarging the road. Anybody who goes to the South, particularly my friends who represent the southern part of the country, they know the importance of that road. We are spending Rs85 m. and the work will be completed within four to five months. We have also rehabilitated three bridges in the South; one was 138 years old and nothing was done. Luckily, at the right moment, we have put our hands in that, and I do hope that in the months to come that work will be completed.



Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, apart from that, we have got a list of major projects in the pipeline. For example, the East-West Connector; the study has already been conducted and there will be bypass that will link Moka to Flic en Flac. Upgrading of Riche Terre road is already on and we are spending Rs75 m. East Coast Trunk road, that is, from Forbach to Bel Air, the study is completed, and now land acquisition has already started and we are looking for funds. Once the funds are made available, the work will start. That will be about 30 kilometres and it will be a road that links the extreme East to the extreme North. At the same time, regarding upgrading the coastal road from Ferney to Bel Air, the study is completed.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, all of us know the difficulties that the inhabitants of Quatre Bornes are facing during peak hours. At Avenue des Tulips, which is a long-awaited project, luckily the project has already started and that is costing us about Rs80 m. Once it is completed, we are going to connect it with Hillcrest and that will join the motorway. In Riche Terre, I have just mentioned that we are spending Rs85 m. Schoenfeld, Phase II, we have already started. And then we have got a list of bridges which we are constructing.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have just mentioned about the PPP in the beginning. We are waiting for the award of the contract and the report of the CPB. Once the report is available, then we will go ahead with the project. Of course, once Government approves it, we will go ahead. By the end of this year, we have already resurfaced 66 kilometres of roads, that is, the classified roads and many kilometres of drains have already been completed. This plan, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, will be maintained in the years to come. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we have to preserve the asset of our road network by maintaining its level of service in terms of riding quality, comfort and safety according to standards through regular interventions of a routine or periodic nature such as cleaning, upgrading of drains culverts and bridges, patching of potholes, resurfacing works, repair and extension of footpaths, road marking and cleaning, replacing and upgrading road infrastructure and addressing the water accumulation problems.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that is about the RDA. I have spoken about the main projects. I have not taken each and every project because I know there is not a single Constituency of this country, a single District, which has been left untouched by the RDA. But I do hope that next year, we are going to redouble our efforts.

As far as the National Development Unit (NDU) is concerned, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, there is no need to highlight the achievements of NDU in the field of infrastructure. They are

visible. They are tangible. They are beyond our expectations, what we have done. We are creating assets for the new generations and, at the same time, we are upgrading our existing roads, drains, sports facilities, cremation grounds, market fairs, bus shelters, children playgrounds, street lighting and handrails.

Our approach, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, is a human-centred approach because we are bringing development to the doorsteps of our citizens. The development brought by NDU is in line with the *Maurice Ile Durable* philosophy. We are creating sports facilities for young and old, shifting from wood fuel to LPG for new crematorium, improving drain systems to save life, creating new access roads, upgrading existing ones to name only a few.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, when we talk about Land Drainage Programme, climate change, all of us know, is the reality today. This is leading to serious floods in several countries, the latest being even modern America. Our small island has not been spared by such calamities. The flash flood of 2008, which resulted in the loss of lives and the torrential rainfall of January 2011 are vivid examples of such natural catastrophes.

This Government came up with the Emergency Rehabilitation Programme and we took prompt decisions to address the problem of flood. The report of GIBB on Land Drainage mentioned a list of 326 flood prone areas, which would have cost R1.5 billion. In 2003/2004, when hon. Bérenger was the Minister of Finance, Rs42 m. were spent. In 2004/2005, Rs100 m. were spent, but from 2006 to this date, we have spent more than Rs1.5 billion. Incomparable! Unparallel! Justice Domah ...

*(Interruptions)*

I have already spoken on that; I don't want to come back. If I come back, that will take me another one hour. I do not want to spend the time of the House. We have started, but, unfortunately...

*(Interruptions)*

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, Justice Domah in his report on the Fact Finding Committee on ex-Lola Flooding had even praised the NDU for the exemplary work done as far as drain construction is concerned. Mention was made in the report on Batimarais, Souillac, 16<sup>ème</sup> Mille and Mahebourg. Many bridges have been constructed under the Land Drainage Programme. Never, never, never in the history of Mauritius, in a lapse of few years, so many drains works were undertaken and so many bridges were constructed. For example -

- Six bridges at Mon Gout + re-profiling of the river - Rs100 m.;
- Pointe aux Sables - Rs19.9 m.;
- Boulanger Street, Bel Air,
- Perrier Bridge, Vacoas;
- Terre Rouge;
- 6 bridges in Malinga, one after the other, construction works has started;
- Jouvence, D'Epinay - Rs14.5 m.;
- Allée Mangues, Poste de Flacq - Rs38 m.,
- Sarcelle Bridge in Constituency No. 10 - Rs15 m.;
- St Anne, Flacq Rs 16 m.,
- Belle Rose - Rs11 m.,
- Argy Bridge;
- Tosca, Crève Coeur,
- Blackburn Congomah - Rs20 m, and
- Ferney - Rs62.5 m.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I can go on and on. In each Constituency, whenever our friends - whoever they were - made appeal to us, we have acted promptly whether in the rural or in the urban areas. This is what we call a caring Government. If this is not a caring Government, then how do you define a caring Government?

*(Interruptions)*

I have already spoken on that.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, under the normal NDU Programme, 8 bridges are currently being undertaken - 6 at La Laura, one at Ilot, Camp Diable and one at Parampuh Bridge Congomah which is costing us – the Member is here – about Rs25 m. The work has started.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this year only, some 157 drain and bridge projects costing Rs398 m. have already been awarded and works are in progress. I have spoken on the bridges and now we have got the major drains works, for example –

1. Sofia Road to River, La Cure
2. Gokhoola - Phase I;
3. Cité La Cure;

4. Bois d'Oiseau, Poudre d'Or;
5. Panchavati;
6. Carreau Esnouf, Trois Boutiques (Phase I and Phase II);
7. L'Escalier;
8. Madame Lolo;
9. Rivière Sarcelle;
10. Quartier Militaire above Rs38 m. in all. I can go on and on;
11. Camp Fouquereaux - Rs14.2 m, and
12. Bel Ombre - Rs10 m.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, then we have got Military Road, Cité Martial: Rs26.9 m.; Gorah Issac: Rs11.9 m.; Morcellement Lamadie, Cité La Cure: Rs24.5 m., Goodlands: Rs15 m. There are many, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I don't want to go on and on. That gives an indication. I have already spoken about L'Amitié; the second phase has to be completed. Definitely, we can prepare not a booklet, but rather a book on the achievements under Dr. Navin Ramgoolam and what work had been conducted.

*(Interruptions)*

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have spoken on the drains, on bridges. Now let me say a few words on the road networks, that is, the non-classified roads. That is why, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it is very easy to philosophise, to come up with prepared speeches and try to hit at the Government. But one has to be practical in life. They should try to step into our shoes and see the amount of work which this Government has done. It is not easy and particularly when we have got so many problems. We have to pass through so many challenges, but despite it we have been able to do these works.

We are responsible also for construction, upgrading and repair of non-classified roads. Better roads Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, make traffic movement more fluid, minimise travelling distances, reduce fuel consumption and enhance road safety. During the period January to October this year - only for this year - 568 road projects to the tune of Rs582.9 m. have already been awarded. I am proud to announce that as from 2013, all road projects will have an embellishment component to make Mauritius a better place to live. Road sides will be planted with decorative plants.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, apart from roads, bridges and drains, then let me move on amenities also, because we have to put the welfare of our people at the centre of development by improving the lifestyle of our population. We are implementing amenities projects also; they concern community base programmes. Currently, 14 football grounds are being upgraded for a contract of Rs22.7 m.

*(Interruptions)*

Of course I will come on light! With the assistance of Local Authorities, lighting of sports infrastructure is being undertaken at the following places. I have got a few names: Barlow, Bois Cheri, Argy, Camp Ithier, Isidorose, Cité L'Oiseau, Malherbes, Plaine des Papayes, Fond du Sac, Crève Coeur, Baie du Tombeau, Jean Lebrun, Dubreuil. I am giving you only a few examples: Bambous, Goodlands. I am giving only a few examples, I can't exhaust the entire list.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, apart from that there is another important issue which we are tackling at the National Development Unit; this is very important. In order to promote the philosophy of *Maurice Ile Durable*, cutting of trees for cremation purposes has, to a certain extent, to be discouraged because we know there are many poor people who can't even afford to pay for the wood and that is the reason why the Government has decided that we must have incinerators throughout the country. A budgetary provision has already been made. A sum of Rs113 m. has already been made available and contracts for the construction of 12 concrete buildings to house crematory incinerators at various places throughout the country have already been awarded. The work has already started. The only issue is regarding those machines. Unfortunately, there has been a challenge which is going on, coming up and down for the past five to six years. Again they have challenged it, but we are going to see to it that we have to award the contract as early as possible because that will definitely give a relief to those people who are poor, who can't afford to pay for the log of wood.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, apart from the new crematoriums, there are 7 cremation grounds and cemetery and we are spending a sum of Rs14.7 m. for the reconstruction, repair and maintenance. It is worth mentioning that we are putting up a new cemetery at Hollyrood/Trois Mamelles. That includes access roads, parking, *janaza* platform, toilet block, office block for the sum of Rs28 m. The work has started. I do expect that within 6 months' time and it must be ready. This new cemetery will also accommodate a crematory incinerator, as I have just mentioned.

The other amenities, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, are that we have got construction of nine children's playground, 60 bus shelters, fixing of handrails wherever necessary. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in 2013, the NDU will maintain its focus on traditional projects, but at the same time, we are introducing on the demand of our friends, of our colleagues, new concepts such as the construction of mini soccer pitches in order to provide facilities for this popular sport in regions which lack adequate space for a standard football pitch. More emphasis will be laid again on flood alleviation measures to mitigate the adverse effect of climate change.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, well, I don't want again to come up on the volleyball pitches, the football ground, basketball pitches, *pétanque* court. All these have already been constructed in many places. The list is very long for me to speak on.

I would like to move to an important issue that concerns each and everybody in our country. It concerns the land transport issue. That comprises the NTA and the TMRSU. These are watchdogs of our road service sector. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, there has been criticism against the NTA, but we tend to forget that with the constant rise in the standard of living almost every family is now not only the owner of one car, but of two cars. The number of vehicles on our roads is increasing by 12% every year and today we have 410,000 vehicles registered with the NTA. This is no mean business to manage such a number and ensure that they are all fit and secure for the road. We have not wasted our time, Mr Deputy Speaker. We have taken the bull by the horn and with the blessings of the Prime Minister, we have taken the decision that the Vehicle Examination Centres have to be privatised. Tender procedures have already started for the privatisation of two existing centres and the construction of a new one. The contract will be awarded soon.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we have put one-stop-shop for registration, transfer of ownership and licensing of motor vehicles thus from February 2013, the NTA will take over from the Registrar General Department, the registration of deed of sale for motor vehicles.

The decentralisation of the services of the NTA is working wonders. Payment of road tax and renewal of motor vehicle licences at Post offices is a resounding success. 50% of vehicle owners avail of the decentralised services. Only the other 50% go to the office of the NTA.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Government and NTA were criticised when we introduced, again, with the blessings of the Prime Minister, new number plates. That was a proposal made by the Prime Minister himself and all new projects as usual entail some teething problems. We have

shown some flexibility in this and the change in the number plates is coming slowly but surely. As at now 300,000 name plates have already been changed and now we intend to put up a deadline for the rest of them.

With regard to speed limiters, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this was again one of the propositions which was introduced by the Prime Minister, that there must have speed limiters on any vehicle carrying 3.5 tonnes. As to date about 90 to 95% have already been fitted with speed limiters and the exercise is progressing satisfactorily because drivers of heavy vehicles are getting conscious of the meaning of safety of road users.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, a major measure has been announced in the budget, that is, personalised number plates will soon be introduced to enable the purchase of an alphanumeric number plate. The number plate will consist of 6 letters and will cost Rs100,000.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Land Traffic Management and Road Safety Unit falls under my Ministry. Land transport and development is not only about building road infrastructure. It is also about ensuring that roads are well designed, well marked and aptly signalised and safe to user and commuters.

Road safety is a major concern for me and my officers because despite all our efforts so far, road crashes leading to fatalities have witnessed a rise, as is the trend all over the world. It has been found that most crashes are due to human error; safe drivers are made, they are not born. An average of 150 deaths in a year is a dreadful figure because one death is too many. However, the causes of those deaths are eloquent: inappropriate speeding, over speeding, reckless driving, late night driving, are some of the major ones. From the figures that I have with me -

22% of people killed this year were senior citizens.

43% people killed were auto or motorcycle riders.

37% of people killed including pedestrians were under the influence of alcohol.

The TMRSU has thus come up with well defined measures based on UN Decade of Action for Road Safety, to promote safe roads through engineering, behaviour modification and stringent Road Traffic Legislation.

As I said, we made promises, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, and we keep those promises. We will be pitiless against offenders and those who flout the law. It is sad that some hon. Members sitting even in this august Assembly on both sides of the House have been caught committing

road traffic offences. I don't want to embarrass anybody, but we are aware of all those who are involved in it.

Others have spoken a lot about penalty points, but never came forward with a piece of legislation. We have done it, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, and as from next year the law will be enforced.

Let, therefore, everybody be on his guard including hon. Members sitting here.

The number of measures being taken to address the issue of road safety is many. Let me mention only a few -

1. Additional speed cameras (20 fixed type and 6 mobile) will be procured before the end of December and all will be fixed in different dangerous spots of the country.
2. 30 more will be procured early next year all to be installed in black spot areas.
3. Traffic signs will be installed to indicate the location of cameras and to warn drivers.
4. Road safety education especially for senior citizens, on drink and drug driving and two wheelers will be intensified.
5. Engineering measures involving new techniques and including by pass roads, footbridges, pelican crossings and speed reducing devices will be implemented.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, good roads used by bad drivers and careless pedestrians will not solve our problems because we do not have a magic formula. But, we have the willingness to minimise accidents and spare the sufferings of victims of accidents and the agony and trauma of their dear ones.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I said earlier, all new organisations have teething problems. The MLTA which is legally operational will merge the RDA, the NTA and the TMRSU.

We will thus ensure that there is no duplication of work and there will be a better control on all activities related to road construction, road safety and road management.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, National Transport Corporation, I cannot forget it because of the services that it is rendering to our people. The prophets of doom who were foretelling the disappearance of CNT from the local transport scenery have failed in their prophecy.

The CNT is very much alive, active and dynamic. It is modernising its fleet with 37 new buses purchased last year and another batch of 80 will be purchased the following year.

In 2012, Rs25 m. deficit was projected. In 2013, we are projecting a surplus of Rs33 m. excluding a cash reserve of over Rs55 m.



It is a fact, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, no organisation can remain static over the years. It has to reinvent itself to brace the realities of 'en face' and this is what we are doing at the CNT.

We are coming with a restructuring exercise in the context of its modernisation to ensure that the Corporation remains a profitable enterprise.

Government will as usual assist the CNT so that it remains in the stride of rapid overall development of the country, attracts more passengers and meets the exigencies of the travelling public.

We will see to it that the NTC qualifies for funding to be disbursed by European Union in the context of accompanying measures for sugar protocol for public enterprise reforms and that it attains 5% return on its capital investment.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, before I move to the last item, I would like to speak a few words on one very, very important issue that concerns each and every one and that is very dear to the heart of our Prime Minister, that is, the LRT project. The LRT project, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, was the talk of everybody but the play of a few, I have to admit. The idea of a Light Rail dates back to 1989. From that time onward, the file went under different Ministers, under different Ministries; different reports were commissioned under different Consultants. I don't want to name, because time is against me.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, one thing I remember, on 21 July 1995, a Ministerial Committee was set up under my Chairmanship - I was the Minister of Works at that time - comprising hon. Nababsing, hon. Sithanen, hon. Jaddoo, hon. Darga and late hon. Gungah to study the reports and to select the best option. The Committee recommended LRT at that time. Unfortunately, there was strong opposition from hon. Paul Raymond Bérenger. Sir Anerood Jugnauth had, himself, on many occasions regretted for not having proceeded with the LRT project only because of the malicious and frivolous allegations made by the then Opposition to the effect that there was corruption. Even the former President had recently expressed his regrets that, unfortunately, because of the repeated opposition of hon. Paul Bérenger, the project could not go. If we had started the project at that time, it would have cost us about Rs5 billion only. Unfortunately, the project had to be shelved.

In 2004, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we were on the point of appointing a consultant for the management of the project. Tender exercises were carried out and the best offer was obtained was BCEOM.

Unfortunately, one Mr Jean-Mée Desveaux - the ears and eyes of the then Prime Minister's Office stopped everything when during a meeting held on 02 July 2004 at the Ministry of Public Infrastructure, he informed the Committee that the exercise had to be scrapped.

Responsibility for the project was shifted from the Ministry of Public Infrastructure to the Ministry of Finance and from there to the Prime Minister's Office. It kept on moving from one Office to another. Nothing was done.

But, following the visit of our Prime Minister to Singapore in 2010, Government to Government agreement was reached for the LRT project.

After the visit of a Singapore delegation in Mauritius, the Singapore Cooperation Enterprise in association with SMRT submitted the Project Implementation Action Plan and we have already accepted. There was due diligence properly carried out and, if everything goes on well, early 2014, we are going to start the construction work.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, let me now turn to the last item, that concerns my Ministry, that is, Shipping which is gaining momentum as a rapidly developing sector. It is our cherished ambition to transform this sector into one of the major pillars of our economy.

It is now among our priorities to transform the island into an Ocean State by optimising the use of our marine resources and make our ocean a major income earning sector. The ambition looks attainable when we have an exclusive economic zone which is bigger than the combined area of France, Italy, Spain and the UK.

We are also exploring the possibility of creating a shipping line to facilitate transportation among the countries in the region, and of which, Mauritius Shipping Corporation Ltd should be a major stakeholder. The Indian Ocean Commission has volunteered to assist in the attainment of this objective.

We are planning to revisit our procedures for registration of ships so as to attract foreign vessels to register under the Mauritian flag, thereby, increasing the oceanic activities in the region and attracting more revenue in our coffer.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, Mauritius Pride is over 20 years old. The ship has not failed us and has constantly enabled Mauritius to honour its obligation towards Rodrigues and Agalega. A Consultant will soon be appointed to advise us on the replacement of this vessel which carries a sentimental value for all us.

Speaking of shipping also implies safety at sea. That is why my Ministry has bilateral working agreements with South Africa and Australia on Search and Rescue. The movement of ships in our waters is closely monitored and the Search and Rescue teams are at all hours ready to intervene.

The safe sailing of ships and fishing vessels calls for a lot of communication equipment. We are already renewing our Global Maritime Distress and Safety Systems and the HF Communication Services.

Moreover, thanks to the courtesy of International Telecommunications Union, an expert was recently sent to Mauritius free of cost to assess the status of our existing maritime communication systems and recommend on its improvement for safety of navigation.

Lastly, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we are working towards the incorporation of IMO Conventions into our national law to ensure safety of ships and protection of our Marine Environment.

We will also ratify and sign certain IMO Conventions which will ensure our response to and compensation for damages caused by chemical, oil and other spills at the sea.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as conclusion, I would say that time is of essence and I have to end my intervention. So much has been done and so many new schemes and projects are in the pipeline that we could talk endlessly. As Jawaharlal Nehru said once -

“I have miles to go before I sleep.”

I would seize this opportunity to place on record the zeal, determination and commitment of my officers who have at heart the development of the country and the well-being of their fellow countrymen. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I commend their patriotism.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would, at the same time, like to thank all the Parliamentary Private Secretaries who are attached to the National Development Unit. Without their support, these works would not have been possible. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, how can we forget the support, advice and encouragement that our hon. Prime Minister and other colleagues give us in our endeavour?

To conclude, I would request the Opposition to stop criticising for the sake of demagogy. Let them come forward with constructive criticisms because we like challenges. We believe in crossing hurdles and not sleepwalking on them. We are a tireless species with an ideal that is

transforming our small country into a haven of peace, pleasure and prosperity, even better than paradise of Mark Twain.

Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The hon. Speaker will take the Chair now.

*At this stage Mr Speaker took the Chair.*

(6.56 p.m)

**Mr P. Jugnauth (First Member for Quartier Militaire & Moka):** M. le président, l'exercice budgétaire sous ce gouvernement est vraiment un désastre total. Flop sur flop ! Bluff sur bluff ! Manipulation sur manipulation ! Déception sur déception ! Faillite sur faillite ! Voilà, M. le président, comment je résumerai le budget 2013, suivant le budget 2012 présenté par l'honorable ministre des Finances au nom du gouvernement illégitime Parti travailliste/PMSD.

Peu après la présentation du budget, M. le président, le Premier ministre est venu dire à la nation que c'est un budget remarquable, innovateur pour faire face aux défis de l'avenir. Le ministre des Finances s'est même vanté d'avoir excellé dans ces mesures économiques et sociales, et d'avoir réalisé des exploits en ce qui concerne les fondamentaux économiques. Les réactions, cependant, M. le président, ont démontré une immense déception tant chez les opérateurs économiques que chez les syndicalistes, et je dirai dans l'ensemble même de la population. Fatal pour les travailleurs, selon la Confédération des travailleurs du secteur privé ; un budget déconnecté des réalités ; de la poudre jetée aux yeux, selon la *Federation of Progressive Unions* ; la classe moyenne restée sur sa faim, selon la Fédération des syndicats du secteur public ; mauvais budget, selon le Front Commun des petits commerçants ; ni moderne, ni avant-gardiste, selon *Rezistans ek Alternativ* ; pas de nouveau souffle pour les PME, selon M. Amar Deerpalsingh, président de la Fédération des PME ; les petits planteurs ont été laissés sur le banc de touche, selon Kripalou Sunghoon, un fervent travailliste ; un budget sans vision, selon l'économiste Pierre Dinan, qui est aussi nommé travailliste au *Monetary Policy Committee* de la Banque de Maurice ; un budget incomplet qui comporte des risques pour l'avenir, selon le *Joint Economic Council* ; le pouvoir d'achat va continuer à dégringoler, selon l'ACIM au nom des consommateurs.

Voilà le flop budgétaire tel que commenté à chaud après la présentation du budget. Une véritable claque pour ce gouvernement et son Premier ministre qui a trouvé ce budget remarquable. Et, par la suite, M. le président, le flop budgétaire a été dénoncé de la manière la plus sévère qui soit par des *opinion leaders* et des observateurs économiques et sociaux, ainsi que par la population. Je vais citer quelques-uns. Business Magazine a résumé le budget en ces termes, et je cite –

« Le budget 2013 apparaît comme une succession d'apposition de rustines, ces petites pièces de caoutchouc destinées à obturer les trous dans une chambre à air ou tout autre objet gonflable. »

Véritable camouflet pour le gouvernement.

L'éditorialiste de '*l'Express Dimanche*' qui, d'habitude, je dirais, encense le pouvoir en place trouve que, et je cite –

« Le budget est un *non-event* et ne génère aucun *feel good factor* »

Et un sondage de *DCDM Research*, publié dans '*l'Express*' du dimanche 18 novembre, soit une semaine après la présentation du budget, révèle que sept Mauriciens sur dix se disent déçus du budget, et un Mauricien sur dix ne se prononce même pas. Donc, *vox Populi vox Dei!* Un autre hebdomadaire, le '*Mauritius Times*', est lapidaire dans ses commentaires. Je cite-

*'No vision --...*

Et ça c'est plus comique, M. le président.

*...not even a camel*

*(...)unremarkable in content, insipid in delivery. 'It's not only dry, it's dead, dead!'*

*Lacklustre Budget, devoid of a credible path of reform, a Budget bereft of ideas."*

*Mauritius Times* ! Je pourrais continuer et citer, par exemple, M. Satyadeo Tengur, qui est aussi le président de la *Government Hindi Teachers Union*, et qui représente aussi des consommateurs, mais j'en passe parce que tout cela représente des claques retentissantes au gouvernement et, par certains, par son propre électorat. Voilà, le budget remarquable et innovateur dont parle le Premier ministre. Voilà, le flop, je dirais, multidimensionnel d'un exercice budgétaire qui aurait été un autre chapelet de bluff, fidèle à la culture travailliste. Et, *on the government side, they are very proud. In fact, they should have drowned themselves in shame instead of blowing trumpets.*

En parlant de bluff, M. le président, que n'a-t-on pas entendu dans le discours du budget sur les soi-disant exploits sur le plan macroéconomique. Prenons la croissance économique. Alors que toutes les prévisions de MCB focus à la Chambre de commerce et d'industrie, en passant par la Banque de Maurice, parle d'un taux de 3% environ, le ministre des Finances est venu dire que la croissance en 2012 sera de 3.4%. C'est déjà un aveu d'échec parce que ce gouvernement nous avait dit l'année dernière que, et je cite –

*“Budget 2012 is about more growth.”*

L'objectif principal des mesures budgétaires était de *deliver* un taux de croissance de 4%, mais puisque la faillite a été monumentale, le ministre balance, aujourd'hui, 3.4% pour 2012, et 4% pour 2013, sortis, je dirais, du néant, comme pour sauver la face. Or, M. le président, l'*Economist Intelligence Unit has called the bluff again*. L'EIU contredit le gouvernement et soutient, noir sur blanc, dans ses commentaires sur le budget, datant du 12 novembre de cette année-ci, que la croissance en 2012 sera de 2,9% et 3,3% en 2013. Des chiffres qui, au fait, ne sont pas loin de ceux des prévisions locales, mais plus crédibles. Et les analystes de l'EIU écrivent qu'avec la perspective des élections locales, le gouvernement a cherché à présenter un beau tableau des fondamentaux économiques. En d'autres mots, ils sont en train de dire que ce gouvernement *bluff*, que ce gouvernement est en train de cacher la vérité sur la croissance économique et, en effet, cela me rappelle les débats budgétaires de 2008 quand le gouvernement de l'Alliance Sociale se vantait de *bumper crop*. On se souvient en 2009, en pleine crise financière aux Etats Unis et il nous avait dit que la croissance allait être de 6,5% ! Une fausseté car par la suite on a su que la croissance n'a été que de 3.1%.

Le bluff sur la croissance est également dénoncé par l'économiste proche du parti travailliste M. Eric Ng Ping Chuen. Ce dernier a écrit et je cite :

« Il est fort peu probable que notre économie réalise une croissance de 4% en 2013. C'est d'ailleurs la vie exprimée par la majorité des spécialistes en économie qui d'ailleurs ne trouvent toujours pas comment la croissance atteindra 3.4% cette année malgré la tentative de doper l'économie durant le dernier trimestre de l'année avec la décision sans précédent du gouvernement d'acheter 100 millions de dollars sur le marché bancaire visant effectivement à essayer de déprécier la roupie dont les conséquences, nous savons tous, seront néfastes pour les consommateurs en général ».

Et je ne sais pas ce qui s'est passé parce qu'à ce jour, d'après les renseignements pris, le ministère n'a pu acheter que 10 millions de dollars. Donc, il y a eu, sans doute, des discussions au niveau du gouvernement après avoir annoncé cette mesure ! Comment le gouvernement de la banque centrale a-t-il réagi? Je crois que nous le savons tous. Je ne vais pas entrer dans les détails mais peu n'importe, M. le président, *bottom line*, les grands discours trompeurs des membres de la majorité, l'île Maurice est, aujourd'hui, à la traîne sur le continent africain surtout quand nous constatons que des pays Africains avec un PIB comparable au nôtre, réalisent une croissance supérieure à 5% et cela m'amène à commenter la situation en ce qui concerne l'inflation.

Le gouvernement ose nous faire comprendre que l'inflation a baissé et sera de seulement 4.1% en 2012. Encore une fois le gouvernement prend les Mauriciens - y compris le gouverneur de la banque centrale - pour des imbéciles parce que les pressions inflationnistes sont d'actualité. Les prix des produits alimentaires continuent à monter. Le pouvoir d'achat continue à dégringoler. Il n'y a que le gouvernement qui trouve le contraire.

La banque de Maurice en dépit des pressions intenses dénoncées par le gouverneur qui écrit - et je lisais le rapport annuel de la banque de Maurice - et je cite ce qu'il a dit -

« *My metal has been relentlessly tested* »

Imaginez qu'on est en train maintenant de persécuter même le gouverneur de la banque centrale ! Lui qui maintient que l'inflation en 2012 ne sera pas loin de 5%. Et dans un autre document de la banque sur Maurice en date du 25 octobre 2012, quelques jours avant la présentation du budget l'*Economist Intelligence Unit* confirme la position de la banque de Maurice et, au fait, met en garde le gouvernement contre les pressions inflationnistes et l'année prochaine, d'après ce même rapport, qui cite que les événements qui sont en train de se produire, à travers le monde, vont avoir un impact négatif et ce sera pire avec un taux d'inflation estimé - je dis à ce stade - à 6% au moins et on voit dans le discours du budget qu'il n'y a même pas eu de projections en ce qu'il s'agit des chiffres de l'inflation.

Donc la vérité sur le désastre est encore une fois cachée à la population. Faillite au niveau de la croissance, faillite au niveau du pouvoir d'achat, faillite également en ce qui concerne la lutte contre la pauvreté !

Le budget 2012 était censé aller *to the roots of poverty* et l'engagement du gouvernement était de *mobilise maximum efforts to face it down*. La même chanson nous est jouée dans le

discours de budget 2013. Le gouvernement ose vanter ses prouesses à ce niveau. Le Premier ministre ose dire que les mauriciens vivent mieux. La vérité dans le pays est dramatique M. le président.

La pauvreté absolue créée par le gouvernement parti travailliste/PMSD, selon l'ancien ministre des finances rouge, ne cesse d'augmenter. Plus de 10% de la population vivent en dessous du seuil de la pauvreté. Le fossé entre les riches et les pauvres s'agrandit; deux mauriciens sur trois, selon un récent sondage, disent que leur situation financière s'est détériorée par rapport à l'année dernière et les familles sont même contraintes à vendre leurs bijoux et même les plantes d'intérieur d'appartement pour survivre. C'est pourquoi le refrain de « budget remarquable » du Premier ministre provoque la colère sur la grande majorité des nos compatriotes.

Faillite également au niveau de l'emploi. Le ministre des Finances nous dit que le taux de chômage est stable à 8%. Dans la réalité, le taux de chômage a augmenté de 7.8% à 8.2%. Il y a plus de 50,000 chômeurs et 52% de ceux là sont des jeunes qui sont désespérés et qui veulent émigrer.

Une situation qui me fait rappeler celle semblable à 1982 quand le parti travailliste avait mis le pays à genoux et maintenant c'est pire, la chambre de commerce et d'industrie qui vient dire que 90% des entreprises ont signifié leur l'intention de ne pas recruter à partir de maintenant pour l'année qui suit. Et la recette du gouvernement sous le *Youth Employment Programme* n'a pas marché et ne marchera pas car les entreprises sont véritablement inquiètes de l'avenir en raison d'un manque de vision, d'un manque d'initiative susceptible de relancer l'économie, les investissements et, bien sûr, par ricochet, la création d'emplois.

Manipulation des chiffres de croissance, d'inflation, du chômage mais également, en ce qui concerne le déficit budgétaire! Franchement, quand vous voyez le ministre des finances descendre à ce niveau, c'est qu'il y a forcément une malhonnêteté malade et une obsession à bernier le peuple.

M. le président, la manipulation du chiffre du déficit budgétaire a commencé depuis la création des fonds spéciaux hors budget. J'ai dénoncé, à maintes reprises, dans le passé ce vaudou *accounting* et quand j'étais ministre des finances 2010/2011, j'avais initié des actions pour transférer ces fonds au budget. L'argent disponible précédemment dans certains fonds avait été transféré au *Consolidated Fund*. Cela avait été loué par le FMI qui, dans un rapport, avait



souligné la nécessité de comptabiliser les mouvements d'argent dans les fonds spéciaux afin de montrer la situation réelle au niveau des finances publiques.

Cette année ci que voit-on encore? Les dépenses à partir de ces fonds se sont élevées et je cite les chiffres : R3,6 milliards représentant 1% du PIB. Les contributions du gouvernement s'élèvent à R 2.1 milliards et lorsqu'on fait le calcul en consolidant les opérations des fonds spéciaux dans le budget, le déficit budgétaire pour l'exercice financier de 2012 élèverait à 3.1% contrairement au 2.5% annoncé. En 2013, même chose, même manigance, les dépenses à partir de ces fonds spéciaux élèveraient à R 4 milliards environ 1% du PIB. Ajoute à cela, il y a un transfert de R 1.2 milliards du *Resilience Fund* vers le budget, soit 0.3% du PIB. Donc, en consolidant ces dépenses et le transfert, le déficit budgétaire pour 2013 élèverait à 3.5% et non 2.2%. C'est cela la vérité qui encore une fois malheureusement n'a pas été dite à la population. On est en train de dire que le gouvernement fait des miracles. L'artifice des fonds spéciaux et les budgets supplémentaires hors commun faisant passer les dépenses de l'année suivante dans celle de l'année en cours n'a que trop duré provoquant même une fragmentation budgétaire et des dépenses incontrôlées selon les mots même du FMI. Donc, encore un carton rouge pour le gouvernement, encore l'heure à la Ramgoolam. Il va s'en dire que les dépenses extravagantes et les gaspillages vont se poursuivre. D'ailleurs, on ne voit rien qui a été mentionné dans le budget en ce qu'il s'agit des contrôles des dépenses du gouvernement.

M. le président, les différents secteurs économiques attendaient des mesures audacieuses et innovatrices. Comme le dit si bien le ministre des finances, il faut relever les défis imposés par la crise dans la Zone Euro et mieux préparer l'avenir. Le gouvernement leur a servi des plats réchauffés - aucune nouvelle vision, aucune mesure avant-gardiste, aucun nouveau pôle de croissance.

L'*Ocean Economy* qu'on entend parler maintenant, annoncé en grande pompe après l'échec de la *Land-Based Oceanic Industry*. Qu'est devenu de la *Land-Based Oceanic Industry*? Elle s'est noyée et c'est resté au niveau du concept. Après douze mois, le gouvernement vient nous dire qu'il cherche maintenant des partenaires stratégiques. Le dossier de l'accès aérien si crucial pour l'avenir du tourisme et du hub commercial et financier mauricien reste toujours prisonnier au bureau du Premier ministre. Le budget parle de facilitation pour les visas aux africains mais à quoi serviront ces visas s'il n'y a pas de déserte aérien sur les destinations africaines potentiellement les plus intéressantes pour notre économie. Le budget reconnaît

l'ambition mauricienne de devenir un *shopping destination* mais par pure mesquinerie, il n'y a aucune mention de *duty-free island*, une mesquinerie que je dirais depuis 2005 d'ailleurs fait perdre à notre pays des opportunités réelles de croissance et de création de richesse.

Au chapitre de l'industrie des communications et technologie, mention a été faite de la mise sur pied de ce qu'on appelle maintenant High Tech Industrial Parks avec des facilités Plug & Play. Or, nous savons tous, M. le président, que le projet de Rose Belle Business Park a été torpillé par le gouvernement travailliste, une nouvelle fois je dirais par mesquinerie politique. Le fameux projet MID tant vanté par le Premier ministre n'arrive pas à décoller réellement par faute d'initiative réelle. La dotation budgétaire pour cet item a été réduite à une peau de chagrin alors que la même personne, qui avait été traité - j'ai lu le discours du Premier ministre - de *debt collector* dans cette auguste assemblée l'année dernière lors des débats budgétaires, a été nommée coordonnateur, s'il vous plaît, suivant son acte de transfugisme. Je constate aussi que le *Solar Water Scheme* avec un don de dix milles roupies que j'avais annoncé dans le budget de 2011 est maintenant implémenté, trois ans après. Ce n'est que maintenant que cela va être implémenté. M. le président...

**Mr Speaker:** Vous avez parlé de 2011 mais exécuté quand?

**Mr Jugnauth:** Now it is being implemented.

**Mr Speaker:** Cela ne fait pas trois ans.

**Mr Jugnauth:** Oui. C'est maintenant. It is not being implemented, it is only now.

*(Interruptions)*

M. le président, les petits planteurs, comme l'a si bien dit Monsieur Sanghoon, ont été laissés sur le banc de touche. Où sont passées les trente cinq pour cent d'actions? Des négociations *at arm's length* entre le Premier ministre et le *Mauritius Sugar Producers Association* sil vous plaît. 35% avait été promise au terme de l'accord signé en décembre 2007. Cinq ans sont passés et ces pauvres petits planteurs attendent toujours. Où sont passés les milles arpents de terre qui allaient être mises à la disposition de petits planteurs pour la production vivrière mise à part, je dirais, quelques agents politiques qui se sont appropriés une centaine arpents. Les petits planteurs sont restés sur leur faim. Maintenant, comble de ridicule, le budget propose de leur allouer des terres abandonnées. Je dirai que, non seulement c'est une insulte, c'est de la provocation pour la communauté des petits planteurs. Les fonctionnaires qui souhaitaient tout au moins un paiement intérimaire en attendant la révision du rapport

PRB largement contesté, il n'y fut rien dans le budget et sur ce dossier, le Premier ministre s'est auto-blâmé en reconnaissant son incompétence et en admettant devant les syndicalistes qu'il a été surpris lui-même de l'ampleur de l'injustice envers les petits et moyens fonctionnaires. Pourtant c'est ce même Premier ministre et ce ministre qui avaient étudié le rapport au préalable et avaient débattu lors d'un conseil des ministres spécial pendant des heures. Ils ont exprimé toute leur satisfaction sur ce qui avait été recommandé.

Voilà un gouvernement qui divague et qui perd les pédales. M. le président, il n'y a pas un mot dans le budget sur la fameuse démocratisation de l'économie, prétendument je dirais grand cheval de bataille du Parti travailliste. Là j'étais ministre des finances, je me souviens lors de la préparation du budget, j'avais demandé à ce qu'on me donne les recommandations qui ont été faites par cette Commission de Démocratisation. Zéro. Il n'y avait même pas une seule recommandation. Je dois comprendre peut être du Ministre des finances que, lui aussi, il a dû faire la demande et qu'il s'est retrouvé dans l'incapacité de pouvoir proposer des initiatives concrètes. Je me demande où est passé la Castafiore au travailliste qui empoche des millions sur le dos de la population et qui tourne les pouces pour ne pas dire autre chose sur le marocain de Présidente de la Commission de Démocratisation.

M. le président, les consommateurs s'attendaient à ce qu'au moins le gouvernement annonce une mesure pour soulager leur fardeau. La nomination du *Hedging Loss Tax* était très attendu, or les *gamblers* travaillistes qui ont imposé ce fardeau de R 5.4 milliards sur les consommateurs sont restés de marbre. L'opération - je ne trouve pas de mot plus approprié que *perçé mett sec* - se poursuit et se poursuivra de plus belle après les élections municipales.

On se rappellera, M. le président, comment en octobre 2005, le gouvernement avait eu le culot d'augmenter les prix des produits pétroliers à peine quelques minutes après la fermeture des bureaux de vote pour le scrutin municipal et il est fort probable que ce gouvernement Travailliste fasse le même coup cette année encore et je dirais les citoyens sont avertis.

M. le président, il est révoltant de constater que les bénéficiaires de la pension de vieillesse ont été privés d'une augmentation adéquate et raisonnable.

*(Interruptions)*

Il y a eu acclamation dans les rangs de la majorité. Encore là, on les entend ! Quand le ministre des finances a annoncé fièrement que les bénéficiaires de la pension de vieillesse toucheront

d'une augmentation de 4,3%, soit, selon lui, supérieure au taux d'inflation de 4.1%, et tout au moins on s'attendait à ce que ces pensionnaires obtiennent une augmentation de R 300, conforme à l'augmentation accordée aux travailleurs se trouvant au bas de l'échelle et touchant jusqu'à R 7,000 par mois, ils n'obtiendront que R 144 d'augmentation. On leur aura volé R 156. C'est pourquoi je dis que ce gouvernement n'a pas de cœur et que le peuple est loin d'être leur priorité.

M. le président, le ministre des finances a annoncé en fanfare l'abolition de la taxe douanière sur les téléviseurs à écran plat de plus de 32 pouces. Mais derrière cette annonce se cache une énorme arnaque aux profits de gros importateurs et commerçants. Les consommateurs seront épluchés en payant des intérêts exorbitants sur les transactions *hire purchase*. D'ailleurs, une décision prise lors d'un des conseils des ministres en date du 15 juin 2012 pour ramener le taux d'intérêt pratiqué sur le *hire purchase* de 24% à 19% est restée lettre morte tant le gouvernement se plie aux lobbies des gros bonnets. Donc, *percer, mette sec*, pour la population, mais pour le gros capital le *bonanza* budgétaire se poursuit.

L'année dernière, le *Capital Gains Tax* avait été aboli pour, soi-disant, relancer l'investissement. Je ne vais pas rentrer dans les détails de ce qui a été dit dans cette Chambre. Mais qu'est-ce qui s'est passé? C'est le contraire qui s'est produit. L'investissement privé reculant de 3% et le *business confidence* au plus bas depuis mars 2010, et cette fois-ci, qu'est ce qu'on nous annonce, la *Land Conversion Tax* a été enlevé pour les promoteurs de 18 *Hole Golf Course*. Voilà un exemple de *résultats lors résultats* pour les riches copains du secteur privé qui soutiennent le pouvoir! Un père de famille qui est contraint à vendre son terrain pour payer les études de son enfant, doit payer le *Land Transfer Tax*. Le gros bonnet qui va investir dans un parcours de golf est exempté de la *Land Conversion Tax*. M. le président, je dirais que c'est le monde à l'envers et ce gouvernement ose encore parler de justice sociale. C'est le peuple qui en fera sa propre justice le 9 décembre prochain pour les municipales, et par la suite, à l'occasion des prochaines élections générales. Cette politique économique qui ne sert que les intérêts du gros capital doit cesser et nous mettrons un terme à cela le moment venu.

M. le président, depuis 1995, le Premier ministre dit que sa priorité c'est l'économie. Elections après élections, il brûle ce qu'il a adoré et il adore ce qu'il a brûlé. Aujourd'hui, à l'occasion de l'exercice budgétaire, il vante à nouveau les prétendues réformes économiques de son deuxième gouvernement et les cadeaux aux Travailleurs, ces boîtes de résonance en font de même. Mais dans les faits, voyons de quelles réformes il s'agit. Ces fameuses réformes se

résumément comme suit : introduction de la NRPT, une taxe injuste contre la classe moyenne, taxation des intérêts bancaires pour éplucher la classe moyenne, toujours. Abolition des abattements fiscaux sur le pré-logement, les frais d'études universitaires, les assurances vie pour saigner à blanc les contribuables. Abolition des exemptions fiscales pour les petits planteurs et taxation des sociétés coopératives de 15%. Abolition des tripartites pour la compensation salariale et on se souvient de la mise sur pied d'une *National Pay Council*, je dirais un mécanisme bidon qui a privé les travailleurs de compensation salariale adéquate. L'adoption de deux nouvelles législations du travail, anti-travailleurs, des lois qui ont permis au patronat de *hire and fire* selon leurs caprices, 20,000 travailleurs ont ainsi été licenciés depuis 2008. Abolition des subsides sur des frais des examens du SC et de la HSC pour la majorité de nos étudiants. Le *deal* qui a été conclu avec le secteur sucrier pour augmenter le prix du sucre sur le marché local de 707%, un cadeau de R 5 milliards aux sucriers et dépréciation massive de la roupie, on se souvient 20%, pour remplir, encore une fois, les caisses des gros bonnets et avec une conséquence de flambée des prix pour les consommateurs. Baisse de la *Corporate Tax* de 15%, un autre cadeau, je dirais, par milliards aux gros bonnets et, à un moment, au nom de cette prétendue réforme, le gouvernement Travailleiste n'avait pas hésité à un instant, je dirais comme symbole, à enlever ce petit pain de la bouche de nos écoliers. Ces prétendues réformes constituaient, en fait, M. le président, des crimes commis sur le dos du peuple. Trahison sur trahison ! On nous avait dit, à l'époque, qu'il n'y avait pas d'autres alternatives, les fameux Tinawalas. Ces crimes, ces trahisons avaient été systématiquement dénoncés par l'électorat Travailleiste dans les colonnes du '*Mauritius Times*' et emmenaient le parti Travailleiste au bord de la déroute politique. Grâce aux engagements du MSM pour corriger ces crimes commis que l'Alliance de l'Avenir a été plébiscitée par le peuple.

**Mr Speaker:** I think this is not part of the Budget. The hon. Member should confine himself to the contents of the Budget Speech.

**Mr Jugnauth:** Yes, Mr Speaker, Sir, but I am tracing back the fact that the Prime Minister...

**Mr Speaker:** Hon. Member, I have ruled and I have said, please, do follow my guidance.

**Mr Jugnauth:** Et je dirais que c'est grâce au MSM qu'on a pu, à travers nos engagements, on a été plébiscité par la population. J'ai prouvé, en tant que ministre des finances, par la suite qu'il y avait effectivement des alternatives. Toute l'Ile Maurice sait que j'ai respecté mes

engagements. J'ai aboli la NRPT, la taxe sur les intérêts, j'ai rétabli les tripartites pour la compensation salariale, j'ai rétabli les subsides sur les frais des examens du *SC* et de la *HSC*, les exemptions fiscales pour les petits planteurs, j'ai doublé le *Income Support* pour les plus pauvres et j'avais réduit significativement le *Hedging Loss Tax* sur les produits pétroliers. Puisque le Premier ministre ose vanter ces grandes réformes dont j'ai fait mention, qu'il vienne réformer encore une fois, de la même façon, en réintroduisant ces mêmes mesures. En tout cas, M. le président, mes actions en faveur du peuple, les initiatives dont nous avons été à la base, visant à mettre de l'ordre là où il fallait, ont provoqué jalousie et irritation de la part des Travailleurs.

*(Interruptions)*

Bien sûr j'ai été l'homme à abattre politiquement et ils ont comploté contre moi et contre le MSM. La suite est connue de tous. Ce n'est pas le MSM qui a été victime de trahison. Au fait, c'est tout un peuple. C'est pourquoi j'ai dit, au début de mon intervention, que nous avons un gouvernement illégitime. Cela étant dit, M. le président, force est de constater que l'économie, le pays et la population sont victimes de l'incompétence Travailleuse et de la culture du bluff et des mensonges.

Tel a été le cas entre 1995 et 2000, 2005 à 2010 et, aujourd'hui, encore en 2012. La résilience, archi-répétée, est attribuable au lancement des nouveaux piliers que nous avons lancés : l'ICT, l'IRS, le *seafood hub*, le *knowledge hub* ainsi qu'aux réformes de restructuration courageuses entreprises entre 2000 et 2005 par le gouvernement MSM/MMM. Que ce soit au niveau de l'industrie sucrière, au niveau de l'industrie manufacturière et le secteur touristique, c'est cela la vérité. Mais peu importe la propagande travailleuse, les cadors peuvent vociférer autant qu'ils veulent. Jamais, au grand jamais, leur général ne parviendra à marquer le pays par son empreinte au niveau du développement économique et social.

L'ambition du Premier ministre d'émuler Sir Anerood Jugnauth en tant que père du miracle économique mauricien ne se réalisera jamais parce qu'il n'en a pas l'étoffe et le *leadership* nécessaire. Je dirai l'avancement d'un pays et d'un peuple dépend largement d'un *leadership* éclairé, ferme, avant-gardiste, mais surtout visionnaire. Le peuple mauricien a eu l'occasion de comparer et clairement il sait à qui faire confiance le moment venu pour nettoyer et remettre le pays sur la voie du progrès et du bonheur pour tous.

Donc, M. le président, l'histoire retiendra que les budgets des ministres travaillistes depuis 2005, et cette année-ci d'un ministre PMSD n'auront été que flop, bluff, manipulation, trahison, déception et faillite, et le peuple saura trancher, M. le président.

Merci.

**The Deputy Prime Minister:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I move that the debate be adjourned.

**The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping (Mr Bachoo) rose and seconded.**

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Debate adjourned accordingly*

### ADJOURNMENT

**The Deputy Prime Minister:** Sir, I beg to move that this Assembly do now adjourn to Tuesday 27 November 2012 at 11.30 a.m.

**The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping (Mr A. Bachoo) rose and seconded.**

*Question put and agreed to.*

**Mr Speaker:** The House stands adjourned.

(7.32 p.m.)

### MATTER RAISED

#### IBA – RADIOS – PUBLIC PHONING INTERVENTION

**Mr R. Uteem (Second Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central):** Mr Speaker, Sir, I would like to raise a matter which concerns the hon. Prime Minister, in particular, the Independent Broadcasting Authority. On or about 20 November, 2012, the IBA issued a directive to private radios and to the MBC, *inter alia*, prohibiting phoning intervention by members of the public.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the Constitution guarantees freedom of expression and it is most unfortunate that the IBA should unilaterally impose a gagging order on the population. I understand that the Government cannot bear hearing all the criticisms from the population, but in the name of the freedom of speech for which our fathers fought during independence, may I humbly request the hon. Prime Minister to convey the outrage of this side of the House against this anti-democratic measure taken by the IBA and request that the hon. Prime Minister ensures that the IBA takes corrective measures to lift this gagging order.

Thank you.

**The Deputy Prime Minister:** We will look into it.

*At 7.38 p.m. the Assembly was, on its rising, adjourned to Tuesday 27 November 2012 at 11.30 a.m.*