



REPUBLIC OF MAURITIUS

FIFTH NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

PARLIAMENTARY

DEBATES

(HANSARD)

SECOND SESSION

TUESDAY 23 APRIL 2013

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Members

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

Dr. the Hon. Navinchandra Ramgoolam, GCSK, FRCP	Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister for Rodrigues
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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

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<i>Deputy Speaker</i>	Peetumber, Hon. Maneswar
<i>Deputy Chairperson of Committees</i>	Deerpalsing, Hon. Ms Kumaree Rajeshree
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MAURITIUS

Fifth National Assembly

SECOND SESSION

Debate No. 05 of 2013

Sitting of 23 April 2013

The Assembly met in the Assembly House, Port Louis,

At 11.30 a.m

The National Anthem was played

(Mr Speaker in the Chair)

ANNOUNCEMENT

PARLIAMENTARY PRIVATE SECRETARIES - REPRESENTATIONS

Mr Speaker: Hon. Members, I have received written and oral representations from some Parliamentary Private Secretaries as to whether they are entitled to put Parliamentary Questions.

To be able to form an opinion, I have deemed it fit to look at the history of similarly offices after 1968, the practice and procedure governing their appointment and the terms thereof, and the practice which obtains in some Commonwealth countries, including the United Kingdom House of Commons. I have also sought the opinion of some experienced persons on Mauritian parliamentary practice and procedure.

Regarding the history of this office and of similar offices in our Parliament, the following points were noted –

- (i) In 1969, section 66 of the 1968 Constitution provided for the office of Parliamentary Secretaries who were required to take and subscribe to the same oath of allegiance for the due execution of their office as would the Ministers. They were allowed to answer Parliamentary Questions in the Ministers' place. In 1982, this section of the Constitution was repealed.
- (ii) In 1988 the office of Parliamentary Private Secretaries was created, but they did not form part of the Executive.
- (iii) In 1996, a new section 66 was introduced to provide for the office of Junior Ministers. They were required to take the same oath of allegiance as that of Ministers, but they neither sat in Cabinet nor did they reply to Parliamentary Questions.
- (iv) Since the year 2000 to date, no Junior Ministers have been appointed, but Parliamentary Private Secretaries have been appointed under section 74 of the Constitution, and they are not required to subscribe to any other particular oath of allegiance except for the oath of allegiance as a Member of Parliament, under section 55 of the Constitution, administered by the Clerk of the National Assembly.
- (v) Our Standing Orders and Rules place no restriction on the parliamentary activities of Parliamentary Private Secretaries except for their eligibility to hold the office of the Deputy Speaker or to act as Speaker, as stated in Standing Orders 7 and 8.

I wish to inform the House of my observations, which are as follows –

- (i) Parliamentary Private Secretaries are appointed by the President of the Republic, under section 74 of the Constitution. According to their letter of appointment, they cannot be called upon or expected to perform executive functions or exercise statutory powers pertaining to Ministers, and their functions are restricted to the following –
 - (a) inform, educate and sensitise members of the public regarding implementation of Government’s policies and programmes, assess the impact thereof, and report to the Prime Minister;
 - (b) act as a link between the Government’s machinery and the public, receive representation from them, and report to the Prime Minister thereon, and
 - (c) perform such cognate duties as the Prime Minister may, from time to time, decide.
- (ii) A perusal of the official reports has revealed no instance of any Parliamentary Question having been set for answer by any Parliamentary Private Secretary.
- (iii) However, it appears that the only instance when reference thereto was made was on 28 June 1994, when a Point of Order was taken to a supplementary question put by a Parliamentary Private Secretary to the then Prime Minister, and the reply of the Chair was as follows, I quote –

“As far as I understand, they are not Ministers; therefore, they are entitled to put questions and supplementary questions as well.”

By comparison, in the United Kingdom House of Commons, Parliamentary Private Secretaries are Members of Parliament appointed by Cabinet Ministers and Ministers of State to whom they act as unpaid aids, with the prior written approval of the Prime Minister; and the responsibilities and restrictions incumbent on them are defined by a Ministerial Code, including allowing them to table Parliamentary Questions with the *proviso* that they cannot put questions on matters which affect the Department with which they are connected. Although they are expected to support Government at all times, they have no ministerial responsibilities.”

In the light of the above and subject to the rules governing the admissibility of Parliamentary Questions, I am of the opinion that this matter should be considered by the Government of the day.

Thank you.

PAPERS LAID

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

A. Prime Minister's Office –

Certificate of Urgency in respect of Fashion and Design Institute (Amendment) Bill (No. V of 2013).

B. Ministry of Social Integration and Economic Empowerment –

The Reports of the Director of Audit on the Financial Statements of the Trust Fund for the Social Integration of Vulnerable Groups for the years ended 30 June 2006, 30 June 2007 and 30 June 2008.

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

PONZI SCHEMES - CASES

The Leader of the Opposition (Mr A. Ganoo) (*by Private Notice*) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to the reported cases of Ponzi schemes, he will –

- (a) for the benefit of the House, obtain information –
 - (i) as to the –
 - (A) number of companies, victims and amount of money involved, indicating the value thereof recovered;
 - (B) names of suspects –
 - (I) arrested, indicating their date of release, if any;
 - (II) who have left the country, if any;
 - (ii) from the Financial Services Commission, as to when it had first received information, indicating the actions, taken, if any;
 - (iii) from the Financial Intelligence Unit if two commercial banks had submitted suspicious transaction reports thereto and, if so, if any dissemination was carried out and, if not, why not, and
- (b) state when the National Committee for Anti-Money Laundering, Financial Stability Committee and the Financial Services Consultative Council met respectively, since 2011 to date.

The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development (Mr X. L. Duval): Mr Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I will reply at the same time to Parliamentary Question B/209, as it relates to the same issue.

I have been advised both by the Enforcement Authority, set up under the Assets Recovery Act, and by the Bank of Mauritius that disclosure of information which is not already in the public domain may entail dissipation of evidence. In my reply, therefore, I have to take into consideration the risks of causing prejudice to ongoing enquiries, and undermine the wider rights and interests of investors, depositors and victims. It would, accordingly, not be appropriate at this stage to give the name of some of the companies being investigated but not yet publicly known, and information relating to the Chief Executive Officers, Managers, Legal Advisers and Bankers.

With regard to part (a) of the question I am informed by the Bank of Mauritius that following the setting up of a help desk, the number of known victims who have called at the Bank was 1,372, as at yesterday, for a total amount of Rs573 m., and concerning the following companies -

- 1,213 cases relate to Whitedot International Consultancy Ltd (formerly known as Profame Gnius Company Ltd incorporated in 2011) for a total amount of Rs530 m.;
- 154 cases relate to Sunkai Co. Ltd, incorporated in July 2012, and involving Rs39 million;
- five complaints relating to other companies such as Je T'aime Marketing Ltd and Emidore Trading Co. Ltd, involving some Rs4 m.

Of these, a total of 639 complaints have been lodged with the Police.

There are also a number of other related companies that are also being investigated in connection with the above cases.

I am informed by the Police as follows -

- as at 23 April 2013, there were 17 arrests of suspects in relation to Whitedot International Consultancy Ltd, of whom 12 were bailed out. An amount of Rs1.5 m. and Euro 600 have been recovered;
- in relation to Sunkai Ltd, there have been 10 arrests, of which nine have been bailed out. An amount of Rs22.5 m. and office cheques totalling Rs128.4 m. have been recovered;
- in relation to Je T'aime Marketing Company Ltd, three suspects have been arrested and bailed out. An amount of Rs1.4 m. has been recovered;
- in relation to GN Wealth Management Ltd, two persons have been arrested and are still in detention;
- in relation to Helene & Partners, one person has been arrested and detained, and
- one Mr Razala Johur, working at Whitedot International Consultancy Ltd, left the country prior to the case being reported to the Police.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I am tabling the list of suspects who have been arrested and the date of arrest.

I am informed by the Enforcement Authority under the DPP applied for several Restraint Orders which were granted by the Judge in Chambers with regard to the following -

For Whitedot -

- 37 motorcars and 11 motorcycles belonging to different companies;
- a safe deposit locker at a Commercial Bank;

- 56 other personal bank accounts of suspects totalling Rs11 m., and
- 2 portions of land

For Sunkai -

- one portion of land;
- three apartments;
- 18 accounts;
- 3 vehicles, and
- 363 office cheques totalling some Rs128 m.

The exercise of disclosure is still ongoing and the Enforcement Authority is still awaiting further information to be disclosed by commercial banks.

I am informed that the enquiry is still ongoing at the level of the Enforcement Authority and measures are being applied for a Preliminary Freezing Order in a foreign jurisdiction, with regard to money which has been transferred to foreign bank accounts.

Mr Speaker, Sir, with regard to part (a) (ii) and (iii) of the question, I would wish for the benefit of the House to provide a chronology of events that led to the unravelling of the scam and the arrest of the persons involved.

I am informed that the first time a report involving Whitedot International was made was in April 2012. The Financial Intelligence Unit (FIU) received information relating to suspicious activity involving a foreign national resident in Mauritius having dealings with Profame Gnius Company Ltd. In the subsequent intelligence gathering, it transpired that the source of funds was legitimate and there was no indication of wrongdoing by the foreign national who also had no adverse record. Accordingly, no further action was deemed necessary.

In July 2012, additional information on suspicious activity involving a Mauritian citizen was reported to the FIU. Although, the intelligence gathering found no indication of wrongdoing, the FIU noted that the same company was the recipient of funds as in the April report. Consequently, the FIU initiated a financial investigative analysis to find out more about the company.

The FIU received two further suspicious transactions report from Commercial Banks involving the same company in September and October 2012, whilst the investigative analysis was ongoing.

In November 2012, the Financial Services Commission (FSC) conducted a sensitization campaign and consumer education campaigns, including the use of video clips. The purpose was to alert consumers that they need to be careful in investing their money and should ensure that companies they

deal with are duly licensed by the FSC or the Bank of Mauritius. Moreover, the public was also encouraged to report any suspected case either to the FSC, the Bank of Mauritius or the Police. Interestingly, one of the clips shown to the public was on Ponzi Schemes.

On 21 November 2012, the Bank of Mauritius received an anonymous letter alleging that several companies were offering loans and attracting investors through a high rate of return. The November consumer education campaign by the FSC may, in fact, have triggered that letter of 21 November 2012 to the Bank of Mauritius. In response, the Bank of Mauritius started inquiring on the company Whitedot International Consultancy Ltd. The Bank of Mauritius also looked into reports on some other companies mentioned in the anonymous letter.

Following its own review, the Bank of Mauritius referred the matter to the Police for further investigation on 31 December 2012.

By early 2013, the FIU had obtained sufficient information from domestic and foreign sources to be in a position to share reliable information with the Police which is in line with its mandate to collect intelligence and to pass it on to the relevant enforcement agencies such as the Police, ICAC, Bank of Mauritius, FSC and the Asset Recovery Unit.

As for Sunkai Ltd, the Bank of Mauritius received on 10 December 2012 an anonymous letter dated 07 December 2012 on an alleged financial irregularity. The matter was referred promptly to the Police for investigation on the following day. It is noted that it was on 12 January 2013 that Sunkai Ltd possible involvement in illegal activity was reported in the press, that is, after the matter had already been reported to the Police. On 21 January 2013, the FIU also received a report on Sunkai, that is, a suspicious transaction report, and made a dissemination report to the Asset Recovery Unit on 08 March 2013.

The FSC decided to expand its investigation on Ponzi Schemes to include Sunkai. FSC carried out its information gathering exercise from other Enforcement Agencies, the company as well as the public. Based on information received, an investigation was carried out at the premises of Sunkai in March 2013.

Similarly, on January 2013, the Bank of Mauritius wrote to all banks to collect information on the banking transactions of the companies referenced in the 21 November anonymous letter.

During the month of January 2013, the FSC received several phone calls on the deposit taking activities of Whitedot Consultancy Ltd. The FSC initiated its information gathering exercise in February 2013 in order to ascertain whether Whitedot is conducting a financial activity.

On 25 February 2013, following a coordination meeting between the Bank of Mauritius and the FSC, each institution issued a *Communiqué* to warn the public regarding unlicensed companies offering unrealistic rates of return. Several queries were then received by the Bank of Mauritius on Whitedot, which was illegally accepting investment/deposits from the public. The information was conveyed to the Police on 20 March 2013 for investigation.

On the other hand, further information was sought by FSC from that company in early March and based on information received, an investigation on the premises of the company was scheduled, but had to be put off following developments, including press reports.

On 29 March 2013, the Enforcement Authority under the DPP held a Task Force meeting to share information with a view to rapidly accelerating the investigations as well as to avoid duplication of work.

Mr Speaker, Sir, with regard to part (b) of the question, I wish to inform the House that the National Committee for Anti-Money Laundering and Combating the Financing of Terrorism met in July 2011 and February 2012. The Financial Stability Committee which was constituted this year has met once. Regarding the Financial Services Consultative Committee it was reconstituted this year.

However, there had been regular meetings since 2011 with all stakeholders in the financial services sector, including anti-money laundering on supervisory, regulatory, law enforcement, financial crime prevention and other policy issues.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I wish to bring to the attention of the House the following important facts -

In September 2003, changes were brought to the Financial Intelligence and Anti-Money Laundering Act to emasculate the Financial Intelligence Unit for unspecified reasons. Three amendments were made to curtail the functions of the FIU in supervision and enforcement of compliance by banks, financial institutions, cash dealers and members of relevant professions. The issue of general guidelines to combat money laundering activities was removed and the FIU was limited to issuing of guidelines on the manner to report an STR. The FIU was deprived of the duty to promote the appointment of qualified and specialised persons by banks, financial institutions, cash dealers and members of the relevant professions.

Since then, the FIU has been noticing and continuously brought up in its annual reports the deterioration in reporting culture from banks and other reporting entities. This weakness has also been highlighted by the IMF in 2008 Mutual Evaluation Report.

Mr Speaker, Sir, since I took office I have brought forward various changes to reinforce the functions and powers of the FIU. Amongst others, these include -

- powers to the FIU to issue Anti-Monetary Laundering Guidelines to members of relevant professions or occupations;
- powers to the FIU to exchange information with the Enforcement Authority;
- powers to the FIU to sanction institutions or persons failing to comply with guidelines. The penalty for non-compliance is Rs50,000 for each day of such breach;
- power of the FIU to request further information irrespective of whether an STR has been made or not;
- reinforcing the operational independence of the Director of the FIU to make dissemination without going to the Board;
- putting in place an Anti-Money Laundering regulatory framework for designated non-financial businesses and professions. The FIU was tasked with Anti-Money Laundering regulatory role in respect of dealers under the jewellers and real estate agents.

We have also spared no effort to continue improving the mode of operation of our Financial Services Sector. My Ministry has also taken a number of measures for strengthening the regulatory framework, including the following -

- enactment of the Private Pension Schemes Act 2012 for better regulation of private pension funds;
- amendment to the Companies Act to provide for share register of nominees and their disclosure for local companies;
- provision for the Bank of Mauritius to impose administrative penalties on any financial institution it has licensed and which has refrained from complying with the provisions of any instructions or guidelines;
- Amendment to the Assets Recovery Act 2012 to allow recovery of proceeds which have been acquired 10 years before the commencement of the Act and to strengthen the powers of the Enforcement Authority in connection with request of information.

During 2012 and 2013, the FSC has also taken steps to considerably reinforce its surveillance, licensing and enforcement capacity through recruitment of 55 staff, of which 39 with technical expertise, including a Director of Surveillance from Australia, a post which had remained vacant since 2004 and a Head of Policy from Canada.

I must add that operators have sometimes complained that the Mauritius Jurisdiction is overregulated. Despite these complaints, we will continue to do whatever it takes to ensure that Mauritius retains its reputation as a sound, clean, compliant and complete jurisdiction.

Mr Speaker, Sir, no society is able to protect itself fully from all criminal activities and prevent criminality. However, we have been and are taking steps to -

- improve coordination and information exchange;
- increase the responsiveness of the various institutions to information/intelligence received;
- plug any regulatory gaps;
- accelerate training of financial institutions on Ponzi schemes;
- review the Companies Act to better deal with small unaudited entities, and
- reduce the risks, stiffen the penalties and alert the public on precautions it should take.

Both the Bank of Mauritius and the Financial Services Commission are looking at ways to further enhance their programmes to educate “consumers of financial services”. This may involve warnings that financial institutions will have to provide information to their customers on the risks involved in each investment as well as a cooling off period.

Another critical area for improvement involves faster, more effective and more informal sharing of information. Whilst several formal coordination committees and task forces have been set up, there is too much reliance on these for sharing information and the process is accordingly slower than necessary.

Follow-up also needs to be improved. It is not sufficient to report cases to the Police, but also there needs to be regular follow up of these reports.

Government will also reinforce legislation, whenever required, to increase the powers of the Bank of Mauritius, the FSC and the FIU to deal with such cases and plug any loopholes. At the same time, we need to be careful to keep proper checks and balances.

In this context, Mr Speaker, Sir, I wrote to the IMF on 2 April to request its technical assistance for improving our regulatory framework and coordination mechanism.

Similarly, further to my letter to the IMF, I talked to Ms Antoinette Sayeh, Vice President of the IMF for Africa for speedy technical assistance during my recent mission to Washington last week. I am pleased to inform the House that the IMF has agreed to send a mission to Mauritius as soon as possible.

Mr Speaker, Sir, international organisations like the OECD, the FATF, the IMF and the World Bank recognise that considerable efforts have been made by Mauritius to enhance its standing as an international financial services centre and comply with internationally accepted norms.

The inclusion of Mauritius by the OECD on its white list of clean, transparent, cooperative and compliant jurisdictions bears testimony to this recognition.

However, in addition to adhering to the OECD and other international standards, we have been drawing on the Financial Sector Assessment Programme (FSAP) reviews to improve our regulatory framework. This has earned us ratings by the IMF and the World Bank that are comparable to many high income countries.

However, as in the case of the USA where the authorities have had to bring major changes for addressing weaknesses that came to light after the Madoff scam, there are always lessons to be learnt from such cases. In that context, I have asked the Financial Secretary to undertake a review and come up with proposals to make our system even more effective. He will, of course, work in conjunction with the IMF.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I wish to inform the House that the hon. Prime Minister while in the UK has had fruitful discussions with hon. Mark Simons, Minister for Africa to request assistance from the UK for the Mauritius Police Force to complete the enquiries and bring the perpetrators to justice.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the House and the nation may rest assured that Government will bring to bear the full force of the law to ensure that a complete investigation is carried out to identify the culprits so that their punishment may serve as an example and a deterrent to others.

I also wish to assure the House that Government will do whatever is necessary to ensure that any remaining assets in the possession of the above-mentioned companies and persons are returned to the victims.

Mr Ganoo: The hon. Minister has taken 20 minutes of the 30 minutes that are allotted for this PNQ, Mr Speaker, Sir. Nevertheless, may I ask the hon. Minister with regard to the first part of the question where he has mentioned, that in December 2012, the Bank of Mauritius received a letter denouncing the illegal activities of one of these companies, but is the hon. Minister aware that in a letter dated 21 November 2012, which was addressed to the FSC and ICAC, the names of several companies offering loans and other financial services, some other companies were named in this letter and some are being queried into today, but the names of these companies were also reported for carrying different types of illegal activities? So, the point I am making is: is the hon. Minister aware that already in November of last year, several companies, excluding Whitedot International Consultancy Ltd, Sunkai Ltd and Je T'aime Marketing Company Ltd and even those who have been queried since a few days ago, namely Helene & Partners or GN Wealth Management Ltd, but there are also other companies, half a dozen of them which have been mentioned in this letter sent to the FSC and the ICAC?

Mr Duval: Yes, Mr Speaker, Sir, I mentioned in my reply that a letter was sent to the Bank of Mauritius on 21 November, I mentioned that and that that letter was subsequently passed on to the Police

on 31 December after inquiry for investigation. Now, that letter was only received apparently by the Bank of Mauritius. I have known apparently that the FSC has no record of that letter, but that letter was received and was inquired into, and was sent to the Police. There are a few companies which are reported in that letter, but all was sent to the Police for investigation.

Mr Ganoo: But then can we ask the hon. Minister why the inquiry into these other companies is not progressing and nothing is being heard of that enquiry?

Mr Duval: It is progressing; what I am saying is that a number of arrests have been made, asset recovery has been seized and all these companies. Let me explain something to the hon. Member and that is important that I do so. There was this campaign by the FSC which included Ponzi schemes. A letter was sent to the Bank of Mauritius on 21 November. This was followed up with a second letter with a copy of a document on 10 December. Both letters were inquired into and were also sent to the Police, which is the inquiring agency. Both letters were sent and all these companies, Mr Speaker, Sir - I have taken it in my main reply, I can read it out again if you like – in which Whitedot International Consultancy Ltd, Sunkai Ltd, Je T'aime Marketing Company Ltd, GN Wealth Management Ltd, etc., but, obviously, a few of them which have not come out in the press, it will be stupid to give out their names because then the opposite will happen and these people will abscond. So, a few of them -from the information I have – which are fairly minor in relation to the amounts that are involved, these are being investigated by the Police, FIU, FSC and by the Bank of Mauritius.

Mr Ganoo: Well, we'll keep an eye, of course, Mr Speaker, Sir, because it is only yesterday that we heard about two new companies being enquired into when we know that for several weeks now, the scandal has blown up and known to the whole Mauritian population. Is the hon. Minister aware that in both cases of Whitedot International Consultancy Ltd and Sunkai Ltd the names of certain depositors had been removed from the list of depositors secured by the Police in the course of the enquiry?

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Silence!

Mr Duval: I have absolutely no information to that effect and I do not see why that would have been so.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker, Sir, this is, I think, cheap politics. What the Government has done so far has allowed all institutions to work independently and without any interference whatsoever, either from the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development or from the Prime Minister's Office. There is a number of

institutions working on the same files and all these institutions, Mr Speaker, Sir, are doing their work properly and independently without any political interference. Mr Speaker, Sir, I must say that it is, firstly, because of the information campaign; secondly, information received, given to the Police, from then it is gone into the press. That has brought people who perhaps - around the four corners of Mauritius - had never heard of Ponzis, thought they were making a decent investment which, of course, to any individual who knows about a bit financial services, knows that these cannot be true, that you offer 15% interest a month or a 1000% interest a year. Now, obviously, you have to be fairly very stupid to fall into that trap, but some people have fallen into the trap and it's when the information has been coming out in the press that these people have come forward more and more to denounce what is happening. I must also say, Mr Speaker, Sir, that Whitedot was set up in 2011. But a number of these companies are fairly new, they were set up very recently, in the last few months of 2012 or at least in 2012. That also shows, Mr Speaker, Sir, that Government has been quite quick in nipping in the bud the Ponzis.

Mr Ganoo: Nipping in the bud! There has been a billboard at Phoenix for two years showing lady Kaba and much more of that type of publicity. Only a few days ago, this billboard has been removed, Mr Speaker, Sir. But, the question I want to put to the hon. Minister now is: when we look at the figures that he has given to the House, the number of victims, the amount of money misappropriated and defrauded, the hon. Minister will agree that this is one of the unprecedented financial scams we have had in this country. I put it to him that in terms of suspects, the number of...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order! I say order, please! Put your question, hon. Leader of the Opposition!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Ms Deerpalsing! Proceed, hon. Leader of the Opposition!

Mr Ganoo: On the question of recovery of assets, the hon. Minister has told us that about Rs500 m. have been involved and Rs530 m. as far as Whitedot is concerned. If we take the case of Whitedot only, the hon. Minister agrees that the sum recovered so far is only about Rs1 m. and about 50 vehicles when Rs530 m. have been defrauded from these victims.

Mr Duval: Mr Speaker, Sir, on the matter of Sunkai and the billboard, I did not see it, but, obviously, neither the hon. Leader of the Opposition, because, all this time, there has not been any questions in Parliament, the budget or anything like that.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Silence!

Mr Duval: Nobody brought it up. He is at fault as well, Mr Speaker, Sir.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: I say order!

Mr Duval: He has not put any questions in Parliament. He would have done a service to the nation had he seen this billboard, Mr Speaker, Sir, he would have brought a copy forward, but he did not. This is a fact, Mr Speaker, Sir. When we talk about Ponzi schemes, we must understand how they work.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Silence, hon. Jhugroo!

Order! I say order! Order! Hon. Minister, proceed with your answer!

Mr Duval: Mr Speaker, Sir, as far as asset recovery is concerned, the nature of Ponzi schemes are such that it is the money of the investors themselves that are returned to them in the form of interest and new ones also. This is how it happens. So, obviously, there will be little money left. In fact, Ponzi schemes, Mr Speaker, Sir, as long as there are new investors, it is in the interest of nobody to report it, neither the perpetrators nor the depositors, because everybody is getting interest. At the end of the Ponzi schemes, of course, the whole thing actually blows up. It is not surprising that there is not a lot, but you will agree, Mr Speaker, Sir, that the Asset Recovery Act which was brought in recently by my colleague, the Attorney General, is a fantastic piece of legislation which is allowing us to recover the money.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Silence!

Mr Duval: As far as the Ponzi schemes are concerned, no jurisdiction in the world is protected from Ponzi schemes. Mr Speaker, Sir, let me take a few examples. In Romania, a company...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order! Order! Order!

(Interruptions)

Well, silence! I am on my feet! I would suggest that the Minister sticks to the contents of the question. Silence, hon. Ms Deerpalsing!

Mr Duval: The point that is being made is that somehow we were lax.

(Interruptions)

They can have extra time, I have no issue with that! I am sure you will, anyway! Mr Speaker, Sir, there is a company called MMM in Romania where up to 40 million people were defrauded. Regarding the Madoff case, Mr Speaker, Sir, 65 billion dollars were stolen by Madoff for about 20 years. In fact, in 2000, when it was reported to the Securities and Exchange Commission, they did not find out and it was allowed to carry on. In Tamil Nadu, Mr Speaker, Sir, in 2012, 12,000 investors were defrauded for 78 million dollars and the case goes on and on.

(Interruptions)

Recently, Mr Speaker, Sir, you have seen...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Silence!

(Interruptions)

Well, the hon. Minister is answering, allow him to answer!

(Interruptions)

Silence! Of course, I will take into account that a few questions should be allowed to the hon. Leader of the Opposition though time is over!

(Interruptions)

I say I will allow a few questions!

Mr Duval: Let me finish!

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: I think I have made my position very clear now. Hon. Leader of the Opposition put your question!

Mr Duval: I have no problem if they have extra time.

Mr Speaker: But I said you should be relevant to the contents of the question.

Mr Duval: No jurisdiction is protected from these, Mr Speaker, Sir. Last month, you saw that Deutsche bank is being investigated by Bundesbank.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Hon. Minister of Health, you are warned! Silence!

(Interruptions)

I don't want to hear! Hon. Minister of Health! Hon. Leader of the Opposition, proceed!

Mr Ganoo: How cheap! I put it to the hon. Minister: referring to what has happened to other countries or big States like Tamil Nadu where there are several millions of people living in this country, in the case of Mauritius, 3,000 victims on a population of one million are being defrauded, there is no comparison! But in the case of the suspects who have been arrested and released, is she aware - is he aware ...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order! I say order! Order, please! Hon. Leader of the Opposition proceed!

(Interruptions)

Silence, now! Order! I say enough is enough! Hon. Leader of the Opposition proceed!

Mr Ganoo: You will understand why I made the mistake of using the word 'she'. Is he aware that in the cases of two of these companies, the two masterminds who are ladies in the case of Sunkai and Je T'aime had been arrested and released with so much celerity and without objection from the Police?

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Silence! I say order!

(Interruptions)

Mr Duval: Mr Speaker, Sir, the hon. Leader of the Opposition should refrain from asking questions below the belt, but that is another issue.

(Interruptions)

So far as these two ladies are concerned, I understand that the Police did object - but I am not responsible for the Police - to bail and, in fact, they were granted bail.

Mr Speaker: Next question, hon. Leader of the Opposition! Hurry up!

(Interruptions)

Mr Ganoo: In the case of the Financial Services Commission, Mr Speaker, Sir, my question to the hon. Vice-Prime Minister is that, in that case, as the hon. Vice-Prime Minister has said, a letter was addressed to the FSC on the 21 November last year incriminating Sunkai Company which was engaged in money lending, deposit taking and so on, in spite of the fact that this letter was sent, no strong actions were taken by the FSC. The hon. Vice-Prime Minister must know that the law invests the FSC with different types of powers - sections 42, 43, 49, 50 empower the FSC to make investigation, site

inspections, to apply to the Judge for relief and protection to the CEO of the FSC, empower him to freezing of assets, but all these powers, the legal armada are there and at their disposal. The law is here! The FSC should have made use of all these powers and ...

Mr Speaker: Hon. Leader of the Opposition, I am sorry to interrupt. I suggest that you put a question. Don't make a statement!

(Interruptions)

Because the time is over! I am allowing you some more time! But questions, please!

Mr Duval: Mr Speaker, Sir, as I mentioned to the House, since 2011 I took over, a number of very important legislative amendments have been made to empower the Asset Recovery Unit, the FSC and the FIU despite the drastic reduction in the powers of the FIU which was made by the then previous Government in 2003. That is clear, Mr Speaker, Sir. As far as the letter of 21 November is concerned, I was very clear to the House that this letter was received by ...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Silence!

Mr Duval: This is a serious matter.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: If the hon. Member wants to make a point of order, he should make it! But don't interrupt the hon. Vice-Prime Minister.

Mr Duval: This is a serious matter. I am trying to answer. As far as the letter of 21 November is concerned, Mr Speaker, Sir, it was received by the Bank of Mauritius and acted upon by the Bank of Mauritius as was the letter of 10 December. There is no record of the letter being received by the FSC at that time. The FSC has first taken recognizance of the Sunkai affair in January when it came up in the papers. This is the information I have. Now, this is what I am giving to the House, Mr Speaker, Sir. I have asked the FSC on a number of occasions and this is the reply that I have received.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Li Kwong Wing!

Mr Li Kwong Wing: Mr Speaker, Sir, since these Ponzi schemes have been going on for several years, can the hon. Vice-Prime Minister inform the House when exactly was he informed of such investment scams and what actions he actually took to stop these activities, because is he aware that under section 44 of the Financial Services Act, the FSC has wide powers to control even companies which are not licensed? Because under the law it says –

“For the purpose of investigation, a licensee includes any person who ought to have been licensed under this Act.”

Therefore, has the hon. Vice- Prime Minister not failed to stop these activities under his brief?

Mr Duval: Mr Speaker, Sir, firstly, if I were to interfere with institutions, I would have been told that I am interfering. I am taking people on the list, off the list and whatever.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Silence!

Mr Duval: My role is to ensure that the best possible legal framework exists for these institutions to work independently.

(Interruptions)

That is my role. My role also, Mr Speaker, Sir, is to ensure that they collaborate and work with each other and this is what I am doing. As far as the powers of the FSC are concerned, this is undisputed. But the Bank of Mauritius also has under section 43 (2) of the Banking Act, powers to act. Both are currently enquiring into activities which are not regulated by license, by themselves. I have to answer, Mr Speaker, Sir. I am accused of failing, I have to answer that I have not failed.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: But in answering, try to be precise!

Mr Duval: How can I?

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Silence!

Mr Duval: As far as my role is concerned, we were made aware in March 2013 when these scams came into the press. Not before have we been made aware because the institutions are independent and they are secret. They are dealing with banking information and I am sure that the House will be happy to know that I am not going into banking information for every single one person here because they are dealing with banking information and they are secret. These suspicious transaction reports, for instance, are very serious documents which deal with banking information of citizens of this country. We were made aware in March and from then on, first role, we asked the Financial Secretary to enquire into how, and a chronology of events and to see what can be done. I can go into this if you wish, Mr Speaker, Sir - you are looking at me. One thing is what should be done by ourselves following these things. We met on various occasions with the Bank of Mauritius, the FIU, the FSC and the Asset Recovery Unit. On

02 April, I wrote to the IMF a long list of things to ask them - they came in 2012 - to come again, let's see what are the changes that need to be made in the light of the experiences we had. I have been to the IMF and I have talked to the team to Mauritius and also to the Vice-President of the IMF, to ask them to please be quick and come to the mission in Mauritius.

Mr Speaker: I will allow two more questions; one to hon. Uteem and the last question to the hon. Leader of the Opposition. Hon. Uteem!

(Interruptions)

I have said hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. Despite what the hon. Vice-Prime Minister has said, the Financial Intelligence and Anti-Money Laundering Act is very clear; the FIU has a duty to refer information to investigatory and supervisory authorities under section 13 of the Act. It has received information – according to what the hon. Vice-Prime Minister has said – in April 2012 and it is only one year later, that is, in March 2013 that the hon. Vice-Prime Minister referred the matter. Does not the hon. Vice-Prime Minister agree that in this instance the FIU has lamentably failed and should go?

(Interruptions)

Mr Duval: Mr Speaker, Sir, perhaps the hon. Member can tell me why in September 2003, amendments were brought ...

(Interruptions)

to the FIU Act ...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: If the hon. Vice- Prime Minister will not be allowed to answer his question. Well, Members should not forget that time is up! So, be quiet!

(Interruptions)

Silence, now!

Mr Duval: I am quite happy to answer the hon. Member.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: You may proceed, hon. Vice-Prime Minister!

Mr Duval: Mr Speaker, Sir, amendments were brought, so that the FIU could not, of its own accord, investigate into banks. Why in 2003 ...

(Interruptions)

This is the big question.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Silence, please!

Mr Duval: ... the law was brought in not to increase the powers of the FIU, but to emasculate it. It became a 'she'.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: I say silence!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Ms Deerpalsing, this is my second warning! Don't wait for the third one!

Mr Duval: Why it was emasculated in that way is to prevent it from supervise, to force banks to comply with these STRs. Ever since then, Mr Speaker, Sir, it has complained that the STRs have not been up to satisfaction. In the recent two Budgets, we have increased the powers of the Financial Intelligence Unit. So, nobody is perfect. Even in America, you have seen the Boston affair, the FBI; nobody is perfect. We have said, Mr Speaker, Sir, - because we have nothing to hide - that we will look at the responsiveness, the time that our institutes have taken to respond. We have said that we will look at that. We will look at the intensity of the investigation. We will look also, Mr Speaker, Sir, at the collaboration between them. We will look also at the regulatory gaps. All this is an experience that we will learn. Even the USA, after the Madoff case, - and I can provide to the House if you give me time, Mr Speaker, Sir, - provided a series of amendments to its laws. And even then, it has not stopped in the USA.

Mr Ganoo: This is another case of *la tisane...*

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Silence, allow the hon. Leader of the Opposition to put his question! Otherwise, we will be wasting time. Yes, proceed!

Mr Ganoo: This is another case of *la tisane après la mort*, Mr Speaker, Sir.

(Interruptions)

Is the hon. Minister aware that the...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Hon. Hossen! Hon. Bhagwan!

Mr Ganoo: Is the hon. Minister aware that the Chairman of the Financial Services...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Well, hon. Bhagwan, you are interrupting your Leader of the Opposition! Put your question, hon. Leader of the Opposition!

(Interruptions)

Quiet! Hon. Bhagwan! Proceed, hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Mr Ganoo: Is the hon. Minister aware that the Chairman of the FSC, Mr Marc Hein, himself said publicly in *l'Express*: “*Avec le recul, j’admets que nous aurions pu agir plus vite.*” Then, he said: “*mais les torts sont partagés entre les institutions financières et des banques commerciales*”. Is the hon. Minister aware that in view of the inaction, sloth, flippant attitude of the FIU and the FSC, and the failure of the Minister, who presides over two of these committees mentioned in the last part of my PNQ ...

(Interruptions)

... the Financial Services Council, the Financial Stability Committee, which have never met...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: No, hon. Leader of the Opposition...

Mr Ganoo: And this is the reason why...

Mr Speaker: Hon. Leader of the Opposition, I am on my feet. I have said: “Put question. Don’t make a statement and comments.” Wait a minute...

(Interruptions)

Lengthy questions will need lengthy answers, and time is up. It is the last question, hon. Leader of the Opposition.

(Interruptions)

Mr Ganoo: Had the hon. Minister and the regulatory institutions worked properly, the victims would have ...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Silence now! Silence!

Mr Ganoo: Had the hon. Minister fulfilled his statutory duty, the country would have been spared of the trauma, and the reputation of this country would not have been tarnished as it has been. The credibility of Mauritius would not have suffered such a heavy blow as an international financial centre!

(Interruptions)

Mr Duval: Mr Speaker, Sir...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Silence! The question has been put. The hon. Minister has the right to answer, and you answer hon. Minister of Finance.

Mr Duval: Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. I put it to the House...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: I warn now! There is not going to be an interruption in this House!

Mr Duval: I put it to the House that the hon. Leader of the Opposition himself and the whole Opposition, by not bringing...

Mr Speaker: Keep quiet hon. Soodhun!

(Interruptions)

Keep quiet!

(Interruptions)

I'll order you out!

(Interruptions)

Mr Duval: I bring it to the House ...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Silence please!

(Interruptions)

Mr Duval: Mr Speaker, Sir, I will have to start again.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: No more interruption please! Answer!

Mr Duval: The Leader of the Opposition himself, by not bringing to the attention of the House any of these scams, and by allowing only financial institutions...

(Interruptions)

In 2003, they emasculated the Financial Intelligence Unit; for whatever reason, they give! It is then...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: I say silence!

(Interruptions)

You complete your answer as soon as possible because time is over!

Mr Duval: Mr Speaker, Sir, as far as meetings are concerned, I am one of the Ministers that have most met the Financial Services Industry and all the organisations concerned. In fact, Mr Speaker, Sir, it has been the case that these committees met also under my predecessor; about once a year. That is when they meet officially. But, unofficially, I meet these guys at least once a month to discuss the issues, and that is why we have taken the number of initiatives. Mr Speaker, Sir, - *le mot de la fin* - this Government shares the grief of the people who have lost their money, and we will do our utmost to ensure that whatever asset left is distributed and that, where possible, no further scams of this sort should go ahead again, despite what the Opposition has done.

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

(Interruptions)

Hon. Roopun, you are interrupting me!

The Table has been advised that Parliamentary Questions B/170 and B/177 have been withdrawn. Question B/211 addressed to Dr. the hon. Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade will now be replied by Dr. the hon. Prime Minister. In keeping with practice, PQ B/211 will be replied at the end of Prime Minister's Question Time, time permitting. Hon. Ms Anquetil!

INDEPENDENCE ROAD, VACOAS - ROAD ACCIDENT

(No. B/165) Ms S. Anquetil (Fourth Member for Vacoas & Floreal) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister for Rodrigues whether, in regard to the road accident which caused the death of Mr G. F., on Friday 5 October 2012, at Independence Road, in Vacoas, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to where matters stand as to the inquiry carried out there into.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that the Police inquiry into all the circumstances relating to the accident which occurred on Friday 05 October 2012, resulting in the death of Mr G. F., has been completed, and the case file has been transmitted to the Director of Public Prosecutions.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I wish to point out that on the day that Mr G.F. passed away, that is, 11 October 2012, the Police arrested Mr S.P., driver of the private car involved in the accident, and a provisional charge for the offence of “Involuntary Homicide by Imprudence” was lodged against him before the District Court of Curepipe. He was bailed out on the same day after furnishing a surety of Rs10,000 and after entering in a recognizance of Rs25,000. His next Court appearance has been fixed for 04 June 2013.

Ms Anquetil: Mr Speaker, Sir, can the hon. Prime Minister inform the House whether, communications between the Police Department and the widow of Mr G. F. can be established to explain the process to her and to keep her updated on the progress.

The Prime Minister: I tend to agree with the hon. Member. I suppose hon. Member has asked the question because she probably feels that this hasn't been the case. I would tend to agree. We have said in the House and I have said myself in this House, and in fact, I must say that the Commissioner of Police has already put this in the framework of his Police service, but nevertheless it depends on the individual station, the people who are in charge. So, that is precisely why the Bill which is in front of the House, the Police and Criminal Evidence Bill, actually makes clear provision to keep victims informed and treats them with considerations.

**MAURITIUS POLICE FORCE - ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER OF POLICE &
SUPERINTENDENT OF POLICE - VACANCIES**

(No. B/166) Mr P. Jhugroo (First Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister for Rodrigues whether, in regard to the Mauritius Police Force, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to the number of vacancies presently existing in the post of –

- (a) Assistant Commissioner of Police, and
- (b) Superintendent of Police, indicating when they will be filled.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I have on many occasions informed the House that promotion in the Police Force falls under the purview of the Disciplined Forces Service Commission.

It is to be highlighted that vacancies in the Civil Service including the Police are not filled automatically but in accordance with the exigencies of the service. Accordingly, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that on the 06 December 2011, 13 Assistant Commissioners of Police and 38 Superintendents of Police have been promoted.

Mr Speaker, Sir, as a result of these promotions respectively to the rank of Assistant Commissioner of Police and of Superintendent of Police, vacancies have arisen, also consequential vacancies. Apart from that, there is also the retirement of Police Officers who have recently been promoted.

Mr Speaker, Sir, as I did inform the House in a reply last week, the exercise is ongoing and is nearing its completion.

Mr Jhugroo: Is the hon. Prime Minister aware that there are growing frustration among Police Officers of different grades and this is leading to a demotivation?

The Prime Minister: I hope not, but, as I said, this is a quite complicated exercise from what I understand because there is a performance related part in that. That is why it is taking a bit longer but it is nearing completion from what I understand.

Mr Jhugroo: Is the hon. Prime Minister aware that many branches and divisions all over are presently being headed by Superintendents of Police instead of ACPs?

The Prime Minister: I am not aware of that, Mr Speaker, Sir, but if the hon. Member comes with a substantive question, I will look into it.

NATIONAL DISASTER MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE - COMPOSITION

(No. B/167) Mr M. Seeruttun (Second Member for Vieux Grand Port & Rose Belle) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister for Rodrigues whether, in regard to the National Disaster Management Committee, he will state the –

- (a) composition thereof, indicating the name of the Chairperson, and
- (b) number of meetings held, since 01 January 2013 to date, indicating the outcome thereof.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, the Central Cyclone and Other Natural Disasters Committee which has been in operation since a long time is a policy organ which defines the roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders before, during and after natural disasters. It is chaired by the Secretary to the Cabinet and Head of the Civil Service.

A National Disaster and Operations Coordination Centre was set up in 2010, under the command of the Commissioner of Police, as an operational arm of the Central Cyclone and Other Natural Disasters Committee, to ensure timely disaster management response on the ground.

In cases of national emergency/crisis such as cyclones, tsunamis, torrential rains, landslides or whatever, the Centre is activated and initiates all necessary actions to deal with the situation.

I must point out, Mr Speaker, Sir, that my Office has obtained assistance from the French Authorities from Reunion Island for the consolidation of the activities of the Centre.

In regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed by the Secretary to the Cabinet and Head of the Civil Service and the Commissioner of Police that the Central Cyclone and Other Natural Disasters Committee and the National Disaster and Operations Coordination Centre Crisis Committee comprise, among others, representatives of the Prime Minister's Office; the Ministry of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping; the Ministry of Social Security, National Solidarity and Reform Institutions; the Ministry of Education and Human Resources; the Ministry of Local Government and Outer Islands; the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life; the Police Department; the Mauritius Meteorological Services Department; the Government Fire Services Department; the National Transport Authority; the Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation; the Central Electricity Board; the Central Water Authority and the Mauritius Red Cross Society.

Representatives of other Ministries/Departments/Organisations are co-opted to form part of the Central Cyclone and Other Natural Disasters Committee and the National Disaster and Operations Coordination Centre Crisis Committee as and when required.

In regard to part (b) of the question, Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that during the period of 01 January 2013 to 14 April 2013, the National Disaster and Operations Coordination Centre Crisis Committee met on eight occasions under the chairmanship of the Commissioner of Police with a view to coordinating and monitoring the actions of the Police and the various agencies deployed on the ground to deal with emergencies and disasters.

I am further informed by the Secretary to the Cabinet and Head of the Civil Service that the Central Cyclone and Other Disasters Committee met on three occasions.

During these meetings, the Committee discussed mainly flood resilience measures that need to be taken to mitigate the effects of flash floodings. In that respect, decisions were taken to -

- (i) devise an enhanced communication strategy among stakeholders involved in disaster response and management;
- (ii) review the mechanism of broadcasting weather bulletins to better inform the public;
- (iii) prepare a Protocol concerning flash floods;
- (iv) finalise the technical aspects of the modalities for alerting the population about eventual disasters through SMS;
- (v) update all flood-prone areas in the light of the findings of the reports commissioned by the Ministry of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping and the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development;
- (vi) examine the advisability of introducing legislation to enforce security measures such as provision for emergency exits, water tight doors and an efficient evacuation system in underground parkings and underpasses. As an immediate measure, the Ministry of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping is carrying out a survey of all underground parkings and underpasses to assess the security level and to submit recommendations as appropriate to the Committee, and also
- (vii) organise continuous public awareness campaigns which would contribute to a better understanding of the potential risks of flash floods as well as flood resilience measures.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I am further informed by the Secretary to the Cabinet and Head of the Civil Service that a meeting of the Central Cyclone and Other Disasters Committee was held in the morning of Saturday 13 April 2013 in the wake of the bad weather associated with cyclone Imelda.

The Committee decided that the alert system by SMS would be made operational, on a pilot basis, on that very day. The Police and the Fire Services Department were requested to mobilize their resources

to strategic places to attend to any emergency. The Police was tasked with the responsibility of contacting owners of buildings in flood-prone areas in Port Louis to ensure that underground parkings and underpasses were immediately closed in case of floodings. Finally, the Ministry of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping was requested to closely monitor landslide-prone areas and to liaise with Police and other stakeholders for assistance should the need arise.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I would like to reiterate to the House that Government is leaving no stone unturned to enhance our emergency response system. In this connection, a Singapore delegation visited Mauritius from 06 to 10 April 2013 to assist Government in understanding the factors thought to have contributed to the flash flood, if any, on 30 March last, analyse if appropriate actions were taken during the response and develop a Terms of Reference for future disaster risk management strategies.

The Singapore experts have already submitted their preliminary conclusions and these are being examined.

Also, I should like to point out that Ms Bellers, an expert with international experience in emergency preparedness and the management of humanitarian responses has been appointed to advise Government in the setting up of a distinct Disaster Management Centre to be established within a legislative framework for the disaster management in Mauritius.

Mr Seeruttun: M. le président, le Premier ministre peut-il nous dire, après l'inondation du 13 février, parce que Port Louis était paralysé, combien de fois entre le 13 février et le 30 mars ce comité s'est réuni et, si oui, quelles sont les délibérations? Peut-il *lay on the Table the Minutes* de ces réunions?

The Prime Minister: I heard the hon. Member say after the 13 of February, but Port Louis was not paralysed on the 13 of February...

(Interruptions)

no, not paralysed.

Mr Speaker: Next question hon. Seeruttun!

Mr Seeruttun: Le Premier ministre peut-il nous dire combien de fois entre le 13 février et le 30 mars le comité s'est réuni ? Peut-il nous dire le nombre de réunions et, s'il peut, *table les Minutes of Proceedings* de ces réunions ?

The Prime Minister: I did answer the question – eight and three.

Mr Speaker: Yes, hon. Lesjongard!

Mr Lesjongard: Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. May I ask the hon. Prime Minister as to the reasons why the main recommendation of the Fact Finding Committee on ex-Lola Flooding, that is, the establishment of a statutory Centre for Disaster Management by an Act of Parliament has not been implemented until now when we know that here in this House, we have sat 104 times since 2009?

The Prime Minister: First of all, let me just remind the hon. Member that I am the one who appointed Justice Domah. There was no such thing. I appointed so I take the responsibility....

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Silence!

(Interruptions)

The Prime Minister: The second thing...

(Interruptions)

Yes, of course, a lot of actions have been taken. The hon. Member wants to make propaganda for the first committee – he should go ahead and make!

(Interruptions)

Ask him how many measures have been taken!

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Silence!

(Interruptions)

The Prime Minister: As for legislative framework, it takes time. We have to examine others - not just what is said in the report. We have to get advice from others, including ...

(Interruptions)

The hon. Member can say what he wants. I am telling you, Government does not run like this!

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Last question, hon. Seeruttun!

Mr Seeruttun: Est-ce que le Premier ministre peut nous dire - concernant la réunion qui a eu lieu le 30 mars - à quel moment il a été informé des délibérations de cette réunion ?

The Prime Minister: As soon as the Secretary to the Cabinet and the Commissioner of the Police, and the Meteo started saying that there were dangerous floods that were occurring at that time.

Mr Speaker: Next question, hon. Seeruttun!

FLASH FLOODS – SMF – DEPLOYMENT

(No. B/168) Mr M. Seeruttun (Second Member for Vieux Grand Port & Rose Belle) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister for Rodrigues whether, in regard to the flash floods of 30 March 2013, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to the time at which the members of the Special Mobile Force were deployed in the affected areas, indicating –

- (a) the number thereof who were deployed, and
- (b) their respective posting.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that not only members of the Special Mobile Force, but also other Units of the Police Force were indeed expeditiously deployed in the affected areas at the material time. However, since the use of operational control of the members of the Police Force falls under the responsibility of the Commissioner of Police under section 71(4) of the Constitution, it is for him to decide on the specific number and places of deployment of members of the Special Mobile Force as well as of other Police Units on the ground.

However, I can assure the House and the hon. Member that there had been active involvement of the various Units of the Police Force, as well as that of the Fire Services, to provide vital assistance to motorists and pedestrians who were in danger.

Furthermore, as the House may be aware, a Judicial Inquiry will, by operation of the law, be held into the causes of death of the victims of 30 March 2013 as the result of the flash floods.

Dr. S. Boolell: Mr Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Prime Minister whether he would not be of the view that the whole Police Force, including the Special Mobile Force, should have been placed on national alert, with even off-duty personnel recalled?

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I keep saying that these events were unprecedented. There were flash floods; it is not something that you had plenty of warning about. As soon as the flash floods started and it looked as if that there were going to be continuing rains, the whole operations started. That is what happened.

Mr Bhagwan: The hon. Prime Minister stated that the various Units of the Police Force were deployed. How does the hon. Prime Minister reconcile the fact that one Minister of his Government - the Minister of Labour - has publicly stated that he has not seen Police Officers during the whole floods in Port Louis? He publicly made statements.

The Prime Minister: I must tell the hon. Member that there were flash floods. I do not know whether he actually said that or not, but...

(Interruptions)

No, the Police had to be covered! I have photographs. I can show a photograph. They have to wear different suits because of the weather.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Silence!

The Prime Minister: They have to protect themselves. Maybe that is the reason, but there were Police Officers there. That is a fact. We have photographs to show this, Mr Speaker, Sir.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Hon. Leader of the Opposition!

(Interruptions)

Silence!

(Interruptions)

Order, please!

Mr Ganoo: Is the hon. Prime Minister aware that the Police Standing Orders, in particular Standing Order 134, I think, provide for, in cases of floods, what should the Police do and there are provisions which are spelt out in details about the deployment of the different Units of the Police Force in case of floods?

On 30 March, it would seem that the Police had not adhered to the provisions of these Standing Orders. Can the hon. Prime Minister tell us why this was not the case?

The Prime Minister: This is precisely why - I hope the hon. Leader of the Opposition understands. The point is that these were flash floods and unprecedented. If the Leader of the Opposition sees the Singaporean Preliminary Report, they already said that this was unexpected, unprecedented and could not have been predicted. Even in Singapore - that's what they said - they have problems in places that they never had floods before. As soon as this event was occurring, and it was clear that this was happening, then they were deployed but, at the minute it happened, they could not, because nobody knew.

Mr Speaker: Last question, hon. Seeruttun!

Mr Seeruttun: Est-ce que le Premier ministre peut nous dire pourquoi dans des régions sinistrées, comme Canal Dayot et Pailles, ni le jour du désastre, ni le lendemain, il n'y avait aucun membre de la *SMF* sur place pour déblayer la région ?

(Interruptions)

The Prime Minister: It is actually untrue. I have been there and I have seen them.

(Interruptions)

It is untrue. The hon. Member is lying!

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order!

(Interruptions)

Next question, hon. Obeegadoo!

(Interruptions)

Silence, please!

MAURITIAN KREOL – PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION - FORMAL USE

(No. B/169) Mr S. Obeegadoo (Third Member for Curepipe & Midlands) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister for Rodrigues whether, in regard to the Mauritian Kreol, he will state if, further to the findings of the 2011 Population Census, Government will authorize and facilitate the formal use thereof in public administration, including in Parliament, local authorities, courts of law and for the application procedures having regard to social benefits and housing.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, the House will note that it is this Government - please note, it is this Government - which has given official recognition to Mauritian Kreol and approved its introduction in schools.

It is also this Government which has set up a Creole-Speaking Union by virtue of the Creole-Speaking Union Act, one of the objectives of which is precisely to promote the Creole language in its spoken and written forms.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Hon. Minister of Health, do not interrupt!

The Prime Minister: Besides, the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination has recently commended Mauritius for the establishment of language unions and the inclusion of *Kreol Morisien* and Bhojpuri as heritage languages and mother tongues in the primary school curricula.

Mr Speaker, Sir, in regard to the use of Mauritian Kreol in our Courts of Law, I am informed by the Master and Registrar that Kreol is already widely used and the usual process is that evidence is habitually adduced in Creole in all cases, except where foreigners are called to depone or are litigants. In fact, the law provides that any person may give his evidence in the language with which he is best acquainted. All Courts in Mauritius have always admitted depositions in Mauritian Kreol by parties and witnesses.

Mr Speaker, Sir, as I have stated in my reply to previous Parliamentary Questions on this subject matter, there are a number of implications that would need to be addressed before one can even contemplate the formal use of Creole language in the National Assembly.

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, since we do now have an agreed standardised spelling and grammar for Mauritian Kreol, would the hon. Prime Minister not agree that it is a basic human rights issue that whereas statements are recorded by the Police from individuals in Creole, but without any training of the Police Officers, in Courts the statements are produced as evidence, but oral evidence given in Creole is translated into English to form part of the official record by a Magistrate who is untrained and that transcript does not have to be approved by the witness?

The Prime Minister: I do not know why the hon. Member said the Magistrate is untrained. Untrained in what?

Mr Obeegadoo: In Creole.

The Prime Minister: In Creole! So, the Magistrate cannot speak Creole?

(Interruptions)

Mr Obeegadoo: No, spelling and grammar.

The Prime Minister: Not just the Magistrate, there are lots of people! So, that is why I said there are implications, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, as regards our Parliament...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker is looking at the time! Does that mean that I am not allowed two more questions, Sir?

Mr Speaker: Have I said anything?

Mr Obeegadoo: No, no. Fine!

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Silence!

(Interruptions)

Please, no adverse comments!

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, in 2011, two years ago, in answer to a question from hon. Bhagwan, the hon. Prime Minister stated that once we have agreed spelling and grammar for Mauritian Creole, the desirability and advisability of allowing the use of Creole in the National Assembly will be considered - two years on. Will the hon. Prime Minister tell us what his stand now is?

The Prime Minister: Two years on, two years since, we have seen what kind of unruly behaviour and language is being used! We become wiser with events.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Hon. Seeruttun!

(Interruptions)

Well, if hon. Members are going to make noise, we will not be able to proceed.

(Interruptions)

Some silence now! Hon. Seeruttun!

Mr Seeruttun: Mr Speaker, Sir, on a point of order! I was just putting a question to the hon. Prime Minister and he treated me a liar and I consider it inappropriate. I would request that you ask him to withdraw that word.

(Interruptions)

The Prime Minister: I said it, yes; but it was a lie, because they were there.

(Interruptions)

It was a lie!

Mr Seeruttun: Mr Speaker, Sir, I...

Mr Speaker: Last question!

Mr Seeruttun: I do maintain that...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: I said last question!

(Interruptions)

Mr Seeruttun: I am insisting on the fact that he has to withdraw the word 'liar'!

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: The hon. Member is insisting on the question.

(Interruptions)

I look at the hon. Prime Minister.

(Interruptions)

Is the hon. Prime Minister answering? Yes, please proceed.

The Prime Minister: I would gladly withdraw if the hon. Member agrees that they were there.

(Interruptions)

He cannot say the SMF was not there when they were there!

(Interruptions)

How can I accept, Mr Speaker, Sir, that the hon. Member misleads the press and the people like this?

(Interruptions)

They were there!

(Interruptions)

No, they were there!

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Okay, now I have to make an announcement. The Table has been advised that Parliamentary Question Nos. B/210 and B/211 have been withdrawn. Dr. S. Boolell!

(Interruptions)

Okay, one last question to hon. Obeegadoo!

(Interruptions)

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, I note that the improper language in the House does not depend on Creole.

(Interruptions)

The word 'shit' was not uttered in Creole and that word was withdrawn for being improper!

Mr Speaker: Is this a question?

Mr Obeegadoo: So, if I may put my question.

Mr Speaker: Is this a question?

(Interruptions)

Is this a question?

Mr Obeegadoo: It was the preamble.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: It is irrelevant to the question put, okay? If the hon. Member has a supplementary, he may put his question!

Mr Obeegadoo: Yes, so my question, Mr Speaker, Sir, is: given that we now have standardised Creole, will the hon. Prime Minister consider having public notices in places like dangerous beaches, hospitals and Social Security Offices placed also in Creole?

(Interruptions)

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, we must be careful...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Silence!

The Prime Minister: We must be careful not to do as if people in Mauritius do not understand French and English. But the point about beaches is probably something that we – I do not know whether there are implications in this, I will have to look into it.

Mr Speaker: Next question!

SEPT CASCADES – SMF OFFICERS - DEATH

(No. B/170) Dr. S. Boolell (Second Member for Curepipe & Midlands) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister for Rodrigues whether, in regard to the case of late L. S. N. and N. K. B., Officers of the Special Mobile Force, who

died during training at Sept Cascades, on 29 September 2012, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to if financial compensation has been paid to the dependants thereof and if so, indicate the quantum thereof and, if not, why not.

(Withdrawn)

WEATHER RADAR - ACQUISITION

(No. B/171) Mr P. Jugnauth (First Member for Quartier Militaire & Moka) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister for Rodrigues whether he will state the reasons why the acquisition of a radar, announced in the 2010-2015 Government Programme, was not included in the 2012-2015 Government Programme.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Director of the Mauritius Meteorological Services that the weather radar at Trou aux Cerfs was installed in 1977 through funding from the UNDP. The equipment functioned until the year 2000. By that time, the quality of the pictures was poor and could not be used for reliable meteorological analysis. The radar system failed completely by the year 2002.

In February 2003, the then Director of the Mauritius Meteorological Services informed the Prime Minister's Office that, following consultation with the Japan Weather Association, the latter had indicated that a soft loan might be made available by the Government of Japan for financing the procurement of a new weather radar system.

In March 2003, the Prime Minister's Office sought the views of the Ministry of Finance on the proposal for the acquisition of a new radar through a soft loan from the Government of Japan.

In its reply, the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development expressed the view that, and I quote -

“The acquisition of the weather radar system should be made through a proper tendering exercise, in respect of the equipment itself as well as the financing, to ensure that value for money is obtained”.

In view of the reply made by the Ministry of Finance, the matter was not pursued any further with the Japanese authorities.

(Interruptions)

And...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Silence!

(Interruptions)

The Prime Minister: And, Mr Speaker, Sir, no further action was taken for the procurement of a new radar at all.

(Interruptions)

Finish! Dead!

Mr Speaker, Sir, since my Government assumed office in 2005, efforts have been made for the replacement of the existing weather radar.

In August 2006, during the official visit of the hon. Minister of Foreign Affairs to the People's Republic of China, the Chinese Authorities were approached to provide assistance to Mauritius for the setting-up of an Early Warning System for natural disasters. In that respect, a request was made to the People's Republic of China for the provision of a weather radar.

However, there was no response from the Chinese side.

In August 2007, my Office deputed the then Director of the Mauritius Meteorological Services to Réunion Island to discuss the possibility of France installing a weather radar at Trou aux Cerfs. Because that radar could have catered for both Mauritius and for that part of Réunion Island which is not covered by the existing radar system there. Subsequently, France decided to install a second radar in the South East of Reunion Island itself.

I am further informed by the Director of the Mauritius Meteorological Services that new initiatives undertaken at the level of the Indian Ocean Commission in July 2008, for the provision of a regional radar network, with the assistance of the European Union, did not also materialise.

In February 2009, the Mauritius Meteorological Services sought the assistance of the UNDP to carry out a feasibility study for the provision of a new weather radar system as the project required specialised skills not available in Mauritius or at the Mauritius Meteorological Services. This request for assistance also did not go through.

Mr Speaker, Sir, in July 2009, the Mauritius Meteorological Services submitted a formal application to the Japan International Cooperation Agency for financing both a feasibility study and subsequently the procurement of a new radar. The request was positively considered by the Japanese authorities and in September 2009, a team of experts visited the Mauritius Meteorological Services for further discussions regarding the feasibility of the project.

A second team of Japanese Experts came to Mauritius in May 2010 to conduct the preparatory mission to further look at the technical aspects of the project.

In parallel, following my visit to Reunion Island in January 2011, we made a request to the French Authorities to –

- (i) advise the Mauritius Meteorological Services on the specifications of a new weather radar to be purchased, and
- (ii) carry out a site visit at Trou aux Cerfs and advise on the suitability or otherwise of the present location to accommodate the new radar.

The French Authorities responded positively to the request and designated an expert to carry out the exercise in Mauritius on 29 and 30 August 2011.

The expert submitted his Report in September 2011 and recommended, *inter alia*, that an S-band Doppler Radar would be appropriate for Mauritius.

The recommendations of the French Expert formed the basis of discussions with the Japanese Experts who subsequently visited Mauritius to finalise the project for the provision of a meteorological radar system.

The cost of the radar, Mr Speaker, Sir, and its installation is nearly Rs500 m. and I am thankful to the Government of Japan to have given us a grant under the Japanese International Cooperation Agency Programme.

Mr Speaker, Sir, according to the work programme established by the Japanese authorities, the new meteorological radar system would be operational by 2015.

The House would appreciate, Mr Speaker, Sir, that a weather radar is a very sophisticated piece of equipment which is not available off the shelf as some people seem to think. The choice of a radar, its specifications, its technology it requires, its performance as well as its installation and commissioning call for the services of experts which are not available locally. But thanks to the technical assistance from Japan we shall have the radar by 2015.

In fact, Mr Speaker, Sir, as for the Government Programme, mention was made in the Government Programme 2010-2015 about the acquisition of a weather radar for the Mauritius Meteorological Services.

This measure was not included in the 2012-2015 Government Programme for the very simple reason that the project had been finalised and had received a positive consideration for financing from the Japanese authorities.

(Interruptions)

Mr Jugnauth: Is the hon. Prime Minister aware that the former Director of the Meteorological Services had stated publicly that should the Meteorological Services have been in possession of a working radar, they would have been in a better position to give a more precise ...

(Interruptions)

...prediction for the weather?

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, well, if we had taken the radar at that time, he would not have said this. But let me say, I do not quite understand why he said that because in his own report, he said exactly the opposite. The other former Directors of the Meteorological Services, Mr Sok Appadu and the others, all said that the radar would have made no difference. It is good perhaps that I tell the hon. Member that the Singaporean experts are also of the same view.

Mr Speaker: Last question!

Mr Jugnauth: From what the hon. Prime Minister has said, has he been able to find out how long does it take to have this kind of radar to be manufactured?

The Prime Minister: I did say it is not as easy as perhaps some people think.

First of all, when the Japanese experts came for the first time, it was a question of whether the site itself, Trou aux Cerfs, would be the right site. So, that is why they came and they had a look. They decided then that the site was right. They had to take all sorts of measurements and all these things. Then, they have to decide on the technicalities. That is why we asked the French Authorities if they could give us some advice because we did not know. They said that we should have this S-Band Doppler radar, which we forwarded to the Japanese. They came to discuss it. Now, they also said that the whole building has to be completely pulled down and that a new building - because there are different specifications - has to be put in place. That is why they said that they will be ready. They have a complicated system; they did not want us to say that we have talked to them at the beginning because they have a different system there, Mr Speaker, Sir. Since it is out, I am saying it. They said that by 2015, it would be ready.

MBC – MRS R. A. – ACCESS

(No. B/177) Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin and Petite Riviere) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications, Minister for Rodrigues whether, in regard to the Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain therefrom, information as to if, on Monday 15 April 2013, a security officer denied Mrs R.

A., employee thereof and Trade Unionist, access to the headquarters thereof, and if so, indicate the reasons therefor.

(Withdrawn)

Mr Speaker: Time is over! I suspend the sitting for one and a half hour.

At 1.12 p.m the sitting was suspended.

On resuming at 2.49 p.m. with Mr Speaker in the Chair.

CHAMAREL - PRE-PRIMARY SCHOOL - CONSTRUCTION

(No. B/181) Mrs J. Radegonde-Haines (Fourth Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether, in regard to the construction of the pre-primary school of Chamarel, he will state the -

- (a) expected start and completion dates thereof respectively, indicating when it is scheduled to be operational, and
- (b) cost thereof.

Dr. Bunwaree: Mr Speaker, Sir, in regard to part (a) of the question, works started on 15 June 2012 and were expected to be completed by end of December 2012. However, implementation of the project has been delayed due to, firstly, the nature of the site which I am informed, warranted additional external site works and also due to bad weather conditions. Works are now expected to be completed in the second week of May 2013. The Pre-primary Unit will consequently be operational in the third week of May 2013, that is, in two to three weeks' time.

Regarding part (b) of the question, the cost of the project is Rs5.3 m.

Mrs Radegonde-Haines: Mr Speaker, Sir, please allow me to make reference to two PQs that I asked the hon. Minister on 03 May 2011 and 15 November 2011, where we were informed that the construction of the pre-primary school was initiated since 2009. We understand that there have been two circumstances: nature of the site or bad weather conditions. But the project was scheduled to be completed in January 2012, and thereafter, delayed to January 2013 and until now being affected by considerable delays. In view of this, can the hon. Minister tell us as to whether the Construction Manager and the Project Manager have not recognised that the project was unlikely to achieve the target for completion, and if so, why measures have not been taken to drive the project forward to the earliest possible completion?

Dr. Bunwaree: I said, earlier, in my reply to my PQs, the reasons that were behind the delay of the project. Last time, when I answered the question, I talked about the long and laborious exercise for tendering procedures which lasted eight months and at the close of which, it was found that none of the bidders was found to be compliant. We had to start the exercise altogether. This is our system as we know. The hon. Member must also realise that I did mention and how much I was interested in having this project done because the idea was to get rid of that school over there. In fact, I did all I could to maintain the school. We are going to have a beautiful school in that region which will be ready in two or three weeks' time. Well, we did talk to the Project Managers, of course, but, first of all, we were told that when the contractor started the job that he saw that there was a slope which was very difficult and that could be dangerous for children. Then, the site of the building had to be relocated on the land. That took some time but, fortunately, we are coming to the end of it.

Mrs Radegonde-Haines: Mr Speaker, Sir, can the hon. Minister tell us if the sum of Rs5.3 m. is the total value of the project as budgeted or it includes extra cost between the start of the project and the projected extension and, if so, give details to how much was the project estimated and the cost increase?

Dr. Bunwaree: A sum of Rs6 m. was earmarked for this. In fact - after tendering procedure - it cost Rs5.2 m. and I must also say that this is only for the construction cost of the building, but the land is something different. It cost Rs1.2 m. and it was bought previous to this procedure for the building itself.

Mrs Radegonde-Haines: Mr Speaker, Sir, from my information the contractor has underpaid his employees and worked on many contracts. May the Minister check the information, please?

Dr. Bunwaree: This is something that happens; we have so many schools concerned. Not only schools, but the contractors have other contracts at the same time. In fact, this contractor has done all his best, but he has not charged anything extra for the slight delay where he was responsible.

FARMERS - RAIN WATER HARVESTING SCHEME

(No. B/182) Mrs J. Radegonde-Haines (Fourth Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Minister of Agro-Industry and Food Security whether, in regard to the Rain Water Harvesting Scheme, he will state the -

- (a) number of farmers who have submitted applications therefor, indicating the number thereof who have benefited therefrom, and
- (b) amount of money disbursed.

Mr Faugoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, The Rainwater Harvesting Scheme was launched in March 2012 with a view to alleviating the water scarcity problem faced by farmers during the dry season.

As per this Scheme, farmers registered with the Small Farmers Welfare Fund are eligible for a grant of 40% of the cost of the rainwater harvest facility up to a maximum of Rs80,000.

As regards part (a) of the question, I am informed by AREU that as at date 23 applications have been received from farmers, of which 13 have been approved. One application has been rejected as the applicant did not meet the criteria established for eligibility under the Scheme. Nine applications are under process and those nine applicants have been requested to submit some missing documents.

As far as part (b) is concerned, I am informed that as at date Rs582,261 have been disbursed under the Scheme.

Mrs Radegonde-Haines: Mr Speaker, Sir, can the hon. Minister inform the House about the time frame and budget plan for this project?

Mr Faugoo: There is no particular time frame, it is an open scheme. The processing also is done on a fast track basis, there is no time frame.

Mrs Radegonde-Haines: Mr Speaker, Sir, from my information I will table a copy, allow me to read, I quote –

“The Mauritian Government has announced that a Rain Water Harvesting Scheme will be implemented and summaries Rs12 m. or 419,580 USD over three years will be spent to circumvent the problems of water precipitation that has persisted since 2006 coupled with irregular agricultural infrastructure”.

Mr Speaker: You need not table this paper.

CHILD MENTORING PROGRAMME – SET UP

(No. B/183) **Mrs L. Ribot (Third Member for Stanley & Rose Hill)** asked the Minister of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare whether, in regard to the Child Mentoring Programme, she will state when it was set up, indicating since then, the number of -

- (a) children concerned therewith, indicating their respective age, and
- (b) mentors concerned therewith, indicating the training given thereto.

Mrs Martin: Mr Speaker, Sir, I wish to inform the House that the Child Mentoring Scheme was incorporated in the Child Protection (Amendment) Act in 2008. The Child Mentoring Programme was initiated in June 2009. The objectives of the scheme are to help children between the ages of 10 to 16 years who suffer from mild behavioural problems -

- i. to have the care and guidance from a role model, and

ii. to improve their relationship with their parents.

Concerning part (a) of the question, the Programme was launched on a pilot basis in June 2012 when the first mentoring order was obtained at the level of the District Court. As at date, there are 10 child mentees in the age range of 11 to 16 years who are being assisted by eight child mentors. Procedures are underway to assist additional five child mentees who will be supported by four child mentors.

Mr Speaker Sir, I wish to inform the hon. Member that as regards part (b) of the question, following a press advert on 28 July 2009, 40 candidates responded positively. They were given training to act as mentors. However, after the training, only 15 agreed to act as mentors. Out of the 15 mentors, one left and two requested for leave and they will resume in January and August 2014 respectively.

Two NGOs, namely, Terre de Paix and CEDEM provided a three month on-the-job-training to the mentors in two different batches from February to April 2012 and from June to September 2012.

Mrs Ribot: Mr Speaker, Sir, I would like to ask the hon. Minister whether a certificate of morality is required of the mentors before they are recruited?

Mrs Martin: I am informed that this is the case, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mrs Labelle: So may I ask the hon. Minister whether a psychological profile is being drawn for the mentors and by whom?

Mrs Martin: Yes, Mr Speaker, Sir, they are, in fact, assessed by the psychologist of the Ministry before they start with the mentoring process.

Mr Assirvaden: Est-ce qu'on peut savoir du ministre qui donne ce *training* aux *mentors*?

Mr Speaker: Well I think ... you are ... at this stage ... Withdraw your question. Not yet.

(Interruptions)

Mrs Ribot: Mr Speaker, Sir, I would like to know from the hon. Minister...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order please!

Mrs Ribot: *Bien essayé!* I would like to know from the hon. Minister for how long the mentees remain under the care and guidance of the mentors?

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Silence!

Mrs Martin: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed that normally the period of time within which the mentoring process takes place depends on the magistrate, but it varies generally from six months to a year.

Mrs Ribot: Mr Speaker, Sir, I would like to know from the hon. Minister the name of the Chairperson and members of the Child Mentoring Committee, the date of their appointment and the date of their last meeting?

Mrs Martin: Mr Speaker, Sir, I can circulate the answer, but the name of the Chairperson is Mrs Narainsamy.

Mrs Ribot: I would also like to know from the hon. Minister the fees paid to the mentors and the cost of the programme since it has been set up.

Mrs Martin: Mr Speaker, Sir, I would request the hon. Member to come with a substantive question with regard to the total sum of the fees, but I am informed that a stipend of Rs1500 which is paid monthly to the mentors.

GRNW - RESIDENTIAL CARE DROP-IN-CENTRE

(No. B/184) **Mrs L. Ribot (Third Member for Stanley & Rose Hill)** asked the Minister of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare whether, in regard to the shelter at Grand River North West, she will state if it is presently operational and, if so, indicate -

- (a) the name of the Non-Governmental Organisation entrusted with the management thereof, and
- (b) if there are inmates thereat, and if so, indicate their respective age and, if not, why not.

Mrs Martin: Mr Speaker, Sir, I presume that the hon. Member is referring to the Residential Care Drop-In Centre for the protection and rehabilitation of children from any forms of sexual abuse and exploitation at Grand River North West. I refer the hon. Member to the statement I made in this House on 09 April 2013 in light thereof replies to part (a) and (b) do not arise.

Mrs Ribot: Mr Speaker, Sir, according to the Minister's reply at PQ No. B/590 in October 2012, the hon. Minister declared that the Ministry had engaged into discussion with the MACOSS to see what was preventing the NGOs to go for the bidding exercise. I would like to know if such a meeting had taken place and what was the finding of the Ministry?

Mrs Martin: Mr Speaker, Sir, several findings were, in fact, outlined. One of them was about the difficulties of the procedure requirements and we had tried, in fact, to open tender this time to international bidding in order to give more opportunities to potential bidders.

Mrs Ribot: Mr Speaker, Sir, we understand that the new international bidding exercise had been launched and the closing date was supposed to be yesterday. Can we know from the hon. Minister if she has got information about the number of bidders received, and can we also know whether the same guidelines and conditions were attached to the international bid as they were to the national one?

Mrs Martin: I am not really aware of the details of the same guidelines or not, Mr Speaker, Sir, but I am informed that, at the closing of 22 April, one bid had been received.

Mr Speaker: Next question! Hon. Ms Anquetil!

NATIONAL MINIMUM WAGE - INTRODUCTION

(No. B/185) Ms S. Anquetil (Fourth Member for Vacoas & Floreal) asked the Minister of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment whether he will state if consideration will be given for the introduction of an across-the-board national minimum wage and, if so, give details thereof and, if not, why not.

Mr Mohamed: Mr Speaker, Sir, at the meeting of the Tripartite Committee on salary compensation held in September 2012 and chaired by the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development, representatives of the workers' organisations made a request for consideration to be given to the introduction of a national minimum wage.

Following that request, the issue is being taken up at the level of the Technical Committee on Labour and Industrial Relations Issues set under of the National Tripartite Forum.

It is to be noted that -

- the National Tripartite Forum has been set up administratively in October 2010 to act as a permanent forum for discussion among social partners, and it is an apex body comprising representatives of Government, employers and workers, and operates under my chairpersonship with two vice-chairpersons, one from the employers' organisations and one from the workers' organisations, and
- the Technical Committee on Labour and Industrial Relations Issues consists of two representatives each from Government's, employers' and workers' sides and is presided by the Director, Labour and Industrial Relations.

The said Technical Committee have so far met on two occasions on this specific issue raised by the hon. Member on 24 January 2013 and 21 February 2013 to discuss the issue of national minimum wage and, in view of the implications and complexities of the subject, there has been consensus among the members to seek expertise and guidance from the ILO as well as from local resource persons who

have conducted studies on that issue. There are certain issues that will have to be considered, Mr Speaker, Sir. For instance, there are some documents and experts that say that a national minimum wage is good because it sorts out and brings a solution to poverty alleviation. There are certain other experts that say that a national minimum wage would be very bad since it really destroys job creation. So, it is a complex issue, and there are various opinions from various quarters. That is why this matter needs to be discussed further at subsequent meetings of the Technical Committee.

The hon. Member, Mr Speaker, Sir, may also wish to note that my Ministry has already, on 26 March of this year, forwarded an official request to the ILO for them to send technical assistance to help us on this particular issue. I also personally met the Director-General of the ILO in March of this year where he has promised to send expertise to help us in this particular subject as soon as possible.

Ms Anquetil: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am very happy that the hon. Minister is a supporter of the minimum wage. Can the hon. Minister state the time frame for the implementation of an across-the-board minimum wage in our country?

Mr Mohamed: As I have said, we have to listen to experts in the field, Mr Speaker, Sir. We have to listen to experts who will have to advise us - in addition to what I have just said - on what are the issues that have to be placed in such an equation; what are the issues that have to be removed from the equation; what is the quantum that they would recommend; whether it would be good for job creation; must it live side by side with the National Remuneration Board or must we do away with the National Remuneration Board; is it good for the country, and whether we must have a specific system created for Mauritius or not. So, all these issues will have to be discussed at the level of the said National Tripartite Forum Technical Committee and, obviously, once we receive expert advice, we will be in a better position to establish a time frame.

Mrs Radegonde-Haines: Since the hon. Minister is talking about experts, can I ask him to consider families earning a minimum wage in our country? Today, they may be still living below the minimum poverty income level, 6.2 as set by the NEF, the National Empowerment Fund, if we calculate it right. Can he also consider the real value of the minimum wage which over time has been eroded by inflation? Many times, in this House, we heard discussions about inflation and the minimum wage.

Mr Mohamed: Mr Speaker, Sir, the precise reason why we have been positive to listen to trade unionists, workers' representatives, the call they made to the hon. Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development last year, is precisely because we believe that there are certain systems that are set up in our country such as the National Remuneration Board, that precisely takes into account, in certain specific sectors, what a minimum wage and minimum conditions shall be. Must they

be reviewed or must they not be reviewed? And if they are to be reviewed, in what way will they be reviewed? We are a Government that believes that we should always be listening, and also we are ready to review if it is for the good of the country. I can assure the hon. Member, Mr Speaker, Sir, that if it has to be reviewed, as usual, whenever there is anything to be reviewed in favour of workers, it will be this Government that will do it.

Mr Obeegadoo: I have two questions. The first question is the minimum wage which, of course, is relevant for those not covered by remuneration orders. Would the hon. Minister kindly indicate to the House, as of now, how many workers, how many persons in employment, what percentage of the labour force is not covered by a remuneration order?

Mr Mohamed: I don't have the exact figures; what percentage of workers. However, if the hon. Member wishes to know what sectors are covered by remuneration orders, I invite him to go to the website of the Ministry and he will find out all the recent remuneration orders and changes that have been thereon. There have been a lot of recent remuneration orders that have been proposed and approved by myself as Minister. As far as the number that is not covered by the remuneration orders, I do not have the exact figures. Should the hon. Member require an exact answer, a substantive question can be sent to me, and I shall reply to it.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Leader of the Opposition!

Mr Ganoo: Did I understand the hon. Minister to be saying that the introduction of a national minimum wage tantamount to the doing away of the National Remuneration Board?

Mr Mohamed: No. Let me be clearer for the hon. Leader of the Opposition to understand, Mr Speaker, Sir. I am saying that we are in a situation where we have had a request from group of workers to look into the possibility of introducing a national minimum wage. That has been a call from workers for many, many years now. So, we need to be advised by experts as to whether or not we should come ahead with the national minimum wage. Now, if we do come ahead, if we are advised to do it, what form will it take? We want to listen from the experts as to whether it can live or stand side by side with the National Remuneration Board, or maybe we have to do away with it and come up with a new system altogether in the interest of the country and the workers. We are all ears, and we are ready to listen to experts. That's what I am saying.

Ms Deerpalsing: Mr Speaker, Sir, talking about minimum wage and the NRB, can the hon. Minister inform the House whether he is aware that in schools we have women cleaning schools at a salary of, I think, Rs2,000 per month - cleaning of whole school just by themselves - and whether these kinds of workers would be taken into...

(Interruptions)

Can I please ask my question in peace?

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Put your question!

(Interruptions)

Order!

Ms Deerpalsing: Shut up! Shut up!

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order please! Silence!

Ms Deerpalsing: Can the hon. Minister inform the House whether these women would be taken into consideration either under the NRB or under a possible eventual minimum wage salary?

Mr Mohamed: In actual fact, the hon. Member is right. There are, Mr Speaker, Sir, not only women but people who are employed - in this particular case, not by the Ministry of Education and Human Resources, but if I am not mistaken, by the Parent-Teacher Association - part-time, on a shift system or somehow. So, they take advantage of loopholes to pay less to workers who are doing a very important and very difficult job for our children in our educational system. But, with the amendments that I have brought in with structuring of the shift work system and the recent Remuneration Order that has been approved with regard to domestic workers as well as in the cleaning industry, those issues will be taken into account and will be sorted out.

I am also aware - last point - that the Ministry of Education has been working with the Ministry of Labour in order to see to it that everywhere that such abuse is going on, it is going to be sorted out and that contractual workers no longer exist and such precarious works are things of the past.

Mr Speaker: Last question, hon. Jugnauth!

Mr Jugnauth: Mr Speaker, Sir, listening to the hon. Minister, do I take it that Government is agreeable, in principle, to an across-the-board national minimum wage and that will be, of course, pending to experts and technical committees that will be set up to advise Government?

Mr Mohamed: Mr Speaker, Sir, let me once again clarify for the hon. Member. Government has had calls whereby we have been asked to look into the possibility of setting-up a national minimum wage across-the-board. Before doing so we have to analyse whether it is good for the country, where we are at

that particular stage. What we are doing right now is, saying that we are totally agreeable to listening to what is good for the country. That is what we are doing right now.

Mr Speaker: Next question, hon. Dr. Sorefan!

BAGATELLE DAM - CONTRACT

(No. B/186) Dr. R. Sorefan (Fourth Member for La Caverne & Phoenix) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to the Bagatelle Dam, he will state if –

- (a) additional claims have been filed by the contractor therefor and if so, indicate the amount paid;
- (b) prior geological investigations had been carried out thereat and, if so, by whom, and
- (c) the works are scheduled to be completed within the contractual time.

The Deputy Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am advised that the Conditions of Contract provide for the contractor to give Notice to the Consultant for any claim for Extension of Time and/or additional cost that may arise during the implementation of the contract. All such claims are examined by the Consultant on the basis of supporting particulars and payment is made solely as determined and recommended by the Consultant.

In that respect, I am informed that the Contractor has, so far, filed ten claims which are still being examined by the Consultants Coyne and Bellier.

Regarding part (b), the consultancy contract for Detailed Design and Construction Supervision was awarded to Coyne and Bellier in association with Servansing Jadav & Partners on 20 January 2009. Prior to carrying out the detailed design, the Consultant was required to study/review available information and collect, among others, geological and geotechnical data through field and laboratory tests.

Accordingly, geological and geotechnical investigations were carried out from July to October 2009 by a local firm, namely, Water Research Company Limited on the instructions and supervision of the Consultant.

I am further informed that, after the start of works and clearing of site, the Consultant, as provided under the contract, instructed the contractor to carry out additional geological investigations from January to May 2012.

The additional geological investigations during the construction revealed the presence of weathered basalt along the dam axis which, according to the Consultant, was unforeseeable at the detailed design stage.

In view of the unsuitability of the soil, the Consultant has recommended two (2) design changes, namely -

- (i) the replacement of the massive concrete “*Ogee*” type spillway by a lighter “*Morning Glory*” type, and
- (ii) the grouting of the foundation be replaced by a concrete cut-off wall of 80 cm thick and to a maximum depth of 35 metres along the entire length of the dam.

With regard to part (c), I am informed that in view of the two (2) changes in the design of the dam, the original construction programme will extend beyond the scheduled completion date of December 2014 and it is expected that the dam will be ready for impoundment by last quarter of 2015.

Dr. Sorefan: The hon. Deputy Prime Minister has mentioned ten claims. Can he inform the House to what tune these ten claims come to?

The Deputy Prime Minister: These ten claims are still being looked into. It would be premature at this stage but, certainly, when the time comes, I will provide the information.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Ameer Meea!

Mr Ameer Meea: Out of those ten claims, can I ask the hon. Deputy Prime Minister how many of them have been paid so far?

The Deputy Prime Minister: I have already replied to that, Mr Speaker, Sir, none.

Mr Obeegadoo: Will the hon. Deputy Prime Minister tell us whether the propriety of this additional claim - now cropping up because of the geological specificities of the site - has been looked into and whether the geological investigations should not have been carried out before the bid and the contract made?

The Deputy Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, the geological investigations were carried out at detailed design stage and were further carried out at the very beginning of the construction after clearing of site by contractor.

Mr Speaker: Yes, last question!

Dr. Sorefan: Mr Speaker, Sir, can the hon. Deputy Prime Minister inform the House who was appointed as Consultant to look into the detailed design in the construction supervision of the dam and the contract value?

The Deputy Prime Minister: I do not have the contract value, but I have already mentioned the name of the Consultant. It is Coyne and Bellier.

BAGATELLE WATER TREATMENT PLANT - BIDDERS

(No. B/187) Dr. R. Sorefan (Fourth Member for La Caverne & Phoenix) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard the project for the construction of the Bagatelle Water Treatment Plant, he will –

- (a) give a list of the bidders therefor, indicating the -
 - (i) respective bid value thereof, and
 - (ii) name of the successful bidder and
- (b) if works have started.

The Deputy Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Central Water Authority that, in accordance with the provisions of the Public Procurement Act 2006, a prequalification exercise was initiated in July 2012 by the Central Procurement Board to shortlist prospective bidders for this project. Sixteen applications were received and the Central Procurement Board shortlisted nine firms and I will submit the names of the nine firms - unless the hon. Member wants me to read them.

I am further advised that the CWA has invited the nine shortlisted firms to submit their bids. The closing date for the submission of bids at the CPB has been fixed for 04 June 2013 at 13 30 hours.

With regard to part (b), I am informed that works are expected to start in October 2013 and will be for a duration of 20 months.

Dr. Sorefan: May we know from the hon. Deputy Prime Minister whether the Water Treatment Plant that is being scheduled to be done is very near the Terre Rouge River and away from contamination of the sludge?

The Deputy Prime Minister: Precautions have been taken. There is no problem regarding that issue.

NATIONAL SPORTS FEDERATIONS - REGIONAL COMMITTEES

(No. B/188) Mr F. Quirin (Third Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether, in regard to the National Sports Federations, he will give a list of the regional committees in respect of each of them, indicating in each case –

- (a) the composition thereof and
- (b) if they comply with the existing legislation in relation thereto.

Mr Ritoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, there are 44 Sports Federations and the number of regional committees runs into hundreds. The information regarding regional committees in respect of its Sports Federations is being compiled and on completion of this exercise, same will be placed in the Library of the National Assembly.

Regarding part (b) of the question, it is a known fact that many sports federations are non-compliant with the Sports Act, mainly with respect to the number of regions and number of clubs. I will be in a better position to give up to date information after the completion of this exercise.

Mr Quirin: M. le président, le 22 février de cette année, le ministère des Sports avait émis un communiqué pour indiquer la liste des fédérations qui sont reconnues et, de ce fait, l'honorable ministre peut-il nous dire s'il a pris en considération la section 9(3) du *Sports Act* par rapport au fonctionnement des comités régionaux comme un des critères pour reconnaître ces fédérations et en même temps pour allouer les *grants* annuels de son ministère ?

Mr Ritoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, in fact, I indicated that since I took the post of Minister, I have been having extensive consultations with all stakeholders, particularly with the Sports Federations with a view to coming up with a new Sports Amendment Bill - which I indicated two weeks back - that will be presented at the next session of the Assembly. However, I can assure the hon. Member that the issues have been taken care of in the proposed amendments.

MAURITIUS JUDO JU-JITSU FEDERATION - FORMER GENERAL SECRETARY - COMPLAINT

(No. B/189) **Mr F. Quirin (Third Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière)** asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether, in regard to the Mauritius Judo Ju-Jitsu Federation and associated disciplines, he will state if his Ministry is in presence of a complaint emanating from the former General Secretary thereof and, if so, indicate the outcome thereof.

Mr Ritoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, it is a fact that on 26 February 2013, the then General Secretary of the Mauritius Judo Federation and Associated Disciplines submitted a complaint to my Ministry. It relates to (i) non-compliance issues and (ii) issues pertaining to internal affairs of the Federation.

My Ministry is inquiring into the matter. The Registrar of Associations has also been requested to conduct an enquiry and report the outcome to my Ministry.

Mr Quirin: M. le président, si je comprends bien la réponse de l'honorable ministre, il donne la garantie à la Chambre qu'une enquête sera effectuée pour faire toute la lumière sur les graves allégations

qui ont été formulées par l'ancien secrétaire de la fédération. Je profite, M. le président, pour déposer une copie de la lettre. C'est bon pour les honorables membres, avec votre permission.

Mr Speaker : No, the hon. Member may communicate it to the hon. Minister!

Mr Quirin: C'est une lettre adressée par le secrétaire sortant et aussi une déposition qu'il a faite en date du 18 février de cette année par rapport justement aux allégations qu'il a formulées. M. le président, je dépose une copie de ces deux documents.

BUREAU D'ÉDUCATION CATHOLIQUE - OPEN COMMUNITY SCHOOL

(No. B/190) Mrs F. Labelle (Third Member for Vacoas & Floreal) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether, in regard to the adults, he will state if he is aware that the *Bureau d'Éducation Catholique* runs an Open Community School therefor, and, if so, indicate if his Ministry will consider incorporating a similar project in the Second Chance Programme.

Dr. Bunwaree: Mr Speaker Sir, I am informed that the Open Community School had been established by the *Bureau d'Éducation Catholique* for adults within the Corporate Social Responsibility Scheme and has been implemented from Year 2010 to December 2012. It offered a literacy and support programme to adults who wished to resume their secondary school studies, and prepare them to sit or re-sit for their 'O' level and 'A' level examinations.

The Second Chance Programme, on the other hand, being implemented by the Mauritius Institute of Training and Development (MITD) since 2009 is meant for persons in the age group of 16 to 21 years who are not in full time education or full time employment and has different objectives as compared to the Open Community School.

While the Open Community School provides an opportunity to adults to complete their academic qualifications at 'O' and 'A' Levels, the Second Chance Programme lays emphasis on vocational and technical education along with the development of life skills for youngsters in the age group of 16-21 years who are, as I said, neither in employment nor undergoing schooling. Candidates who successfully complete the programme are awarded a Basic Certificate in Literacy and Numeracy by the Mauritius Examinations Syndicate (MES). Any person wishing to join the Second Chance Programme can apply to the MITD.

The Second Chance Programme is therefore meant for adults wishing to also have basic literacy and numeracy skills at a level comparable to end of primary cycle studies. Hence, it is not considered appropriate to incorporate into the Second Chance Programme, the Open Community School Project which prepares adults for academic studies at a higher level ('O' and 'A' levels).

Mrs Labelle: Mr Speaker, Sir, since there is a great demand for this project and that the BEC has just frozen its project for 2013 because of lack of fund. BEC can't go on with this project and there is a big demand. May I ask the hon. Minister, whether he will consider giving a second chance to those who for one reason or another have dropped out of secondary schools?

Dr. Bunwaree: Yes, we have very many options for these children who drop out from secondary schools. This is an interesting project, of course, I do admit. Unfortunately, it could not continue due to lack of funds. We are trying to look into the reasons why and what can be done to allow those who want to do 'O' level and 'A' level studies and who have difficulties to find a solution for them.

Mr Speaker: Yes, last question!

Mrs Labelle: Mr Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister has just given us details of the Second Chance Programme. Is it not a sort of repetition of what is already being given, because we are talking about vocational and technical education? This is being given under other programmes at the MITD. So, is it not a sort of repetition and how can we enhance the Second Chance Programme?

Dr. Bunwaree: No, it is not a repetition; in fact, it is a system which allows them to catch up on where they stopped. In fact, it is giving very good results at the MITD. About 250 students are taking this programme and this one is going on. But the MITD, of course, has got other programmes for technical and vocational training. This is something different, but the Second Chance Programme is meant to allow those who have not been able to pass successfully the CPE, for example, to catch up on where they have left and to continue, and many of them go into the other training programmes of the MITD once they get this. In fact, I said the MES gives a basic certificate for the Second Chance Programme.

**SIR SEEWOOSAGUR RAMGOOLAM STREET, PORT LOUIS - COVERED DRAINS -
UPGRADING**

(No. B/191) Mr A. Ameer Meea (First Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to the covered drains, situated along the Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam Street, in Port Louis, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Road Development Authority, information as to when the upgrading thereof was carried out, indicating the -

- (a) cost thereof, and
- (b) name of the contractor.

The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping (Mr A. Bachoo): Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed that the covered drains

along Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam Street in Port Louis were upgraded in 2011 by Messrs General Construction Co. Ltd at the cost of Rs9,101,043. Works which started in February 2011 were completed in December 2011.

I am further informed that the drains were last cleaned in June 2012 before the end of the defects liability period by the contractor and that the junction of the lateral roads joining SSR Street are being regularly maintained by the direct labour of the Road Development Authority.

Mr Ameer Meea: Mr Speaker, Sir, can I ask the hon. Minister if he is aware that the drains along Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam Street, in Port Louis, has been wrongly designed, since they are at the same level of the road surface and that has resulted of an overflow of water on 30 March this year thus causing material damages to shops surrounding SSR Street?

Mr Bachoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed there has not been over flooding in that area firstly, and, secondly, from all the information which is available, I am satisfied that the drains, which have been constructed along Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam Street, are properly maintained. They are used by the public and even in the past, even the design - I can assure the House - is of good standard, it has been acceptable. We cannot raise the platform. We cannot raise the footpath because it is also utilised for parking proposes. If we had raised that, it would have been impossible for so many cars to be parked for the whole day and even in the morning and afternoon. So, it is used for dual purpose. This has always been the case in the past, and it is so now. I am fully satisfied with the way the drains are working. My only regret is that the lateral drains are not properly maintained, and I remember last year, we had written a letter to the municipality as far back as March 2012 to see to it that the lateral drains are properly maintained.

Mr Ameer Meea: Mr Speaker, Sir, the point is not to make the drain higher; the point is to lower slightly the drain so that when it rains, the water overflow will go to the drain because the drain will be lower than the surface of the road. Is the hon. Minister aware...

Mr Speaker: Put your question, hon. Member!

Mr Ameer Meea: Is the hon. Minister aware that there is a lack of water exits of those drains? It is built in with heavy concrete block and with no metal outlets. And when it pours heavily, there is no place for the water drainage on that Street. And since it is a classified road which falls under the purview of MPI, can I ask the hon. Minister to look into what I am saying?

Mr Bachoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, I had myself conducted site visits in the company of the hon. Minister of Labour. I had conducted site visits myself during construction and I am satisfied with the

number of opening that we have. We couldn't have lowered it more than what it is. I am not myself an engineer. It had been properly designed. I will have a look over again.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Silence!

Mr Bachoo: I will have a look over again at those drains, at the footpaths and if any corrective measure needs to be taken, I don't have any problem.

Mr Ameer Meea: The hon. Minister stated to the House that the drain was last cleaned in June last year. Can I ask him if he is satisfied that nine months have elapsed since the drain was last cleaned?

Mr Bachoo: I have just mentioned the junctions are being repeatedly cleaned – and, at the same time, I have got the photos, I have seen the photos. I would like to present copies of the photos for the lateral roads, but as far as the main drain is concerned, I am satisfied. Repeated checks have been carried out; we do not have any debris inside the drain. No garbage!

Mr Uteem: Mr Speaker, Sir, when the hon. Minister said that he has done checks to see that there is no débris on the drain, can I know from him when was it the last time he checked because we are talking about concrete slabs? There is no way you can see what falls beneath these slabs.

Mr Bachoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, there are openings and I do have a photo. This was checked even after 30 March; visits were conducted and I can lay a copy on the Table of the Assembly where we can clearly see that at least we can go inside and clean. So, the photos have been taken. We don't have any such debris.

(Interruptions)

I can show. The slabs can be removed.

(Interruptions)

Photos have been taken. We don't have any such debris. The slabs can be removed.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Minister, have you taken the photos yourself?

Mr Bachoo: Not me, my officers have submitted.

Mr Speaker: Not admissible.

Mr Bachoo: Mr Speaker, well the technicians of my Ministry have submitted me the photos, that is all.

Mr Speaker: Next question hon. Mrs Labelle!

NATIONAL HERITAGE TRUST FUND – DIRECTOR

(No. B/192) Mrs F. Labelle (Third Member for Vacoas & Floreal) asked the Minister of Arts and Culture whether, in regard to the National Heritage Trust Fund, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Fund, information as to if the Director thereof was suspended from duty in 2011 and, if so, indicate –

- (a) the reasons therefor;
- (b) if an inquiry has been carried out in relation to the circumstances that have led to her suspension, and
- (c) if she has been re-instated in her post and, if so, when

Mr Choonee: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the National Heritage Fund (NHF) that the Director was interdicted from office by the Board on the 04 August 2011 on reasons of alleged discrepancies following an internal control exercise.

Regarding part (b) of the question, Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed that -

- (i) at its meeting of 22 August 2011, the National Heritage Fund Board agreed that an independent Committee of Enquiry chaired by a Permanent Secretary and assisted by two Senior Officers be set up to enquire into the alleged discrepancies.
- (ii) the Committee started its enquiry on 20 October 2011 and six (6) meetings were held.
- (iii) During the course of the enquiry, the Independent Commission against Corruption (ICAC) started another enquiry regarding alleged malpractices by the Director of National Heritage Fund (NHF).
- (iv) in light of the enquiry started by ICAC, the Board decided, as at 29 March 2012, that the Committee of Enquiry should be discontinued.

Mr Speaker, Sir, as at 25 March 2013, the Commissioner of Police has informed my Ministry that the ICAC, following enquiry it had conducted, had referred the matter to the office of the Director of Public Prosecutions who has advised that there is no sufficient evidence to substantiate a charge in the matter. The Director of Public Prosecutions has, however, advised that disciplinary proceedings be preferred against the Director.

Regarding part (c) of the question, Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed that -

- (i) The Board, at its meeting of 28 March 2013, decided that the Director be re-instated with effect from 01 April 2013 and that disciplinary proceedings be initiated against the latter. However, the continued suspension is not necessary for the purpose of disciplinary proceedings.
- (ii) The Director resumed duty on the 02 April 2013 as 01 April was proclaimed a public holiday.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Minister whether he is aware of cases of abuse of power by the Director as indicated in the Audit Report. With your permission, for example, Mr Speaker, Sir, the case of when the Director was supposed to attend a course in Birmingham and, according to the Audit Report she didn't; in the case of the training course she was supposed to attend in Delhi, which course was cancelled previous to her supposedly departure and the case of curtains being paid to herself. There are so many cases of abuse of power in this report. May I ask the hon. Minister whether he is aware of these cases of abuse of power?

Mr Choonee: Mr Speaker, Sir, I just mentioned in my reply, because of allegations – these are allegations, that's why the Committee was set up to enquire and following the enquiry, we are having a letter from the DPP which states clearly that there is no sufficient evidence to substantiate a charge in the matter and it stops there.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Speaker, Sir, with your permission, may I ask the hon. Minister whether, following the recommendation of the auditor that undue payment which was effected in favour of the Director be refunded, the internal auditor has stated clearly in his report that undue payments effected to the Director be refunded whether any action has been taken in this case?

Mr Choonee: Mr Speaker, Sir, we have a Board which is responsible for the NHF. The Board will look into the matter and then definitely take the necessary action.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Soodhun!

Mr Soodhun: can the hon. Minister inform the House who is the Chairperson of the Disciplinary Committee?

Mr Choonee: of the Disciplinary Committee.

Mr Speaker: Board or Committee?

Mr Choonee: The Board of NHF or the Committee?

Mr Soodhun: The Committee.

Mr Choonee: For the Committee, it was the former Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Social Security, National Solidarity and Reform Institutions, Mr Duva Pentiah.

Mr Jugnauth: The hon. Minister has just mentioned in his reply that, as a result of an internal control, there were discrepancies that were found out. Can the hon. Minister tell the House what those discrepancies are?

Mr Choonee: Mr Speaker, Sir, I don't want to prejudice any enquiry that is being undertaken.

Mr Speaker: Next question hon. Li Kwong Wing. This issue has been aired enough.

BOI - RESIDENCE PERMITS & INVESTMENT PROJECTS -

(No. B/193) Mr K. Li Kwong Wing (Second Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to the Board of Investment, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain therefrom, information as to the number and nature of residence permits and investment project clearances issued respectively, allegedly upon bribery, indicating the number of staff under investigation in relation thereto and where matters stand.

The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development (Mr X. L. Duval): Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Board of Investment (BOI) that 12,900 Occupation Permits, and Residence Permits have been issued since its introduction in 2006. Of these, 11 permits processed by BOI are subject to Police enquiries involving cases of bribery. Out of these 11 permits, 8 are Occupation Permits relating to Investors and 3 are Residence Permits to Retired Non-Citizens.

With regard to processing of investment projects, I am informed that there is presently no alleged case of bribery.

I am further informed that a provisional charge was retained against two BOI staff. In addition, a retired employee of the BOI is also subject to Police enquiry and a provisional charge has been retained against him.

Police has completed its enquiry and has referred the matter to the Director of Public Prosecutions.

Mr Speaker, Sir, in order to enhance the present system at the Board of Investment, the Office of the Public Sector Governance (OPSG) was requested to carry out an audit of the actual process. This exercise has enabled OPSG to assess the existing system, identify bottlenecks and propose feasible recommendations to further streamline the processing of applications and eliminate opportunities for any malpractice.

Mr Li Kwong Wing: Can the hon. Minister inform the House whether it is the first time ever since its establishment that there are Police prosecutions instituted against senior officers at the BOI and whether this has not spoiled the image of the BOI as a promoting agency of Government and this is what has caused the reduction of the number of residents and occupation permits issued during the last year which the Minister, himself, estimated to be by more than 10% lately.

Mr Duval: Not at all Mr Speaker. I don't know if it is the first time, but if there are things that are wrong they must be taken care of and not swept under the carpet. Mr Speaker, Sir, I don't know about the senior officials. There were two administrative assistants. Both read up to form V so I cannot imagine they would be senior. There is no need to exaggerate all the time that they are senior. Now there is a retired also...

(Interruptions)

No they are administrative assistants from what I can see. That's one thing. The other one, the third person has already retired. So, in fact, it is good that we take actions against people who don't act properly and the Police are doing their work. That can only reinforce the reputation of Mauritius, Mr Speaker, Sir, as a good jurisdiction. Thank you.

Mr Li Kwong Wing: Mr Speaker, Sir, given the spoilt image now of the BOI, will the Minister inform the House whether there were not more than 50 employees recruited since he took over as Minister of Finance in the BOI without any qualification and without any due diligence just like cleaners have been recruited at the MTPA which, therefore, is wrecking the reputation of the BOI in the international circles.

Mr Duval: Mr Speaker, Sir, I have no clue...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Silence!

Mr Duval:...what the BOI has recruited. You may find it difficult to imagine, but I do not meddle in their recruitment. As far as their reputation being spoiled, Mr Speaker, Sir, the hon. Member himself is acting as a spoiled child.

Mr Uteem: Mr Speaker, Sir, may I know from the...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Silence!

(Interruptions)

I say silence!

Mr Uteem: The hon. Vice-Prime Minister just mentioned that there are only 11 cases on the Police investigation. May I know what is the nature of charges against the two staff and how many files did they handle?

Mr Duval: I do not have the information, Mr Speaker, Sir. I know that the file is with the DPP. I know that these people are suspended and have been prosecuted, but if you'll ask for additional information, I will be happy to provide it.

Mr Bhagwan: In view of the numerous cases – we have heard the public who has reported about bribery and corruption – may I ask the hon. Vice-Prime Minister whether he has recommended to Government a complete reorganisation of the BOI in the light of what has happened for the replacement of the actual Chairperson and having two Chairpersons at the head of the BOI, one for Africa and one for the rest of the world?

Mr Duval: Mr Speaker, Sir, I have not recommended the removal of the Chairperson. As far as the changes are concerned regarding the procedures, I replied in this House some time ago as to the report of the OPSG and the House was informed of the measures recommended and taken. Also, I seem to remember the firm Ernst & Young did a complete audit of the situation at the BOI.

Mr Speaker: Last question!

Mr Li Kwong Wing: Mr Speaker, Sir, on a point of order! I heard the hon. Minister saying that the hon. Member is acting like a spoiled child. I am not a *filis à papa*. Can I ask that he withdraw these words?

Mr Speaker: Next question, hon. Bhagwan!

(Interruptions)

Silence!

(Interruptions)

Silence! I want some silence now! Hon. Mrs Labelle, please!

GRNW – MATERIALS - DUMPING

(No. B/194) **Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière)** asked the Minister of Agro-Industry and Food Security whether, in regard to the case of dumping of materials within the reserve of river Grand River North West on its left bank, at Morcellement Hermitage, Coromandel, by one Mr R. B., he will state if the latter has complied with the request of his Ministry

dated 02 October 2012 for the removal of material and the restoration of the river bank and, if so, when and, if not, if legal actions have been initiated against him.

Mr Faugoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed that a site visit was carried out by the Forestry Service of my Ministry on 14 January 2013 and it was found that 80% of the materials deposited within the river reserve had been removed. According to the promoter, the remaining removal works were completed in the beginning of March and this has been confirmed from the last site visit effected by the Forestry Service. The site is now clear of all the materials, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Bhagwan: Can I ask the hon. Minister...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Silence, please! Hon. Bhagwan, proceed!

(Interruptions)

I say no interruptions now!

Mr Bhagwan: Can I ask the hon. Minister whether the promoter, a well-known recidivist who has been asked to replant fruit and forest trees whether he has done so?

Mr Faugoo: This is true, Mr Speaker, Sir. He has been asked to plant fruit and forest trees within the reserve and he has asked for a delay. He has undertaken to do the needful by the end of May. Because of weather conditions, he was not able to do so, but he has undertaken to plant the reserve with trees by the end of May.

Mr Bhagwan: Being given the status of the project which is in a very bad state - not only the associated works are being done by that contractor - can the hon. Minister give us the information as to what action the Ministry will take in case the promoter does not do the needful for the planting of trees? He has been given so many extensions and knowing the reputation of that contractor, I am sure that he will do nothing.

Mr Faugoo: He has been instructed to do so. If he fails within the delay which has been granted, he will be booked for a contravention, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Speaker: Next question, hon. Jugnauth!

POSTE DE FLACQ - PRIDE BRIDGE CO. LTD. – STATE LAND

(No. B/195) Mr P. Jugnauth (First Member for Quartier Militaire & Moka) asked the Minister of Housing and Lands whether he will state if Pride Bridge Co. Ltd. has been granted a plot of

land at Mare aux Lubines, Poste de Flacq and, if so, indicate the nature of the project which the company proposes to implement thereat.

Dr. Kasenally: Mr Speaker, Sir, in December 2008, Pride Bridge Company Ltd has indeed been granted a reservation over a plot of State land of an approximate extent of 30 *arpents* at *Pas Géométriques* Mare aux Lubines, Poste de Flacq for the implementation of a Mixed Development Project comprising, *inter alia*, 100-bedroom, all-suite, eco-resort, a rejuvenation centre, bungalows and equestrian sports. The letter of reservation was issued on 09 December 2008.

However, Mr Speaker, Sir, the company was getting difficulty in obtaining all the necessary permits as well as the access issue and they decided in April 2012 to withdraw from the project and returned the land to the State.

Mr Jugnauth: May I know from the hon. Minister whether according to the condition that the company should deposit a cash amount of Rs4.5 m., the money has been deposited initially on the date of the reservation of the land?

Dr. Kasenally: The money was deposited and has been returned with the return of the land.

Mr Jugnauth: May I know from the hon. Minister if the company has been asking for extension of the terms and conditions of that reservation letter and, if so, when and on how many occasions?

Dr. Kasenally: I do not recall exactly whether they asked for extension, but no extension was granted to anybody.

Mr Jugnauth: May I know from the hon. Minister if his Ministry did issue a letter on 02 October 2009, in fact, granting an extension of three months with regard to a request that was made by the promoter?

Dr. Kasenally: It may well be, but actually I do not have the information. To my knowledge, I have consistently refused to give extension to any project and I wanted all projects to be on time.

Dr. Sorefan: May we know from the hon. Minister whether the 30 *arpents* that was given to Pride Bridge Co. Ltd. was, at a certain stage, transferred to Lobin Holdings, if yes, who are the shareholders?

Dr. Kasenally: I am not aware of shares being moved around. I think this is a public company and if you want to have the information, you can get it all at the Registrar of Companies.

Mr Speaker: Last question!

Mr Jugnauth: First of all, may I table copy of a letter emanating from the Ministry of Housing and Lands, a signed letter...

(Interruptions)

...an official letter, stating that the Ministry is agreeable to extending this request by three months - that is one. Secondly, the Minister is saying that they have returned the land. May we know whether this land has been again granted to a different entity or individual or whoever?

Dr. Kasenally: Yes, they have returned it and it has not been so far given to anybody. As far as the letter is concerned, I am a bit concerned that a confidential letter from my Ministry is floating around. But certainly I may not be aware of all the correspondence going through my Ministry and I think I would look into it and make an enquiry as how this has come out.

Mr Speaker: Next question, hon. Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun!

SCHOLARSHIPS – CRITERIA

(No. B/196) Mrs L. D. Dookun-Luchoomun (Second Member for Quartier Militaire & Moka) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether, in regard to the scholarships offered on social grounds to students having completed their Higher School Certificate, he will state the number of applications received by his Ministry therefor, indicating the number thereof which satisfied the eligibility criteria therefor.

Dr. Bunwaree: Mr Speaker, Sir, as from this year, 24 additional scholarships will be awarded on the combined basis of merit and social criteria to two categories of students as follows -

(a) CATEGORY A

16 candidates who are ranked among the first 500 of the Cambridge International Examination Scholarship Rank Orders 2012 and whose family income does not exceed, in the aggregate, Rs 12,000 per month, and

(b) CATEGORY B

8 students based on their results at the Cambridge Higher School Certificate Examination 2012 and whose family income does not exceed in the aggregate, Rs6,200 per month.

The 24 Scholarships were advertised by way of Press Communiqué on 06 February 2013 and as at 28 February 2013 a total of 257 applications (112 for Category A and 145 for Category B) was received at the Scholarships Section of my Ministry.

The allocation of scholarships under these two categories will be made by the High Powered Scholarships Committee of my Ministry in which a representative of the Ministry of Social Security, National Solidarity and Reform Institutions has been co-opted given the social criteria dimension.

The High Powered Scholarships Committee has already screened the 257 applications and has drawn up a list of 104 candidates eligible for scholarship under Category A and 135 candidates eligible under Category B on procedural and academic grounds. On 08 April 2013, the two lists of candidates have been submitted to the Ministry of Social Security, National Solidarity and Reform Institutions for social enquiry to establish their eligibility or otherwise.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: May I ask the hon. Minister whether the other candidates who were receiving scholarship from his Ministry regarding tertiary studies are still on board because we already know that there are some students who were receiving social aid, who were being provided with a form of scholarship for their tertiary education on a year to year basis, whether these children are also receiving their scholarship this year?

Dr. Bunwaree: There are other schemes, but not from this scheme. This is specific for what I have mentioned. They must be ranked among the 500 for the 16 candidates. But, for the 08 candidates where the social criteria is important, the Rs6,200 per month, there it is a question of passing the examination and not necessarily being in the 500 first.

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am not sure whether we are speaking of the same scholarship. Is the hon. Minister aware that there is a Student Scholarship Scheme which was launched on the regulations made under section 24 of the Finance and Audit Act - this is Government Notice 98 of 2008 – I am quoting

“Whereby a full scholarship is provided for students attending or admitted on courses at post secondary institutions whose household income do not exceed Rs7,500 per month and who face severe hardship”

If we are talking of this same scheme, is the hon. Minister aware that there are several hundred young people out there who started a degree programme on the basis of the scholarship and at the point of embarking on the third year of their degree programme, have been told that their application, since it is renewed yearly, has been rejected and they are to await until a new scheme comes into effect?

Dr. Bunwaree: No. I am not aware that they have been rejected. In fact, when they have started they have to go to the end. I am taking this commitment here. There is no question of ending the scholarship before the end of the studies.

Mr Obeegadoo: At least will the hon. Minister please act decisively to put an end to the anguish that those hundreds of students are presently experiencing by communicating immediately with each and everyone who has applied at his Ministry for the scholarship?

Dr. Bunwaree: I said it here very openly! I cannot understand how this could have been otherwise. I am going to look into the matter.

Mr Speaker: Last question!

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Mr Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister has just mentioned that this will not be the case and that all these students will receive their scholarship, even today on the papers the *attaché de presse* of the Minister mentioned that there were no funds available in the Human Resource Knowledge and Development Fund. There are no resources left and therefore these students should show some patience until “we come up with a new scheme.” So, I am asking the hon. Minister if, as he has just mentioned, this will not be the case, as my colleague has just mentioned that diligently and very quickly we should make it clear to the students concerned?

Dr. Bunwaree: The Fund is no longer there, it has been transferred to the Consolidated Fund. This has already been done. But, I am mentioning for those who have already started studies and have already been given scholarship. If it was given for three years, it has to go through the three years.

Mr Obeegadoo: One last point, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Speaker: Okay, last question!

Mr Obeegadoo: Will the hon. Minister intervene at the level of the private tertiary education institutions concerned so that they allow these students to pursue their studies until the Ministry comes up with the appropriate solution?

Dr. Bunwaree: I will look into this matter very urgently

FLASH FLOODS - LORD MAYOR– MISSION OVERSEAS

(No. B/197) Ms K. R. Deerpalsing (Third Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes) asked the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether he will state if the Lord Mayor of Port Louis was absent from the country during the week following the flash floods which occurred on Saturday 30 March 2013.

The Minister of Environment and Sustainable Development (Mr D. Virahsawmy): Mr Speaker, Sir, with your permission I shall reply to this question. The Municipal City Council of Port Louis in its capacity as a member of the “*Association Internationale des Maires et Responsables des Capitales et Métropoles partiellement ou entièrement francophones*”, was invited by the latter to

participate in the 75th Executive meeting of the Association scheduled on 01 April 2013 in Vientiane, Laos, followed by a seminar on 02 and 03 April 2013 on the theme '*le patrimoine urbain, sa protection et sa mise en valeur*'.

The Council, at its sitting of 21 February 2013, approved the participation of the Lord Mayor, Mr Aslam Adam Hossenally and another representative in these meetings and sought the approval of the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands in line with established policy directives issued to Local Authorities. He conveyed approval for the participation of the Lord Mayor and the Chief Executive in these meetings.

The delegation left Mauritius on Friday 29 March 2013 at 20.50 hours and returned on Saturday 06 April 2013 at 19.37 hours, as originally planned.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker, Sir, the Lord Mayor was therefore absent...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Silence!

Mr Virahsawmy: from the country during the six days following the flash flood.

(Interruptions)

Ms Deerpalsing: Mr Speaker, Sir, *est-ce que le ministre pourrait confirmer à la Chambre qu'au moment où le Lord Maire a été informé des flash floods de Port Louis, il se trouvait à Kuala Lumpur et que s'il voulait rentrer, il aurait pu rebrousser chemin immédiatement après avoir appris le désastre de Port Louis ?*

(Interruptions)

I am putting my question, I am not giving way!

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: I am on my feet! Okay. Quiet!

(Interruptions)

I am on my feet!

(Interruptions)

Silence!

(Interruptions)

I say silence!

(Interruptions)

I am going to suspend the sitting, okay!

(Interruptions)

If you continue I will suspend the sitting!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Leader of the Opposition!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Jhugroo!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Jhugroo, keep quiet!

(Interruptions)

Yes, what is your point of order?

(Interruptions)

Mr Ganoo: I am...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Silence!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Assirvaden!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Jhugroo!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Jhugroo, I warn you!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Jhugroo it is my second warning! Yes.

(Interruptions)

Mr Ganoo: I am rising on a point of order!

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Silence, there is a point of order!

(Interruptions)

Mr Ganoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, our Standing Orders say clearly under the paragraph 'contents of question' that a hypothetical question cannot be put. So the contents of the question of the hon. Member are purely hypothetical.

(Interruptions)

If he had known he would have returned.

(Interruptions)

A question shall not be asked for an expression of ...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Do not interrupt, please!

Mr Ganoo: I am quoting the Standing Orders, Mr Speaker, Sir,

"A question shall not ask for an expression of opinion or for the solution of an abstract legal question or of a hypothetical proposition;"

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Well...

(Interruptions)

Who is going to give the ruling now? The Speaker or somebody else?

(Interruptions)

Therefore, you have to listen hon. Members!

(Interruptions)

I have to check...

(Interruptions)

I have to check the recordings and find out whether the question put is hypothetical or not. So, I reserve my ruling.

Ms Deerpalsing: Mr Speaker, Sir,...

Mr Speaker: No hypothetical question will be allowed, however.

Ms Deerpalsing: Mr Speaker, Sir, the question I asked was a factual one. What I asked is whether the hon. Minister ...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: No, interruption!

Ms Deerpalsing: ... is aware that ...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Silence!

Ms Deerpalsing: ... the moment the Lord Mayor was informed of the disaster of Port Louis, he was in Kuala Lumpur. That is a question; not a hypothetical one.

(Interruptions)

It's yes or no!

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Silence! Hon. Members are wasting time and shouting for nothing!

(Interruptions)

Well, hon. Members are making a lot of noise for nothing! There is a point of order. I want to listen to the point of order.

Mr Roopun: On a point of order, Mr Speaker, Sir. The hon. Member should ask a question and not provide information. The hon. Member is providing information, and it is against the Standing Orders.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: The question is proper, is in order, and the hon. Minister may answer.

(Interruptions)

Mr Virahsawmy: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed ...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Silence, hon. Roopun!

Mr Virahsawmy: ... that the Lord Mayor broke his journey in Kuala Lumpur on 31 March 2013 and he was informed of the flash floods. So, if he was a responsible person, he should have returned to Mauritius.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order!

(Interruptions)

I say order! Let us proceed!

(Interruptions)

Well, I repeat. I am going to suspend the sitting! Please, quiet now! Hon. Ms Deerpalsing!

Ms Deerpalsing: *Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir.* M. le président, je voudrais savoir du ministre s'il pourrait confirmer si le *Lord Mayor*, étant membre du bureau de l'AIMF, a présenté une motion d'urgence pour solliciter de l'aide pour la ville de Port Louis qui avait été sinistrée.

(Interruptions)

Mr Virahsawmy: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed that nothing was presented to get help and assistance. Finally, the Municipality of Port Louis did not get anything from that mission, except a cost of Rs172,000, as compared to only Rs122,000 which was spent by the Municipality on the construction of drains from 09 December to 07 April 2013.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order!

(Interruptions)

Order! I am going to suspend the sitting if you continue!

(Interruptions)

Well, hon. Members ...

(Interruptions)

Next question, hon. Ms Deerpalsing!

(Interruptions)

We have to move to the next question!

(Interruptions)

Next question! Hon. Ameer Meea, please sit down! I am not going to listen to you!

(Interruptions)

Proceed with the next question!

(Interruptions)

I have the discretion whether to allow you or not! Proceed with the next question!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Ameer Meea! Silence! Please, I do not want to hear anything from this side! Hon. Ameer Meea, you withdraw the word - 'unfair!'

(Interruptions)

Silence! The hon. Member has used the word 'partisan'.

Mr Ameer Meea: I have used the word 'partisan', but it was not addressed to you!

Mr Speaker: It was addressed to whom?

(Interruptions)

Mr Ameer Meea: To the hon. Minister! Of course, to the hon. Minister!

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: I have a ruling to give. I am going to check the records.

(Interruptions)

Hon. Assirvaden, please! I am going to check the records; then, we will know the truth. So, what's the use of shouting? I don't see any reason for shouting from both sides of the House. Let us proceed with the next question, please.

(Interruptions)

Wait a minute! Silence please!

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, can I seek some guidance? I am just seeking some guidance before the hon. Member puts her question. From my understanding of parliamentary practice, and I have been in the House for a good many years, when somebody from this side of the House puts a question, supplementary questions from backbenchers of the majority are allowed. I would like to know whether the reverse does not apply, that is, when a question is put by a backbencher of the majority, nobody on this side of the House - the Opposition - is entitled to a supplementary question.

Mr Speaker: No, this is not correct. When a question is put, any hon. Member of this House is entitled to put supplementary questions, irrespective of the majority or the Opposition. This is my ruling. If there is any question that the hon. Member wants to put next time, he raises his hand.

(Interruptions)

Hon. Members, please!

(Interruptions)

I will not allow the hon. Member! I am on my feet!

(Interruptions)

I'll consider the remark of the hon. Member. Don't you worry about it. What I remember is that I have already asked hon. Ms Deerpalsing to move to the next question. Then, I saw hon. Ameer Meea ...

(Interruptions)

Hon. Ameer Meea, if you are not happy, there is a procedure. Now, we move to the next question. Hon. Ameer Meea, I have taken note of your remarks.

QUATRE BORNES, TULIPES AVENUE - WIDENING

(No. B/198) Ms K. R. Deerpalsing (Third Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to the proposed widening of the Avenue Tulipes, in Quatre Bornes, he will state where matters stand.

The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping (Mr A. Bachoo): Mr Speaker, Sir, the contract for the widening of Tulipes Avenue has been awarded to Sinohydro Corporation (Mauritius) Limited, with an order to commence works on 12 December, 2012. The project is scheduled for completion on 11 December, 2013. The progress of the works on site has reached 80%, and the project is on target.

Ms Deerpalsing: Can I ask the hon. Vice-Prime Minister whether he can inform the House as to the width of land that has been acquired on the left hand side in the widening of Avenue Tulipes, what is the width of land that has been acquired from St Jean up to Hillcrest?

Mr Bachoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, in fact, the road itself will be of 10 metres inclusive of footpath on both sides. This is the information which I have been given.

Dr. Sorefan: My question relates to Avenue Tulipes, but there is a roundabout that is going to have access to the M1. May we know from the hon. Vice-Prime Minister whether there has been a Traffic Impact Assessment (TIA) and, if so, is he aware that joining the M1, within 500 metres, there will be two cross lanes to join the flyover at the bus stop and, secondly, from the roundabout, this may cause loss of lives very soon?

Mr Bachoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, all these things are being taken care of. In fact, I have already constituted a committee of technicians - top technicians - of my Ministry who are working on that. The TIA has already been worked out in-house.

Ms Deerpalsing: Mr Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Vice-Prime Minister whether he is aware that my original request together with the Vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Finance was that the Avenue Tulipes be widened ...

Mr Speaker: No, the hon. Member has to put a question.

Ms Deerpalsing: The hon. Vice-Prime Minister has said that there will be two footpaths on either side, but can he inform the House whether there will be, as requested, a ...

(Interruptions)

... walking path together with trees planted all along from St. Jean Avenue – shut up!

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Silence! Silence!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Ms Deerpalsing, will you listen?

(Interruptions)

I will request you to apologise.

(Interruptions)

Ms Deerpalsing: I do withdraw.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Apologise!

Ms Deerpalsing: I apologise. I withdraw - if that pleases the gentlemen. Mr Speaker, Sir, my question is, whether the hon. Vice-Prime Minister will inform the House whether trees will be planted all along from St Jean Avenue all the way to Hillcrest on the left hand side so that people can exercise and walk along?

Mr Bachoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, I still remember the original decision but, in fact, many proprietors dragged me to court. The matter was in court because they did not - under Land Acquisition Act when section 8 was being published. We had to go to Court and, in fact, the proprietors were hesitant and after many months of negotiation and discussions we were able to get part of the land. So, whatever land is available we will try to see to it that the maximum utilisation will be made for the planting of trees but, unfortunately, the initial idea of enlarging it and then to provide additional footpaths, we could not go ahead because of scarcity of land. Had I insisted, it would have taken years and years to deal with the case. We preferred an out of court settlement. In fact, we got it and that is why I will request the hon. Member to bear with us. We are doing our maximum with the amount of land which is available.

Dr. Sorefan: Is the hon. Vice- Prime Minister aware that the roundabout that will join the M1 and recently we have spent a lot of money doing the third lane with drain ...

Mr Speaker: I am sorry! Put your question!

Dr. Sorefan: Is the Vice-Prime Minister aware that today they are removing all the drain along the M1 which was recently done two or three years ago?

Mr Bachoo: I am not aware of any removal of drain along M1 but this is a specific question regarding the roundabout. Mr Speaker, Sir, why we are doing it is because we want to allow the fluidity of the vehicular flow along not only the St Jean Avenue but rather the Hillcrest Avenue, because there have been repeated requests from the inhabitants of that region that they always get stuck in the morning and evening. So, to facilitate the traffic vehicular flow we are trying to find an outlet but before opening we will try to see to it that all necessary precautions are taken.

Mr Speaker: One observation, the question is about Avenue Tulipes.

Mr Obeegadoo: For the sake of clarity, the hon. Minister said 'widened to 10 metres'. Is the intention to have two double lanes, that is, four lanes in all, two in each direction and will this widened road have drains designed otherwise than as Desforges Street?

Mr Bachoo: No, this is not the dual carriage way. The 10-metre means inclusive of one and a half metres on both sides of the drains as well as footpath will be included. I maintain, I am neither an engineer nor a technician but instructions have been given ...

(Interruptions)

Let me complete. Instructions have been given to the designers to see to it that the flow of the water in that region has to be captivated by the two drains on both sides of the road.

QUATRE BORNES - WOMEN'S CENTRE

(No. B/199) Ms K. R. Deerpalsing (Third Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes) asked the Minister of Housing and Lands whether, in regard to Quatre Bornes, he will state if a plot of State land is available thereat for the setting up of a Women's Centre.

Dr. Kasenally: Mr Speaker, Sir, my Ministry is not in presence of any request for the setting up of a women's centre at Quatre Bornes. In case such a request is received and subject to funds being available, my Ministry will most certainly look into the availability of State land.

Ms Deerpalsing: Is the hon. Minister aware - and this concerns you, Mr Speaker, Sir - that the piece of land where the Speaker's House is in a derelict situation and that women in my Constituency have expressed the wish to be able to use the building to have a women's centre so that they can have various activities there?

Dr. Kasenally: After consultation with Mr Speaker and the authorities, the Prime Minister's Office will most certainly look into the matter but we must also have the financial clearance, because this building will require a fair amount of refurbishment which will cost quite a bit of money.

Ms Deerpalsing: Can the hon. Minister confirm whether the plot of land just facing Mr Speaker's house is also State land?

Dr. Kasenally: I have to verify that.

Mr Speaker: I have to inform the House that with regard to the building in question it has been returned to the Ministry of MPI.

MOTORWAY – MAHEBOURG-NORTH - LANDSCAPING WORKS

(No. B/200) **Mr S. Soodhun (Second Member for La Caverne & Phoenix)** asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to the motorway starting from Mahebourg to the North, he will state if any contract has been allocated for landscaping works to be carried out along the sides thereof.

The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping (Mr A. Bachoo): Mr Speaker, Sir, no contract for landscaping works along Motorways M1 and M2 has been awarded by Road Development Authority (RDA).

However, last year, the RDA contracted out the plantation of 4,000 plants on both sides of the motorways from Plaisance to Forbach. Ornamental plants have also been grown in-house jointly by the RDA and the Ministry of Agro Industry and Food Security along the road reserves on the central verge.

Mr Soodhun: Will the hon. Vice-Prime Minister inform the House whether after the landscaping work now drainage work is being carried out?

Mr Bachoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, I have just explained there is no landscaping work. There have been the plantations of small plants or trees on both sides of the road. No landscaping work has been done. I have to inform the House that we are planting the ornamental plants in the middle - that is all - in the central verge and that too we are doing in association with the Ministry of Agriculture.

Mr Soodhun: Is the Vice-Prime Minister confirming that there has been no drainage work in the middle?

Mr Bachoo: In the middle, that is, the central verge is being done in the vicinity of Montagne Ory, but there we have not yet planted anything. That is not the drain work. In fact, it is the installation of light and as a result of the *agrandissement* of that road, the third lane, but there is no landscaping work as such.

Mr Soodhun: Can the hon. Vice-Prime Minister inform the House whether the RDA has not subcontracted the landscaping work?

Mr Bachoo: I have just mentioned, Mr Speaker, Sir, that there has not been landscaping work last year, but they contracted out the plantation of 4,000 plants not in the central verge but on both sides towards the south, that is, from Plaisance and upwards and then in the north from Grand' Baie downwards. That was last year on both sides and through tenders; the proper procedures have been followed but there has not been any landscaping work.

Mr Soodhun: Could the hon. Vice Prime-Minister inform the House who was the tenderer?

Mr Bachoo: There are two tenders. I am going to submit a copy of both. One bid was for Rs885,500 and another one for Rs954,500. The company was called 'We Grow Enterprise Ltd.'

TOURISM AUTHORITY - POSTER BOARDS

(No. B/201) Mr S. Soodhun (Second Member for La Caverne & Phoenix) asked the Minister of Tourism and Leisure whether, in regard to the poster boards, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Tourism Authority, information as to if it had put up temporary ones in December 2012, and if so, the reasons therefor.

Mr Yeung Sik Yuen: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Tourism Authority that in December 2012, some 300 temporary panels were installed in the city of Port Louis and in the four towns, with a view to providing a dedicated space for affixing of posters in the context of the Municipal Elections.

The House would appreciate that this measure was taken so as to prevent the proliferation of fly-posting which has a negative impact on the image of Mauritius, which is being promoted on the international scene as a clean, environment- friendly and up-market tourist destination.

Mr Soodhun: Can the hon. Minister inform the House whether there has been a tender procedure before allocating this contract?

Mr Yeung Sik Yuen: Yes, Mr Speaker, Sir. There were, in fact, two tender exercises. The first one was non-responsive and we had to go through a second exercise.

Mr Soodhun: Can the hon. Minister inform the House who was the successful tenderer?

Mr Yeung Sik Yuen: The name of the supplier is Arbess Enterprises Ltd.

Mr Soodhun: Can the hon. Minister confirm whether they have been able to put up the 300 posters?

Mr Yeung Sik Yuen: In fact, Mr Speaker, Sir, according to the report that I have, 298 posters panel were placed.

Mr Ganoo: Can the hon. Minister inform the House whether the tender was issued by the Tourism Authority or by the Central Tender Board?

Mr Yeung Sik Yuen: It was done by the Tourism Authority, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Ameer Meea: Can I ask the hon. Minister what is the total amount of the poster boards?

Mr Yeung Sik Yuen: The amount was Rs687,700. So, the average price was Rs2,000 and something.

Mr Speaker: The Deputy Speaker will take the Chair.

At this stage the Deputy Speaker took the Chair.

The Deputy Speaker: Next question! Hon. Lesjongard!

CEB - SOLAR PV PROJECT - SARA KO PVP CO. LTD.

(No. B/202) Mr G. Lesjongard (Second Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to the Solar PV Project submitted by SARA KO PVP Co. Ltd., to the Central Electricity Board, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Board, information as to -

- (a) the date thereof, indicating when -
 - (i) the Board decided to negotiate with the promoter thereof, and
 - (ii) when land was allocated to the promoter, indicating the conditions of the lease;
- (b) the conditions attached to the letter of intent issued to SARA KO PVP Co. Ltd., and
- (c) if a Power Purchase Agreement has been signed between SARA KO PVP Co. Ltd., and the Board and if so, if copy thereof will be tabled.

The Deputy Prime Minister: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Central Electricity Board that a 15MW solar farm project was submitted by the promoter, Sarako PVP Co. Ltd, on 25 June 2012 and negotiations started on 01 March 2013.

As regard part (a) (ii) of the question, I am informed by the Ministry of Housing and Lands that a plot of land of an approximate extent of 80 arpents has been reserved in the name of the promoter as from 03 April 2013 for a period of one year. The reservation is subject to the usual terms and conditions applicable to industrial leases. No lease has yet been granted to the company.

Concerning part (b), I am informed by the CEB that the letter of intent issued to the promoter on 01 March 2013, is subject to the following conditions -

- (i) submission by the promoter of a proposal security of Rs15 m. in favour of the CEB;
- (ii) submission by the promoter of a Certificate of Incorporation and Shareholding structure of the Sarako PVP Co. Ltd;
- (iii) adherence to the confidentiality clause by both parties, during the negotiations;

- (iv) each party shall have to bear its own costs and expenses to be incurred for the finalisation of the Energy Supply and Purchase Agreement, and
- (v) both parties to endeavour to finalise all the discussions within 6 months of the issue of the first draft of the Energy Supply and Purchase Agreement.

As regards part (c), I am informed by the CEB that the Energy Supply and Purchase Agreement is still under negotiation.

Mr Lesjongard: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, from what I understand from the Deputy Prime Minister, Sarako PVP Co. Ltd has been allocated 80 *arpents* of land for that project. Can the Deputy Prime Minister confirm that for such a project per MW will require 2 *arpents* since the project is a 15 MW project, the total surface area required is 30 *arpents*, why is it that in this case Sarako has been allocated 80 *arpents* and also, the ESPA is for a period of 20 years, can we know whether the land will be allocated for a period of 60 years?

The Deputy Prime Minister: As I have said, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it is still under negotiations. So, let us wait for the end of the negotiations. As to the area, it will be decided according to the project. They have asked for 80 *arpents*, it does not mean that 80 *arpents* would be given. The land will be given as needed for the project.

Mr Lesjongard: May I also ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether he can confirm or whether he is aware that neither Mrs Shyam Seetaram or the German company TS Almeria have any experience in PV installation systems?

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Prime Minister: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I will leave it to the CEB to sort out all the technicalities. I am not a technician. They will decide whether the project is valid or not and so far it has proved to be valid. So, let's not substitute ourselves to technicians.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Bhagwan!

(Interruptions)

So, I will give him the last question.

(Interruptions)

Please, go ahead with your question, hon. Bhagwan!

Mr Bhagwan: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, last time I asked the Deputy Prime Minister one question; I am asking the question again; whether the decision of Government to allocate land to Seetaram family forms part of a deal for one Member to cross the floor?

(Interruptions)

'Asize toi! Asizé!'

(Interruptions)

Let me ask my question!

(Interruptions)

I am asking a simple question, the Government can say yes or no. I am asking whether the allocation of 80 arpents of land to Seetaram family of Sarako forms part of the deal for one hon. Member to cross the floor from the MSM to Government.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Silence, please! Silence! Hon. Bhagwan! This question is not allowed. I'll ask the hon. Leader of the Opposition to put his question.

(Interruptions)

Hon. Bhagwan! Hon. Seetaram!

This question is not allowed! I'll invite the hon. Leader of the Opposition for the next question!

Mr Ganoo: Can the hon. Deputy Prime Minister give an undertaking to the House that the PPA will be made public as it has been made recently in all the other cases with the PPPs?

The Deputy Prime Minister: Yes.

Mr Lesjongard: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, one of the conditions for starting discussion with the promoter was that they had to align their price with regard to the lowest bidder that stated its price in the tender that occurred at the CEB. Is the Deputy Prime Minister aware that negotiations are ongoing at the CEB and that the price of the KW hour will be reduced? Will then the Deputy Prime Minister assure the House that if the price is reduced, that ESP that is being negotiated with the CEB will have to be started fresh again, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir?

The Deputy Prime Minister: I have said the negotiations are not over. So, how are we going to start again?

Mr Jugnauth: Is the Deputy Prime Minister aware that the policy of the CEB with regard to the request for proposal to split all the providers around the island is so that the interconnecting feeder does not originate from one substation? That is why, in fact, they came with a request for proposal for 10 MW to be spread throughout the island. Is it not in contradiction with the policy of CEB now to allocate one provider of 15 MW from one part of the island?

The Deputy Prime Minister: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this project of 10 MW split into 1 or 2 MW units was taken for two reasons. One is to democratise generation and give the chance to as many players as possible to get into the competition and second, to be able to connect to the grid easier. In this particular case, the site where it is, it can accommodate up to 15 mw and no more. The request was for a much higher figure, but it was scaled down to 15 mw on technical grounds.

Mr Lesjongard: Can the Deputy Prime Minister inform the House whether it was in order for the Board of the CEB to issue a letter to the promoter for starting discussions when the Central Electricity Board was still analysing tenders with regard to similar projects at the Central Electricity Board?

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Prime Minister: May I ask what similar projects the hon. Member is talking about?

Mr Lesjongard: The similar projects are the tender procedures that were ongoing, that is, the tenders were being analysed for the installation of other PV installations.

The Deputy Prime Minister: We are talking of the 1 or 2 MW up to 10. It took so much time, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. The submission for the 15 mw was in June 2012 and the negotiations started in March 2013. We waited for the evaluation of the other submissions to be able to have a benchmark.

Mr Uteem: Mr Speaker, Sir, may I know from the hon. Deputy Prime Minister why is it that the Board did not launch a tender for the installation of 50MW solar PV instead of dealing with an unsolicited bid?

The Deputy Prime Minister: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, there is a long history of people coming to submit proposals and most of them - we discussed it last week or the week before - on a page of glossy paper saying that they have projects when they do not have any. This is very important. But we realise that we are wasting a lot of time with people coming with projects.

(Interruptions)

One minute! We discussed last week.

(Interruptions)

Last week, the hon. Member talked about Alutec, Aqua Energy and Abhijeet Group all incidentally unsolicited. Two of them never showed any interest after that. The third one, after expressing interest did not even submit a proposal. So, it shows you the track record of those who come with unsolicited proposals.

Mr Ganoo: The hon. Deputy prime Minister made mention of 80 *arpents* of land in Bambous. Can the House be informed about where in Bambous will the 80 *arpents* of land be made available? The hon. Deputy Prime Minister said that as much land as needed will be granted to the promoter. If *le compte de 30 arpents est bon* according to the computation of hon. Lesjongard, why not grant only 30 *arpents* and keep the 50 *arpents* for a housing project for other poor people in Bambous?

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Prime Minister: We must look at the specificity of the site, the nature and location of the land and I this rule of two *arpents* per MW does not necessarily stand. The hon. Member may have specialised knowledge, but it does not always apply.

(Interruptions)

We have this problem also with Wind Farms and with other projects as well.

Mr Lesjongard: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, there is an element of subsidy in that project. Last week, I stated that that promoter will benefit, over a period of 20 years, Rs748m. of subsidy...

(Interruptions)

... at a price of Rs1.56 per KW. One of the conditions to start negotiations was that the promoter had to match its price with the lowest bidder for the 1 or 2 MW tender which was being analysed by the CEB. Now, since discussions are ongoing and nothing has been finalised, how is it that we have already reached a stage where we have accepted the price match from SARAKO PVP Co. Ltd.?

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Allow the Deputy Prime Minister to answer the question!

The Deputy Prime Minister: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I wish the hon. Member would listen to my answer. It is in two lines. I read it again -

“As regard part (c), I am informed by the CEB that the Energy Supply and Purchase Agreement is still under negotiation.”

I said that. Our aim, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, is to get the lowest price possible, but it must also be comparable. We can't compare like and unlike.

(Interruptions)

We can only compare like with like!

Mr Jugnauth: I heard the hon. Deputy Prime Minister saying that to justify the unsolicited bid, there were companies that make proposals and they are only on glossy papers. Is he aware that with regard to the recent request for proposals there were many companies that had made proposals, there was an evaluation committee that had looked into all the aspects and the details of all the bids and in fact, there were five companies that were selected and having scored a total mark of 100? How can the hon. Deputy Prime Minister now justify that he is going to set this aside and accept an unsolicited bid when there are very serious, technically proven companies who have scored 100% of the marks?

The Deputy Prime Minister: I am not certain as to which exercise are we alluding to?

Mr Jugnauth: For the evaluation done by CEB. The hon. Deputy Prime Minister is asking me a question, I am answering.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Deputy Prime Minister is going to give the answer. The hon. Member has asked the question; allow the hon. Deputy Prime Minister to give the reply now.

The Deputy Prime Minister: We had the same confusion from the Opposition last time. They talked about different projects. The hon. Member talked about different projects. We are talking about 1 MW, 2 MW units up to 10. Is it comparable?

Mr Baloomoody: We are talking about an energy project. Can I ask the hon. Deputy Prime Minister...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Silence, please!

Mr Baloomoody:... whether this project has been referred to the National Energy Commission chaired by Mr Manraj and if not, whether he intends to do so?

The Deputy Prime Minister: Yes, the NEC is aware.

The Deputy Speaker: Last question, hon. Lesjongard.

Mr Lesjongard: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in his reply last time, the hon. Deputy Prime Minister stated that a Letter of Intent was issued on 01 March 2013 to SARA KO and he stated that there is a security of Rs15 m. which will be provided by SARA KO. Is he aware that in the tender documents with regard to the installation of 1 or 2 MW solar plant it is stated that in the case of a Letter of Intent being

issued to a successful bidder, a development security amounting to Mauritian Rs5 m. per MW shall have to be payable? If we multiply 5 by 15 MW, it does not amount to Rs15 m. but to Rs75 m.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Prime Minister: Again, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, they are not comparing like with like. It is not the same.

The Deputy Speaker: Next question, hon. Nagalingum!

MONTAGNE ORY ROAD – WORKS

(No. B/203) Mr D. Nagalingum (Second Member for Stanley & Rose Hill) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to the Montagne Ory road, he will state since when it has been closed to vehicular traffic, indicating-

- (a) where matters stand as to the works being carried out thereat, and
- (b) when will it be re-opened.

The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping (Mr A. Bachoo): Mr Deputy Speaker, following the heavy rainfall recorded on 13 February 2013 ...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Ameer Meea, I am requesting you to remain silent, please! Allow the hon. Vice-Prime Minister to answer his question!

Mr Bachoo: ... immediate action has had to be taken by the Road Development Authority (RDA) to close the Montagne Ory Road for public safety in view of the fact that part of the vertical escarpment bordering Montagne Ory road eroded and collapsed rendering a section of that road unsafe. Furthermore, it was observed that a private building had been constructed close to the edge of the cliff. A diversion scheme was concurrently put in place.

On 20 February 2013, the RDA issued a Works Order to the Colas (Maurice) Ltée, zonal contractor, for urgent remedial works.

The works are progressing satisfactorily and have reached 30% completion.

The whole of the works are expected to be completed by the end of June 2013, after which the diversion scheme will be cancelled and the Montagne Ory road will be reopened to the public.

The Deputy Speaker: Next question hon. Dr. S. Boolell!

Mr Jugnauth: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I just want to draw the attention of the hon. Minister if he is aware that with regard to the ...

The Deputy Speaker: Do you have a question hon. Jugnauth?

Mr Jugnauth: Yes. Whether he is aware that with regard to the free transport operation that is being done, the inhabitants are encountering some problems, especially at the later times of the day, the irregular service? So, if he is aware of same and if he can look into that?

Mr Bachoo: Well, the matter was not brought to my attention. I will look into it.

The Deputy Speaker: Next question hon. Dr. S. Boolell!

BROWN SEQUARD HOSPITAL - INPATIENTS

(No. B/204) Dr. S. Boolell (Second Member for Curepipe & Midlands) asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether, in regard to the inpatients of the Brown Sequard Hospital, he will state the number thereof who are -

- (a) on active psychiatric treatment, and
- (b) long stay and who do not require internment and may benefit from outpatient care.

Mr Bundhoo: Mr Speaker Sir, concerning part (a) of the question, I am informed that as at 18 April 2013, the total number of inpatients at Brown Sequard Mental Health Care Centre was 570. Of these, 132 inpatients are in acute wards, 431 inpatients are in long stay wards and seven adolescents (4 males & 3 females) are in the Male Adolescent and Female Adolescent Wards respectively.

With regard to part (b) of the question, there are 158 long stay patients who are well stabilised on medication and probably no longer need inpatient medical treatment, but may benefit from outpatient care. They have been in the hospital for long periods of time varying from five to 40 years as their relatives do not want to take them back home.

Dr. S. Boolell: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, considering the forgotten patients of Brown Sequard Hospital, the figure given by the hon. Minister is 439 occupying an active bed, which is far more expensive than if these patients - whether the hon. Minister would agree - along the lines the kids who are removed from Brown Sequard Hospital would benefit from leaving this institution to make way for, maybe, another unit to be set up within the hospital compound?

Mr Bundhoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am totally in agreement with the hon. Member. It is precisely why in the Presidential Address, provision is made for the setting up of a midway home. I can

assure the hon. Member, as far back as mid-2011, the first expression of interest was issued, which has to be cancelled because there was not enough interest - I mean companies or whatever it is - only one applies and the second bid was re-launched in August 2011. Again there was not enough interest shown with regard to this.

(Interruptions)

Can I? Can I?

The third one was after seeking views from the Procurement Policy Office on the way forward, we had issued it again and successfully we had five and on 07 May 2011, proposals were made to repeat the expression, as I said earlier. On 11 May, we had five and on 22 June, last year, 2012, new EIA was invited. Since 28 November 2012, a technical team was appointed to work out details of the terms of reference and evaluation criteria for request of proposal. We have set up a team - composed of the DHS, representatives of the Ministry of Public Infrastructure, someone from my Ministry, the Principal Health Economist and a representative of the Health Engineering Unit - which is looking at it. On 12 December 2012, the MPI was requested to designate their representatives and it was done. Two technical committees were held on 22 January and 05 March 2013 and I must say I have impressed on the officers of my Ministry. I have liaised with the hon. Deputy Prime Minister, with the hon. Vice-Prime Minister so as to do whatever is possible to accelerate the issue with regard to the midway home in order - as you said rightly, as it was in the Government Programme - to move the people, long stay people, from where they are at the Brown Sequare Hospital to these places, where they can be coached better, they would be more independent and, of course, as you said, it would be less expensive for Government.

The Deputy Speaker: Next question hon. Uteem!

BPML - EBÈNE & ROSE BELLE - LEASES

(No. B/205) Mr R. Uteem (Second Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central) asked the Minister of Information and Communication Technology whether, in regard to Ebène and Rose Belle, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Business Parks of Mauritius Limited, information, in each case, as to the number of -

- (a) leases that have been assigned, indicating in each case, the
 - (i) names of the lessee and of the assignee and
 - (ii) extent and value of the land
- (b) cases where the lessee is in breach of the terms and conditions of the lease agreement, indicating the actions, if any, taken against them

Mr Pillay Chedumbrum: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Business Parks of Mauritius Limited that assignment of lease is provided for in the lease agreement itself for land at Ebène and is in accordance with the “Bail à construction” of the Mauritian Civil Code. The number of leases assigned so far is 12 and details thereof as requested at part (a) of the Question are being tabled.

With regard to part (b) of the question, I am informed by the BPML that two lessees are in breach of the terms and conditions of the lease agreement and legal action has been taken against them for the recovery of the land.

Insofar as Rose Belle Business Park is concerned, the land is divided in 30 plots varying between one to four acres each and is not meant for leasing, but rather for sale. Only two plots of an area of around four acres have been sold. I am advised that the demand for land at Rose Belle Business Park is not as high as at Ebène Cybercity.

Mr Uteem: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, is the hon. Minister aware if at the BPML there has been any file relating to lease agreement which has been lost?

Mr Pillay Chedumbrum: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, at a certain time this issue was raised in a ministerial committee, but up to now, I am not aware what has been the outcome of the findings.

Mr Uteem: Have these cases been reported to the Police?

Mr Pillay Chedumbrum: I will have to look into it with BPML Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

The Deputy Speaker: Last question!

Mr Uteem: May I know from the hon. Minister what are the criteria used by BPML for the agreeing to the assignment of leases or to the issue of new leases?

Mr Pillay Chedumbrum: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, let me remind the hon. Member that in the contract itself, which was drawn up at the time he was in Government, it is clearly spelt out in the contract itself at paragraph 6(1), that the lessee may sublet or assign the whole or part of the land lease provided the lessor has given prior notice under the activities of the sublease or assignee and within the ICT field of business.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in fact, I must say that we, ourselves we were not comfortable with that clause and even advice has been applied for and obtained from SLO, which says that BPML will be unable in law to refuse, to give its consent, as this is a legal right that cannot by contract be restricted.

The Deputy Speaker: Time is over!

MOTION

SUSPENSION OF S.O. 10 (2)

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

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

Question put and agreed to.

At 4.51 p.m. the sitting was suspended.

On resuming at 5.26 p.m. with the Deputy Speaker in the Chair.

PUBLIC BILL

First Reading

On motion made and seconded the Fashion and Design Institute (Amendment) Bill (No. V of 2013) was read a first time.

Second Reading

THE FASHION AND DESIGN INSTITUTE (AMENDMENT) BILL

(NO. V OF 2013)

Order for Second Reading read.

The Minister of Tertiary Education, Science, Research and Technology (Dr. R. Jeetah): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I move that the Fashion and Design (Amendment) Bill (No. V of 2013) be read a second time.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Fashion and Design Institute Act was enacted in 2008, with the objective of setting up a specialised institute to develop creative skills and professional competence for the textile and garment manufacturing sector. This was one of the rare occasions where a Bill received the support of both sides of the House and was welcomed by the hon. Leader of the Opposition who considered that it will help the development of fashion and design in general in Mauritius, in particular, in the textile and clothing industry, but beyond Mauritius, in general.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I wish to remind the House that the establishment of the Institute followed the recommendations of Prof Edward Newton, UNDP Consultant, who advised that the textile and clothing sector should re-orient itself from pure assembly of garments to original design manufacturing and that training facilities should be integrated under one roof to provide holistic, seamless and responsive services to the industry.

Consequently, the Fashion and Design Institute became operational in 2009 with the integration of the School of Design of the IVTB, the Department of Textile Technology of the University of Mauritius and the Textile and Apparel Development Centre of Enterprise Mauritius.

It was decided at the time that the Act was passed, that the Institute will operate as a tertiary education institution, but would not be given awarding powers at that stage. Provision was made in the Fashion and Design Institute Act for the Institute to make recommendations to the University of Mauritius or other institutions for the award of certificates, diplomas, degrees and other qualifications. Since its setting up, the Institute has been working with Edexcel, UK as one of its main awarding bodies together with the University of Technology in Mauritius.

The Institute has been in existence for four years and its student population has doubled since 2009. Almost all the graduates of the Institute have been easily absorbed in the manufacturing and design sectors with employers even approaching them in their final year of studies. Their services are highly appreciated in the industry. Some of them occupy senior positions in our enterprises and some have even become highly successful entrepreneurs with their own brands of products. One former student has set up a retail branch in Madagascar, while a few others are employed in international reputed companies in UK and Australia.

With the experience which it has gathered, the Institute has also made inroads in the development of short courses to develop creative skills and entrepreneurship. Thus it has been working with the National Empowerment Foundation and the National Women Entrepreneur Council to provide training to young people and women to help them become entrepreneurs. The Institute in collaboration with the Mauritius Research Council will provide incubator services shortly to enable students to develop their commercial projects.

It has also been working in close collaboration with the local industry and provides continuous professional development programmes for in-service employees so as to increase the level of competitiveness of the textile and garment sector.

The Institute has therefore made significant progress by providing high quality manpower resources to the manufacturing and advertising sectors.

It is now prepared for the next leap and to address new challenges in fashion and design education. The development of new technology and changes in customer preferences require the introduction of new programmes and research. Students have to familiarise with new areas such as 3D, video games and design of technology products. The Institute has to progress to a higher level in order to respond to the needs of the design and the garment industry – an industry which is vital to the economy, but which has to constantly innovate in order to maintain its competitive edge.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the present Bill is now proposing to give to the Institute awarding powers and to establish the necessary structures to enable it to act as an awarding body.

The main proposals in the Bill are –

- (i) at Clause (4), the Institute be given powers to hold examinations, award certificates, degrees, diplomas, honorary degrees and other academic and professional qualifications on its own or jointly with any other tertiary education institutions to persons who have successfully pursued a course of study or conducted research;
- (ii) at Clause (5), to align the provisions for admission of students with the provisions guiding other public tertiary education institutions in Mauritius;
- (iii) at Clause (6), the conduct of inquiries in respect of any matter connected with the objects, functions and powers of the Institute;
- (iv) at Clause (7), requirement for the Chairperson of the Board to be a person with experience in management, fashion and design or academic matters and for the appointment of elected members representing the academic and non-academic staff and students;
- (v) at Clause (8), the powers and functions of the Board are defined;
- (vi) at Clause (9), the setting up of an Academic Council to replace the existing Academic Committee and for the Council to include a representative of the Mauritius Examinations Syndicate, a representative of the Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Consumer Protection, an external examiner to be appointed by the Board, the Head of Quality Assurance, the Head of Research, Consultancy & Innovation and a representative of the Tertiary Education Commission;
- (vii) at Clause (11), the establishment of a Convocation ;
- (viii) at Clause(12), the establishment of the position of Registrar;
- (ix) at Clauses (13), the setting of the necessary structures such as Head of School, Head of Finance, Head of Quality Assurance, Head of Research, Consultancy and Innovation and Head of Projects, Estates and Endowments, and

- (x) the introduction of Statutes which make detailed provisions for the regulation of committees and academic matters.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I wish to draw the attention of the House that the Economic and Financial Measures (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2012 had already amended Section 13 of the Act by replacing the Advisory Committee by a Consultative Committee.

Justifications

I would like now to provide the House with some of the reasons which have motivated us to propose that the Institute be given awarding powers.

Firstly, it is a known fact that apparel and garment production, fashion and design are global industries with highly competitive markets. There is a strong value placed on creativity and innovation in this sector. Many garment manufacturing countries such as Bangladesh, Vietnam, India, Hong Kong to name, but a few have established their own specialised institutes or centres which provide higher learning and skill development programmes, and which operate autonomously and award diplomas and degrees on their own.

Secondly, by obtaining awarding powers, the Fashion and Design Institute of Mauritius will have and enhance credibility vis-à-vis its counterparts in other countries and would have greater scope for developing partnerships and linkages to bring quality improvement and introduce new programmes.

The third and most important reason is that we need a very strong institution in Mauritius to help our young people develop their creative skills and to unleash their artistic potential whether it is in designing garments or products or in advertising and marketing. A strong institution will have the capacity to attract students with high potential as well as experienced academics and researchers.

Mr Deputy Speaker Sir, according to MEXA figures for the textile and clothing sector in Mauritius, it has been one of the main pillars of the Mauritian economy with an annual estimated turnover of Rs28 billion, that is, 60% contribution to total exports, a contribution of 5.2 % to the GDP with 35,917 direct employment. The production is estimated to be 34 million meters of woven fabric, 60 million meters of knitted fabric and 9 million pieces of pull over, 82 million pieces of T-shirts, 23 million pieces of shirts and 15 million of trousers in addition to a wide range of other products such as beachwear, lingerie, towels, sportswear and so on and so forth.

Training in design also caters for the advertising sector, industrial and product design. It is good to note that the global advertising sector expanded by 6 per cent in 2010 to reach almost 87 billion dollars. This industry is expected to reach 113.5 billion dollars by 2015, representing more than 30 per

cent growth in five years. In Mauritius from the year 2011 to 2012, an increase of Rs200 m. has been noted in media revenue while higher growth rates were noted in television and radio advertising.

The Jewellery sector, for instance, is a growing sector with about 45 operators involved in the production of high end products for famous brands such as Tiffany, Swarovski, Chanel and Gucci. The progress of this sector depends on the craftsmanship and quality of design, which add value to the products. The export turnover for this sector was estimated at Rs3.2 billion with a contribution of 8% to the total exports in 2011 with about 1,240 people employed within the sector.

Design is also linked to trade as consumers increasingly look for products which combine practical with aesthetic considerations. Industrial Design is gaining increasing importance worldwide whether it is in the production of vehicles, mobile phones, domestic products or office products. Local and international companies as well as small entrepreneurs need more skilled professionals to design their products, add value and move their products up market.

Internationalisation

The higher education sector has been undergoing a fast process of internationalisation in the recent years, with more cross border education and student mobility than ever before. In this context, it is the vision of Government to transform the country into a knowledge based economy, to attract more foreign students and play a significant role in capacity building in this region. As the only specialised fashion and design institution in this part of the world, the Fashion and Design Institute can play a vital role in providing training to young people of neighbouring countries.

Presently without awarding powers, it suffers some drawbacks in marketing its programme to attract students from Africa. With the awarding powers, the Fashion and Design institute could aim at becoming a regional centre of training and skills development in the Indian Ocean and Africa.

The recent participation of the Institute at the South Africa 2013 has opened up several avenues for future cooperation with several countries. The School of Fashion of South Africa is keen to develop exchanges, Tanzania has asked for a train the trainer programme in design courses, Lesotho is interested in staff training in design and Ghana has sought the assistance of the Institute to set up its own Design Institute.

Capacity of institution to become an awarding body

I now come to the question of whether the Fashion and Design Institute has the capacity to become an awarding body. Being the sole institution to provide a common platform for design education,

research and training for fashion and design, it has acquired sufficient experience under the guidance of external bodies such as Edexcel, UK and can safely progress to the status of an awarding body.

When the Fashion and Design Institute was set up, the merger of the then training institutions enabled it to benefit in terms of transfer of technology, experience and know-how in specialised fields such as -

- Industrial Pattern Making for ladies' wear, men's wear and Children's Wear;
- Computer Aided Design and Computer aided manufacturing in pattern construction, grading and marker production, sample making and Quality and productivity improvements, and
- Multimedia and graphic design, and so on and so forth.

It has a pool of qualified and experienced staff. Most of the academic staff have 18 years' experience and have had the opportunity to work with external agencies for the preparation of academic programmes and conduct of examinations. About 50% of the staff already holds postgraduate degrees. The new recruits include young post graduate degree holders who have obtained their training in UK, Australia, France and Italy.

A staff development programme has also been put into place to enable the academic staff to acquire, update their skills and knowledge to update themselves in new skills, technology and knowledge.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the fact that the Institute will become an awarding body also places the responsibility on the institution to continuously improve quality standards. The Bill provides for the position of Head Quality Assurance and for the Academic Council to include an external examiner, as well as a representative of the MES. However, the Institute will continue to have recourse to examiners from international bodies to validate programmes and qualifications.

In this respect, I am pleased to inform the House that contacts have already been established with the Central Saint Martins College of the University of London in UK, which has agreed to provide academic support. The Institute is also in the process of establishing linkages with the Marangoni Institute of Italy, and is now opening new partnerships, namely with -

- Nanyang Technological University, Singapore;
- Ravensbourne College of Design and Communication, UK;
- The National Institute of Fashion Technology (NIFT), India;
- Hong Kong Polytechnic University, and
- Esmod, France.

In January 2013, the Institute signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Institute of Apparel Management of India, which will allow it to exchange information on programme development, curricula and pedagogy; exchange staff and students; develop joint applied research projects; award scholarship for students in different undergraduate and postgraduate programmes; train professionals with special focus of apparel management, merchandising, fashion communication, fashion design and design management, and obtain technical assistance for setting up of a fashion innovation lab and design studio.

The Institute, from its humble beginning of two departments, namely Fashion & Textile Design, Graphic Design, has now added two more departments, namely the Media & Communication Department and the Built Environment Department. From its initial three programmes offered in 2009, today the centre is offering eight programmes.

The Fashion and Design Institute, as mentioned, is widening its scope of activities and encompassing other aspects of design besides the apparel and textile sector.

I am also pleased to inform the House that the Institute has already introduced new courses after consultations with the private sector, namely –

- BA (Hons) Interior Design
- HND Art & Design
- BA (Hons) in Product Design
- BA (Hons) Interactive Media
- BA (Hons) Fashion Design
- BA (Hons) Graphic Design

It would now consider programmes in merchandising and other related fields.

With regard to the recognition of qualifications, the Institute will have the responsibility to ensure that the academic programmes satisfy international standards and would stand the test in any country. Recognition refers to acceptance of a qualification to allow a person to pursue or continue higher education, or confer the right to use a national title or degree or for employment. Academic recognition and professional recognition have different objectives, and require different approaches and instruments. The Fashion and Design Institute would continue to seek the assistance of external examiners and agencies to validate its qualifications.

In his report on the need for a specialised Fashion and Design Institute, Professor Newton placed much emphasis on the fact that the institution should also have the capacity to carry out research in

material and product development, provide consultancy services to industry, and promote entrepreneurship in the area of fashion and design. The Fashion and Design Institute should, by offering higher degrees and research degrees, engage in research in various areas related to the Mauritian market and the industry as a whole. Research should focus on the development of Mauritian brands, and addressing local and regional markets and patenting would be encouraged.

Since this year, the academic staff of various departments of the Institute are undertaking research projects on the development of handicraft, the formulation of a Mauritian size garment, the effect of colour blind on student performance, the prospects of mobile advertising, and the use of clay and natural fibres in manufacturing.

The service of an international researcher from the University of Waterloo, Canada, has been sought to help enhance the research skills of the staff.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Institute has gradually acquired modern equipment and documentation to suit the criteria of an awarding body. Its resource centre consists of books, magazines, e-library, videotapes, slides and other audio-visual materials, covering different fields of specialisation of the creative industry. It has four computer labs, including a MAC lab and a 3D Multimedia lab equipped with the latest technology and software such as –

- Graphic software, namely illustrator, Photoshop, In Design, Flash Dreamweaver and so on and so forth, including 3D Max;
- CAD (Computer Aided Design) software such as *Lectra* and *Novocut* for pattern making, grading and marker making;
- Design software for 2D and 3D designing of garments;
- CAM (Computer Aided Machines) – automatic loading, spreading and cutting machines, and
- a free Wi-Fi Zone is available for students on the campus, thanks to my good friend here.

Students have the opportunity to get hands on experience in the 3D workshops for ceramic, pottery, printing, dye works and a dark room for photography works, and sewing workshops equipped with the latest equipment of automatic sewing and embroidery machines.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as regards campus facilities, the Institute is presently located in Ebène, but will be provided space in the new campus to be constructed in Réduit, and workshops and incubator rooms in the ex-MBC building in Curepipe.

The Fashion and Design Institute was expected from the outset to have close links with industry. The Director of MEXA and the representative of the Ministry of Industry are members of the Board of Governors of the Institute. A Consultative Committee has now been established. It will be chaired by a private sector representative, and include representatives of the Human Resource Development Council, the Ministries concerned, representatives of the textile, advertising sectors, the Joint Economic Council, the Mauritius Employers' Federation, and small and medium entrepreneurs. The Committee will act as a platform for permanent dialogue between the institution and industry, and ensure that the skill requirements of the industry are addressed effectively.

The Committee will advise the Institute on development of programmes of study and research, relevance of the curriculum to labour market needs, effective quality assurance and placements, internships and research.

Some of the benefits of becoming an awarding body are –

- (i) the Institute has built strength by working with and offering courses available at Edexcel, UK. By becoming an awarding body, it can now offer customised courses suited to the local context or combine courses to respond to specific demands from industry;
- (ii) given that the academic staff of the Institute has acquired sufficient experience, it may act as examiner and awarding body to other training organisations in Mauritius and in the region;
- (iii) a better career path will be open to academic staff of the Institute, in terms of promotional and professional development to positions of senior lectureship, associate professor and professorship;
- (iv) it will add more credibility vis-à-vis other organisations and can establish linkages with reputed institutions in UK, Europe and Asia;
- (v) the Institute will have more scope for research and innovation by conducting research degrees, and
- (vi) it can become a leading regional centre for fashion and design in this part of the world, and help build capacity in Africa.

Design, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, permeates all aspects of life, and by giving the Fashion and Design Institute awarding powers, due recognition will be given to the institution which has been a pioneer in the sector and has been consistently supporting the design sector with competent and highly trained professionals.

With this Bill, we are giving the institution the capabilities to grow into not only a national but a regional centre.

I wish to conclude by expressing appreciation to the staff, students of the Institute, and I have to thank members of the textile and advertising sectors for their contribution in building solid foundations for this Institute.

With these words, I commend the Bill to the House.

Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

Mr T. Pillay Chedumbrum rose and seconded.

(5.40 p.m.)

Mr S. Obeegadoo (Third Member for Curepipe & Midlands): M. le président, l'honorable ministre de l'Enseignement Supérieur nous a gratifié d'un long discours concernant l'industrie, la productivité, les défis internationaux, mais ce projet de loi, en fait, vient faire une chose très simple. C'est d'établir le *Fashion and Design Institute* comme la cinquième université publique du pays. Car ce qui définit une université n'est-ce pas, c'est cette stabilité à conférer, en leur propre nom, des diplômes universitaires, des diplômes de l'enseignement supérieur ; l'après secondaire. Voilà ce que propose de faire ce projet de loi, qui vient donc amender celui que cette Chambre avait approuvé en 2008. C'est tout. Rien de plus et rien de moins. C'est de faire d'un institut affilié pendant les quatre dernières années à l'Université de Maurice, ensuite à l'Université de Technologie, mais enfin affilié à une université existante et maintenant une université en elle-même.

Il y a une deuxième chose que fait ce projet de loi, c'est de s'assurer que le *Fashion and Design Institute* - j'espère que l'honorable ministre ne me tiendra pas rigueur si je le dis - reste sous le contrôle de l'honorable ministre. Parce que si on devait faire l'historique de cet institut, il y a un élément qui frappe. Cet institut est-ce qu'il représente et suit le présent ministre de l'Enseignement Supérieur? Nous savons tous qu'il était à l'Université de Maurice, au département de *Textile Technology* et, ensuite, il devient ministre en 2005, mais il est ministre de la Santé. Donc, là c'est un peu compliqué, on ne peut pas emmener *Textile Technology* à la Santé. Donc, le département reste à l'Université de Maurice, mais, en 2008 lorsqu'il passe à l'Industrie, il s'assure que ce qui était le département devienne cet institut. Donc, le projet de loi est voté en 2008 et le *Fashion and Design Institute* prend naissance et, ô miracle !, il est placé sous l'égide du ministère de l'Industrie. Sauf que l'honorable ministre n'avait pas prévu que l'Université de Maurice ferait de la résistance ! Donc, le personnel refuse de suivre, les étudiants de l'Université préfèrent compléter leurs études à l'Université de Maurice. Donc, l'institut prend naissance

en représentant la fusion de ce qui se faisait ailleurs qu'à l'Université et, très vite, des problèmes surgissent parce que les choses ne se passent pas très bien avec l'Université de Maurice, qui, insiste sur certains procédés, certains niveaux pour l'assurance qualité ainsi de suite, et le divorce a lieu.

Cet institut - qui avait été créé pour être affilié à l'Université de Maurice ; c'est comme cela que le projet de loi fut défendu par le ministre de l'Industrie d'alors - va établir une affiliation à l'Université de Technologie au lieu de l'Université de Maurice. Et puis, le ministre de l'Industrie passe à l'Enseignement Supérieur en 2010 et, *ipso facto*, l'institut doit quitter l'Industrie, pour aller à l'Enseignement Supérieur pour suivre le ministre Jeetah.

(Interruptions)

Je vous laisse deviner la suite!

Donc, au fait ce projet de loi fait deux choses; d'une part, il vient établir une cinquième université publique, d'autre part on s'assure que cet institut reste rattaché au ministre Jeetah.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Roopun!

Mr Obeegadoo: Ce projet de loi avait suscité énormément d'intérêt quand il fut présenté à la Chambre en 2008. Il y eut sept ou huit intervenants des deux côtés de la Chambre. Certains avaient eu des réserves sérieuses, mais sur l'idée même de la création de l'institut personne n'était contre dans la mesure où cet institut allait fédérer toutes les énergies, allait rassembler toutes les compétences ; tout le monde était en faveur de ce principe. Même aujourd'hui, j'ai le regret de vous dire, M. le président, que nous sommes contre cet amendement à la loi. Je dirai que nous sommes d'accord sur la vision du ministre, sur la politique de l'enseignement supérieur de ce gouvernement, qui est caractérisé par l'obsession du nombre. Il faut, à tout prix, augmenter le nombre d'inscrits dans le supérieur. Il faut, à tout prix, multiplier le nombre des institutions d'enseignement supérieur. Le ministre se targue d'avoir augmenté – je ne sais pas, d'avoir doublé, peut-être - le nombre de *Tertiary Education Institutions*. Le ministre se dit qu'il va entrer dans l'histoire parce qu'il sera jugé sur le nombre d'institutions qu'il aura créées.

C'est ainsi qu'en 2005, nous avons deux universités publiques : l'Université de Maurice, créée dans les années 60, et l'Université de Technologie créée en l'an 2000. Mais depuis 2005, il y a eu l'*Open University*, qui est entrée en opération récemment, il y a eu l'Université des Mascareignes, et voilà que la petite République de Maurice va avoir une cinquième université publique ! Pourquoi? C'est l'obsession

du nombre, parce que cinq, cela sonne plus impressionnant que quatre, comme quatre est plus impressionnant que trois ! Nous avons maintes fois expliqué en détail, ici, en ce faisant c'est la qualité qui est sacrifiée à la quantité. Vous savez que les experts en éducation, M. le président, font une distinction fondamentale entre massification et démocratisation. La massification de l'enseignement, c'est d'augmenter le nombre à tout prix; offrir le même produit en plus grand nombre. Tandis que la démocratisation de l'éducation, c'est s'assurer que tous puissent progresser aussi loin qu'ils le désirent, qu'ils le peuvent mais en assurant une offre éducative qui soit pertinente à leur besoin en prêtant attention à la qualité et aussi à l'efficacité dans les dépenses publiques. Donc, voilà ce que nous reprochons à l'honorable ministre et voilà pourquoi nous nous opposons à cette initiative, c'est parce que ce n'est que la énième tentative de se focaliser sur le nombre aux dépens de la qualité et de créer des universités publiques. Parce que - comprenez moi bien - ce n'est pas la fin, ce n'est qu'un commencement.

Je vous assure, M. le président, que dans les mois à venir, le *Mahatma Gandhi Institute* va acquérir *the award conferring powers* et ce sera la sixième université publique. La *Mauritius Institute of Education* pourra offrir ses propres diplômes et ce sera la septième université publique, de sorte que, quand l'honorable ministre se présentera aux prochaines élections, et ses collègues du gouvernement avec, ils pourront se frapper l'estomac en se disant, que, 'quand nous sommes arrivés au gouvernement, il y avait deux universités et aujourd'hui nous en avons 8, 10, voire 12 ou 15 » - et j'oublie évidemment les campus régionaux qui, peut-être, entre-temps deviendront des universités publiques. Notre position est cohérente. Lorsque j'étais ministre de l'Education - et cela remonte quand même à plus de huit ans - déjà nous subissions alors d'énormes pressions de la part de la direction du MIE, le MIE qui est une vieille institution, qui existe depuis les années 70, si je ne me trompe.

(Interruptions)

73 me dit ma collègue, l'honorable Madame Labelle. D'énormes pressions du Mahatma Gandhi Institute qui existe depuis 1970, qui voulaient devenir des Universités de pleins droits et de conférer leurs propres diplômes et nous avons dit : non, vous pouvez avoir vos cours, votre autonomie mais pour des raisons d'assurance qualité, pour des raisons d'économie d'échelle, pour des raisons d'efficacité, en ce qui concerne les dépenses publiques, vous resterez affilié à une université et ces institutions sont toujours affiliées à l'université de Maurice, mais je me suis laissé dire que la politique de l'enseignement supérieur faisant, nous allions inévitablement vers la transformation de ces institutions en université de pleins droits et nous en sommes très inquiets.

Je disais tout à l'heure que nous étions contre la vision, contre la politique, contre la stratégie mais que dis-je, vision, cette vision, elle n'a jamais été énoncée. Le ministre qui nous a promis depuis

belle lurette un plan d'ensemble, un plan cadre, un *master plan* ou un *strategy document*. Je ne sais plus comment cela s'appelait, qui a fait venir des experts de la banque mondiale, qui a réuni à maintes reprises tous les opérateurs du secteur, n'a jusqu'ici pas accouché de ce plan.

Donc, il y a une vision implicite que l'on peut déduire parce que c'est ce qu'ont fait certains pays avec des conséquences catastrophiques pour dire le moins. C'est la massification de l'éducation, c'est l'obsession du nombre au dépens de la qualité et c'est pour cela que nous sommes contre cette initiative du ministre, tant bien même que nous soutenons l'existence et le fonctionnement du *Fashion and Design Institute*. Donc, le projet de loi comme l'explique l'introduction, le préambule fait cela, il y a deux clauses, en particulier, qui sont amendées pour permettre à l'institution de devenir université, les clauses 5 et 9.

Ensuite je vais rapidement pointer du doigt quelques dispositions qui nous semblent inquiétantes. D'abord, le pouvoir du ministre. Vous savez dans le secteur de l'enseignement supérieur, depuis l'existence d'un ministère de l'enseignement supérieur, le personnel, parfois les responsables même, dénoncent l'ingérence ministérielle. Je ne vais pas revenir sur tous les cas à l'Université de Maurice et ce projet de loi, ce n'est pas une coïncidence, vient prévoir à la clause 7(a) une nouvelle disposition que le ministre aurait un pouvoir d'enquête –

“The Minister may, in respect of any matter connected with the objects, functions and powers of the institute, direct an enquiry to be made by such person as he may appoint in such manner as he may determine”.

On se demande à quoi sert la *Tertiary Education Commission*. C'est le principe de l'autonomie, *academic independence* qui est fondamental dans le concept d'une université. Ce pouvoir n'existait pas du temps que cet institut était affilié à l'Université de Maurice. Désormais, l'institut quitte l'Université de Maurice pour suivre le ministre à l'enseignement supérieur et sera désormais sous son contrôle direct sans médiation de la part de la *Tertiary Education Commission*, sans qu'intervienne qui que ce soit. Cela est néfaste, cela est dangereux. C'est un précédent dangereux parce qu'on a qu'à imaginer ce qui se passera demain lorsque le MGI ou le MIE passeront sous le contrôle de l'enseignement supérieur et Dieu sait si les ingérences ne se comptent pas au quotidien déjà.

Ensuite, M. le président, ce qui interpelle, c'est les '*jobs for the boys*' ou devrais-je dire '*jobs for the boys and the girls*'. Ainsi il y aura dans notre nouvelle université un *Chairperson* ou une *Chairperson*. Il y aura au sein de notre nouvelle université un *registrar*, n'est-ce pas? C'est ce qui a été prévu. Il y aura au sein de notre université de *Head of School, Head of Finance, Head of Quality Assurance, Head of*

Research, Consultancy and Innovation, et notez bien, M. le président, pour un institut qui comprend 400 étudiants, me suis-je laisser dire, un *Head of Projects, Estates and Endowments*. Combien cela va coûter à l'État et à quelle fin?

Je m'arrêterai ici un instant pour faire une requête au ministre. Ce ministre, contre qui je n'ai rien au niveau personnel, dans la perception publique est toujours associé aux affaires de famille. Je le dis parce que je vais vous demander de nous rassurer.

(Interruptions)

Non, ce n'est pas sous la ceinture parce que beaucoup d'entre nous, ici, y compris les ministres du gouvernement, font très attention à ce qu'il n'y ait pas cette perception que se mêlent politique et *business*, que les familles bénéficient d'avantages indus. Le ministre Arvin Boolell, un exemple; je peux en citer d'autres. Certains ne prennent pas cette précaution.

The Deputy Speaker: I appeal to the Member to refrain from making any personal attack.

Mr Obeegadoo: Certainly not personal! This is political. It is eminently political.

(Interruptions)

I am defending a principle of transparency.

(Interruptions)

Non, mais écoutez, on le sait.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order, please!

Mr Obeegadoo: On le sait, tout le monde le dit. Quand vous étiez au Commerce, il y a eu Betamax; quand vous êtes à l'enseignement supérieur, il y a EIILM. Alors, je me suis laisser dire et j'espère que j'ai tort parce que je ne sais pas. Je me suis laissé dire que lorsqu'il faut nommer à l'*Open University of Mauritius* des personnalités à différents niveaux, de même au *Fashion and Design Institute* qu'il y aurait des liens de parenté. Je ne sais pas, et je demanderais donc au ministre de nous rassurer tout à l'heure qu'il n'y a aucun lien de parenté avec qui que ce soit à la tête de l'*Open University* aujourd'hui et demain du *Fashion and Design Institute*.

(Interruptions)

Je ne plaisante pas messieurs. Je ne fais pas d'accusation.

(Interruptions)

Je ne formule pas d'attaques.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Assirvaden, you are not supposed to make any remark from a sitting position!

Mr Obeegadoo: Je pose la question pour que le ministre ait l'occasion de rassurer la Chambre. Mais le projet de loi comporte d'autres sujets d'inquiétude. D'abord, la composition du conseil d'administration. M. le président, je note que le Président sera nommé par le Premier ministre, comme c'était le cas auparavant, qu'il y aura au conseil d'administration, le *Supervising Officer* du ministère de l'enseignement supérieur, ensuite, le *Supervising Officer* du ministère de l'industrie et puis, le directeur de la MEPZA. Mais le ministère de l'éducation n'y est plus.

Vous savez que nous avons exprimé de sérieuses réserves quant à cette séparation de l'éducation de l'enseignement supérieur. Ça, c'est un peu la mode dans certain pays d'Afrique avec des conséquences catastrophiques, avec quatre ministères de l'éducation. La coordination, la cohérence entre ce qui se fait au niveau du primaire et du secondaire et ce qui se fait dans la présecondaire, elle est d'une importance capitale. Dans ce domaine particulier, dans d'autres pays - le Premier ministre affectionne beaucoup Singapour et je cite souvent Singapour en matière d'éducation - c'est au niveau du secondaire deuxième cycle, ce que nous appelons chez nous HSC, que la préparation au niveau des polytechniques, les premiers pas dans ce genre de formation sont entrepris.

Il y aurait donc un besoin absolu de connexion, d'échange, de coordination, de cohérence, entre les initiatives du ministère de l'éducation et celles du ministère de l'enseignement supérieur. Toutefois, tout le rôle de l'éducation nationale est évacué de ce conseil d'administration de cet institut. Cela nous inquiète, cela est grave. Par contre, je demanderai au ministre de nous éclairer. Il y aura, désormais, au niveau de ce conseil d'administration –

“(d) one person with knowledge and experience in financial matters.”

Je ne comprends pas trop. J'aurai compris s'il y avait un représentant du ministère des finances. Je me dis que pour tout ce qui est investissement, conseil en terme de rentabilité, de gestion comptable, ce sera

le fait d'employer des experts. Pourquoi quelqu'un *with knowledge and experience in financial matters* ? J'ignore si au niveau des conseils d'administration, d'autres organismes au sein de l'éducation nationale que cela soit le cas. Ce conseil d'administration aura, entre autres responsabilités selon la nouvelle clause 9 -

“Payment of fees and charges.”

Lorsque le projet de loi fut introduit en 2008, certain de ce côté de la Chambre, je crois que c'était l'honorable madame Dookun-Luchoomun, qui avait souligné le risque de la privatisation de l'enseignement supérieur en comparant ce qui se fait à l'Université de Maurice où les études sont gratuites, mis à part les frais d'inscription et les frais d'examens à ce qui pourrait se faire au niveau de cet institut. Déjà, selon mes renseignements, les frais annuels pour chaque étudiant reviennent environ à R 50,000. Donc, je souhaiterais aussi un éclairage du ministre, quant aux implications de la transformation de cet institut en université à part entière pour ce qui est des frais universitaires.

Ensuite, je souhaiterais souligner, M. le président, la question du conseil académique, *the Academic Council*. Je note que si la MES et un *external examiner* font leur entrée, par contre, s'en vont l'Université de Maurice, l'IVTB, maintenant le MITD et *Enterprise Mauritius*. Ce qui m'inquiète ici, c'est le départ des opérateurs économiques. On pourrait dire qu'*Enterprise Mauritius*, dans un sens, c'était aussi la voix des opérateurs de l'industrie. Il n'y en a plus personne. C'est vrai qu'il y a un représentant de la MEXA au niveau du conseil d'administration; mais un seul et cela m'inquiète. Cet institut est sensé être très lié à ce qui se fait par les opérateurs économiques. Un des objets fondamentaux c'est justement de pouvoir, en ressources humaines, qualifier ce secteur de l'industrie. Le ministre lui-même nous a fait un discours où il a beaucoup parlé du contexte national et international, des défis à relever, de la productivité et pourtant, mis à part un représentant de la MEXA au niveau du conseil d'administration, il n'y a personne d'autre. Et cela m'inquiète parce que le reproche principal que l'on fait à notre Université de Maurice, c'est que pendant trop longtemps, l'offre a été déterminée par ce que voulait faire l'Université. *It was supply-driven*. Et aujourd'hui même eu égard à l'Université de Technologie, c'est la même critique qui est formulée et cet institut où il est encore plus important qu'il y ait des liens quasiment organiques avec les opérateurs, n'a qu'un représentant au niveau du conseil d'administration et personne au niveau du conseil académique.

Voilà donc, en quelques mots, M. le président, des dispositions particulières du projet de loi qui nous inquiètent. Mais je voudrais revenir à l'essence même de ce projet de loi qui est la transformation de l'institut en une université. Le ministre nous a expliqué la logique, la motivation en se référant à *enhanced credibility*, deuxièmement *partnerships* et troisièmement, *a strong institution*. En d'autres

mots, il nous dit qu'en détachant le *Fashion and Design Institute* de l'Université de Maurice hier et de l'Université de Technologie aujourd'hui pour en faire une université en elle-même, il allait garantir qu'il y ait une crédibilité accrue, que cet institut devenu université soit mieux à même de parvenir à des partenariats qui seraient porteurs pour le développement des enseignements et troisièmement, que ce serait une institution plus forte. Alors, expliquez-moi cela, M. le président ! Comment peut-on prétendre qu'en détachant, qu'en désaffiliant cet institut qui n'existe que depuis quatre ans et demi, cet institut qui a un nombre d'élèves qui ne fait pas la moitié du Collège Royal de Curepipe ou du QEC, qui a environ 400 étudiants, me dit-on, que cet institut va gagner en crédibilité, va se renforcer, va être mieux à même de conclure des partenariats avec les centres les plus importants au niveau mondial en devenant une université en elle-même plutôt qu'en restant affilié à une institution bien établie comme l'Université de Maurice, car c'était là l'idée débattue et approuvée au sein de cette Chambre, approuvée à l'unanimité en 2008?

Trois problèmes, M. le président, que je perçois. D'abord, l'infrastructure. Qu'il s'agisse des salles, de moyens pédagogiques, qu'il s'agisse des facilités récréatives, sportives pour les étudiants, qu'il s'agisse de possibilités d'épanouissement, d'échanges pour le personnel, il me semble logique que cet institut aurait été mieux loti en demeurant affilié à une université bien établie. Donc, en termes d'infrastructure et de facilités pédagogiques et autres, c'est un non-sens, M. le président.

Ensuite, deuxièmement: l'assurance qualité. En termes d'assurance qualité, c'est un secteur à la dérive. L'autre jour je disais que le président du syndicat du personnel de l'Université de Maurice dénonçait la baisse dans le niveau, mis à part quelques exceptions - le droit, la médecine et, je ne sais plus, il y avait une troisième discipline.

A l'Université de Technologie, c'est une université qui va de controverse en controverse, avec ces jours ci, les qualifications même de son directeur qui sont remises en question à la fois par le personnel et les étudiants. L'honorable ministre le sait. Il y a une pétition qui a été circulée, adressée à l'honorable Premier ministre.

The Tertiary Education Commission va de crise en crise. Je crois que nous n'avons toujours pas de directeur à la *Tertiary Education Commission* après que le dernier sera parti suite à une PNQ dans les circonstances que l'on connaît. La question de l'assurance qualité est fondamentale dans l'enseignement supérieur. Et qui l'assure ? La *Tertiary Education Commission* est censée l'assurer par des audits institutionnels, par la venue de spécialistes, de professeurs, d'enseignants étrangers. Et dans ces cas précis, alors que l'affiliation à l'Université de Maurice – je dis bien, l'Université de Maurice, c'est cela qui fut approuvé par la Chambre en 2008 - va être évacué. Désormais, c'est une institution devenue

université qui n'aura à répondre à personne en matière de qualité sauf au ministre. A personne ! L'Université de Maurice n'aura plus rien à dire, ni même l'Université de technologie dont la crédibilité est remise en question ces jours-ci. Donc, cette question d'assurance qualité nous pose problème et vous savez cette autorégulation que nous propose le ministre, nous inquiète parce qu'on se demande pourquoi cette précipitation ? Le MGI qui date de 1970 et qui offre des cours au niveau de l'enseignement supérieur depuis 20 ans - quand je suis rentré de l'université, c'était déjà le cas. Au niveau des langues orientales, c'est le MGI qui formait nos enseignants, qui offrait des *diploma level courses*. Le MGI n'a pas encore obtenu les faveurs du ministre pour devenir université. Le MIE qui chaque année forme des centaines, peut-être des milliers d'enseignants à temps partiel, à plein temps, en anticipation de ceux qui font maintenant le *pre-teaching diploma*, n'est pas reconnu comme université mais la *petite Fashion and Design Institute* qui existe depuis quatre ans va en devenir une. Expliquez-moi la logique et comprenez, M. le président, nos inquiétudes pour ce qui est de l'assurance qualité.

Troisièmement, la crédibilité ; précisément la crédibilité dont a fait état le ministre comme une des raisons de la transformation de cet institut. Cette crédibilité est fondamentale. Vous savez lorsque le projet loi fut présenté en 2008, il suscita tellement d'intérêt que le ministre de l'Economie et des Finances d'alors, crut utile d'intervenir, et voilà ce qu'il déclara à la Chambre. Il répondait à une question de l'honorable Nando Bodha qui avait posé la question fort pertinente : Qui allait délivrer les diplômes à l'époque? Lui répondant, le ministre de l'Economie expliqua qu'à l'exemple de l'Institut du Professeur Bhattacharya qui était affilié à l'Université de Warwick, ici, le FDI serait affilié à l'Université de Maurice. Il expliqua que le Professeur Bhattacharya *has created a school, the degrees awarded by the University of Warwick because it needs to get recognition*, et je cite -

“That is why we want the recognition, the brand name of the University of Mauritius to appear so that if tomorrow they - les étudiants - want to go abroad, it would be recognised, but they have autonomy, independence in every sense of the word, in its curriculum, in what they want to teach.”

Mais l'affiliation à l'Université de Maurice – c'est ainsi que le ministre de l'Economie d'alors défendait ce projet loi - garantissait la crédibilité, la reconnaissance des diplômes délivrés, ici même à Maurice, et au-delà de nos frontières parce que, M. le président, si votre enfant ou le mien demain allait étudier à ce *Fashion and Design Institute* et que par la suite ce jeune souhaitait aller entreprendre une maîtrise aux États Unis, en Europe, est-ce que cela ne ferait pas une différence fondamentale que le diplôme détenu soit délivré par l'Université de Maurice avec bientôt ses 50 ans d'histoire, plutôt que la petite *Fashion and Design Institute*, un bâtiment se trouvant derrière l'école hôtelière avec quelque 400 élèves dans quelques

salles de classes ? C'était quoi? L'ancien Sir Rampersad Neerunjun. C'est élémentaire. C'est évident, M. le président. On aurait tant voulu, comme en 2008, soutenir le gouvernement pour faire avancer ce *Fashion and Design Institute*. Quelle était l'utilité? Quelle était la nécessité ? Quelle était l'urgence à transformer cet institut en université ? Je me le demande ! Je demande au ministre de la majorité gouvernementale, y a-t-il un seul parmi eux qui aurait soulevé la question ou bien est-ce chacun pour soi ? Et le ministre de l'Education qui s'est fait complètement éliminé de ce projet. Donc, qu'il s'agisse d'infrastructure, qu'il s'agisse d'assurance qualité, qu'il s'agisse de reconnaissance de crédibilité, ce projet de loi ne passe pas la rampe. Cette initiative est condamnable, M. le président.

Nous disons non. Nous avons dit non de ce côté de la Chambre à une quatrième université publique lorsqu'on prit, de la même façon, quelques instituts ici et là pour en former l'Université des Mascareignes. De la même manière aujourd'hui, de manière de tout à fait cohérente envers nous même, et face au pays, nous disons non à la création d'une cinquième université publique. J'ai donné trois raisons : infrastructure, assurance qualité, reconnaissance. Je pourrais me référer au nombre d'universités pour le pays.

Quelque temps de cela j'avais évoqué un calcul très simple que nous avons fait au sein de l'opposition, en divisant la population par le nombre d'universités publiques. Nous sommes parvenus à la conclusion qu'on arrive à un chiffre d'à peu près 500,000 à 600,000. En Suisse, si vous divisez la population par le nombre d'universités publiques, on arrive à 650,000. En Grande Bretagne : 540,000. Si l'honorable Melle Deerpalsing était là, j'aurais cité les chiffres pour le Canada. A Maurice, avec 12 universités publiques, nous en étions à 650,000, et nous allons maintenant passer à une cinquième université. Et parlons de masse critique.

L'Université de Maurice compte maintenant 13,000 étudiants environ ; l'Université de Technologie, autour de 6,000, je crois. En Grand Bretagne, la plus petite université à Chichester compte 5,000 étudiants. La plus grande, celle de Leeds, 41,000 étudiants. Et nous allons, nous, faire d'une institution avec quelque 400 élèves, une université ! Parlez-moi de masse critique, M. le président. Et y a-t-il lieu que je vous instruisse, que j'instruisse la Chambre de la question d'économie d'échelle ? Il n'y a nul besoin d'être économiste pour comprendre qu'en terme de dépenses, qu'en terme de rapport coût-efficacité, il est tellement plus évident que cet institut demeure affilié à une grande université ! C'est du gaspillage de l'argent public, ni plus ni moins. Objectivement, inévitablement je vous ai cité tous les postes additionnels qu'on va créer. Cela va nous coûter plus cher, beaucoup plus cher. Je me demande, lorsque le ministre a été au Conseil des ministres, s'il a présenté les implications financières de cet amendement à la loi.

M. le président, nous faillirons à notre tâche si nous approuvions ce projet de loi. Songez - et je vais conclure - à l'avenir de notre pays ; songez à la qualité des ressources humaines qu'exige le développement économique de ce pays. Pour l'avenir du pays et pour l'avenir de notre jeunesse, M. le président, de ce côté de la Chambre, nous estimons que c'est une initiative dangereuse, reflétant une politique de l'enseignement supérieur néfaste, qui est le fait d'un ministre qui entraîne le secteur de l'enseignement supérieur à la dérive, au nom d'un gouvernement qui a une orientation tout à fait pernicieuse pour l'avenir du pays. Nous sommes contre, et nous voterons contre ce projet de loi.

Merci, M. le président.

(6.22 p.m.)

The Minister of Tertiary Education, Science, Research and Technology (Dr. R. Jeetah): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, allow me to thank the hon. Steven Obeegadoo for his intervention. I do not wish to congratulate him, but I still need to thank him for his intervention.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, 42 years ago, Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam had the vision to start a small school called the Mauritius College of the Air. He had the vision then that education could enter the doors or the dwellings of people through radio, television and other means. And yesterday, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I had the distinct pleasure, honour and privilege to go and inaugurate the Open University of Mauritius.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, if I was to reply to hon. Obeegadoo, all I have to do is to go through his previous speeches on the creation of institutions. He asked exactly the same questions, and he is consistent on one point, I must say, he has always opposed the creation of new institutions. He has never created anything, and has nothing to show as achievements in the Tertiary Education Sector.

(Interruptions)

I listened quietly to you my dear friend! Give me my chance to speak! He has nothing to show as achievements in the Tertiary Education Sector when he was Minister. I have got some figures that I could share with you later on, and I want to do that.

There is one point, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, and I am not sure whether I should get into it or not, but I think I will because he has attacked my family.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, my grandfather, late Moteeputh Fowdar, built the first primary school in Camp de Masque Pavé in the 1940s. If he hadn't built that school, the villages; Camp de Masque Pavé,

Clémencia, Médine, etc. and these villages would not have been what they are today. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, my father built a school in the 1950s, which has provided education to more than 15,000 people, and now he has started his first private university.

If I were to protect the family, would I have asked the hon. Prime Minister to put at our disposal the ex-MBC building to create a campus for the Open University? This is a public university my friend! This is not a private university. There is nothing that I can go and take from there. If I had the interest of my family in mind, would I have pushed for the construction of a university in Montagne Blanche, a university in Piton, another one in Réduit and a fourth one in Pamplemousses, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir? Recently, we fought for another extra 50 acres for the public sector, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. I should be either really very dumb or stupid...

(Interruptions)

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

Dr. Jeetah: *Or, Monsieur Obeegadoo est de très mauvaise foi!* It appears that it may be so. If I wanted to protect my family, would I be building all these universities? This is our Prime Minister's vision, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. I recall the days, in 2003, when they were in power. We went to visit Panchavati, where we met kids who could not pay Rs6 to go to school. And they were in power. I think he was Minister of Education then. Rs6 from Panchavati to Rivière du Rempart, and Rs6 back. And now, you come and give lessons while we are creating something!

When did I use the term "University" here? I am talking of a specialised institution, a specialised institute which will be dedicated to fashion and design. Tell me, my friend, if there is somebody who wants to follow a course in interior decoration, where does he or she go? You probably can afford it; you can send your kids anywhere. But what about the kids here in Mauritius? My friends who are sitting at the back just sent me some notes; people who work at the FDI. Look what I have found here, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, 52% of students studying at FDI come from low-income families who earn less than Rs10,000. And this is the kind of respect he shows to people who are getting a chance to study here.

(Interruptions)

I do not wish to give way! I am not giving way, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

The Deputy Speaker: It's a point of order?

(Interruptions)

Dr. Jeetah: He has to listen! I am not going to give way!

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: I am on my feet! Hon. Jhugroo! Hon. Obeegadoo, I am on my feet.

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Deputy Speaker...

The Deputy Speaker: Have you got a point of order?

Mr Obeegadoo: Yes.

The Deputy Speaker: Let me listen to you - Hon. Assirvaden!

Mr Obeegadoo: I refer to the rules of debate in this House. First of all, I have always referred to the hon. gentleman as the Minister or the hon. gentleman or the hon. Member; never as “he”.

Secondly, I have been accused of being of bad faith and I have listened, and I have come along with that. Now, when the point we are debating is the issue of whether or not that Institute, which we all approve of, should be made a university, the motive that is being attributed to me is that I lack respect, I disregard the students because they are poor students. I take strong objection to that, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, and I call, on the basis of our Standing Orders and Rules of debate, for your intervention.

The Deputy Speaker: First of all, I would request the hon. Minister to show regards to the hon. Member, and secondly...

(Interruptions)

Hon. Assirvaden! Secondly, if hon. Obeegadoo has raised certain points, it is perfectly in order for the hon. Minister to rebut those points.

Dr. Jeetah: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, my learned friend, my hon. friend...

The Deputy Speaker: I am sorry I don't want any provocation from any quarters otherwise I'll have to take action against you.

Dr. Jeetah: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I do take strong exception to the fact that he brings in strangers while he is discussing; he brings in members of my family in this Chamber...

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Minister that is over now!

Dr. Jeetah: But he did do that.

The Deputy Speaker: That is over. We have already ruled upon that, just move ahead with the other arguments.

Dr. Jeetah: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, history will recall that every time we come up with a proposal to build an institution in this country; hon. Obeegadoo, I do not know whether it is at a personal

level or as a spokesman of the MMM, he has always had something to say against the building of institutions. When we were discussing about the creation of a university campus in Curepipe, guess what he said Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, let's convert that building into a swimming pool. Yesterday, as I said, I had the pleasure to launch the Open University which is going to serve our kids from the south, from Curepipe, the East and other regions. Let me quote what he had to say when we were discussing...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Kindly refer to him as honourable Member.

Dr. Jeetah: Let me refresh the hon. Member's memory as to what he had to say...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Jhugroo, you are interrupting the Minister.

Dr. Jeetah: When we were creating the University des Mascareignes with the collaboration of the University of Limoges and I quote: '*Nous ne sommes pas d'accord qu'il y ait besoin d'une quatrième université à l'île Maurice*'.
université à l'île Maurice'.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: I am sorry. I want you to withdraw the word '*voleur*' that you used just now.

(Interruptions)

Please, don't shout! I do not want anyone to shout. I would kindly appeal to the hon. Member to withdraw the word that he utilised just a moment ago.

Mr Jhugroo: Addressed to whom?

The Deputy Speaker: Addressed to the Members.

Mr Jhugroo: To all the Members of the Government.

The Deputy Speaker: Are you withdrawing or are you not withdrawing? This is my question.

Mr Jhugroo: I withdraw.

Dr. Jeetah: Yes, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, let me refresh the hon. Member's memory.

The Deputy Speaker: I am sorry.

Dr. Jeetah: Yes, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

The Deputy Speaker: When hon. Obeegadoo was intervening I made sure that there was no interruption from this side. Similarly, when...

(Interruptions)

Don't interrupt, please! I am talking to hon. Mrs Labelle. I can hear your voice; I don't want you to interrupt. Similarly, when the Minister is intervening, I don't want any comments or interruption from this side. Thank you very much.

Dr. Jeetah: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. Let me refresh the hon. Member's memory in what he had to say when we were creating yet another institution: '*Nous ne sommes pas d'accord qu'il y ait besoin d'une quatrième université publique*'. By association, what did he mean? That the kids living in Trèfles, in Stanley, in Camp Levieux, in Rose Hill aren't good enough to have a University at their doorstep. Today the same thing again! People, with very low income, after having completed a diploma at the Fashion and Design Institute, would be in a position, I hope, in a year's time, to move to a degree level, get a good job and do well in life. What is it that the hon. Member has to say about massification; job for the boys, the usual terms Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. If you went through all his speeches, it is always the same rhetoric: creating jobs for the boys and girls, massification. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I will have to remind him again and let me read this to the hon. learned friend. I have a table here which compares gross tertiary enrolment rate vis-à-vis GDP and HDI. HDI is the Human Development Index. For instance, the HDI in the US is 0.91; in India there is 12% enrolment rate and their GDP per capita is about 1,200 USD. That was in 2011. Their HDI is 0.547. In Mauritius, the enrolment rate is 45% and we had a GDP of about 8,776 USD in 2011. In Australia, the enrolment rate is 76% and what is the GDP per capita? It is 42,000 dollars and what is the HDI? It is 0.929. I don't wish to give a tutorial to the hon. Member who has spent some time in UNESCO. I am sure he has these figures. He knows all about it, but he still has to say things that are difficult for one to understand. I want to make a comment about hon. Obeegadoo.

I am sure he will be against any future new project. He did mention that he is going to raise his voice again if one day MGI was to be granted degree awarding powers; he would oppose that. He would also oppose the upgrading of the Mauritius Institute of Education which does not fall under my purview. I am trying to think why he is always opposed to the creation of institutions. Is it because he is an expert in creating failure, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir?

He, as a Minister of Education – I have to say this again because of what has been said, I have to reply – what was the pass rate at CPE in Mauritius when we were in Government in 2000? It was 66.4%.

In 2001, who was the Minister of Education? The pass rate was 65.3%. Let's do a little arithmetic. 66.4% to 65.3%, which is higher? In 2002, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir...

The Deputy Speaker: Kindly address the Chair, hon. Minister.

Dr. Jeetah: Yes, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. In 2002, the CPE result went down to 64.9% and in 2003, 62.6% the worse ever CPE results between 2000 and 2012 and today he comes and talks about massification, quality, jobs for the boys, recognition, infrastructure, quality assurance. *Mais non, cela ne tient pas la route, M. le président.* I do not wish to go any further with these arguments. I did say, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we have been through that. I am convinced just as the staff of FDI and I hope they take it as a challenge. I hope those sitting here have listened to what the hon. Member had to say and they take it as a challenge and, in time, they will come up with their own Mauritius brands in the textile and apparel sector. Our textile industries still employ about 40,000 people directly and indirectly about 80,000 and still manage to survive.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, everybody from the Opposition talks about quality and massification. We should ask ourselves a question. How come even today we are able to produce one hundred and fifty million pieces of garments? Who work in these factories and where do they get the training if not from the FDI, the Department of Textiles at the University of Mauritius and other tertiary education institutions? How are we able to compete with Vietnam, China and India?

(Interruptions)

A une vitesse horrifiante s'il vous plaît!

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Cader Sayed Hossen, please!

Dr. Jeetah: On this side of the House, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we firmly believe in building institutions. It is not as if somebody has already built a house, now he is coming here to discuss the colours of the curtains, the chairs, etc. Here, we are talking about creating a base. I think we will have to use as inspiration what SSR did 42 years ago when he had the vision to set up the Mauritius College of the Air. By having this little idea, today, that little institution has become a full-fledged university and now it has the ambition to be present in Africa as well.

So, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the staff and members of the Fashion and Design Institute, I must say, this is a subject I happen to know a little bit, I am quite satisfied that they have been able to put in place the right structure with regard to quality assurance.

More importantly, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, today, the Director has been able to get into a partnership with Central Saint Martin's College of Fashion of the University of London. I would like to invite hon. Members here, if they have an opportunity to go and visit this school in London. They will probably see that it is one of the most prestigious institutions in Europe. These very learned Professors are now willing to work hand in hand with the Fashion and Design Institute to ensure that in this part of the world we have an institution worth the name.

With regard to infrastructure, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, one can only wait. I would have dreamt of having the kind of endowment Harvard University has, but I know that this is not likely to happen in my lifetime. But we have to start with whatever means we have. I am not going to stay here forever. One can only do what one can. I think we see an opportunity here. If we do not do this, what will happen to the textile industry if we are not here to support the industry? What will happen to those 45,000 people who are currently working in that sector?

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, my professor used to tell: "Rajesh, none of us here needs any more pieces of textiles. Look at our wardrobe! It is all full of garments!" But why are we able to make a difference by selling more in these high street stores? Because we have been able to add a new element to that textile fabric! This is exactly what we need.

With regard to recognition, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the hon. Member needs to understand that one can only confer degrees by Act of Parliament for the public sector. At the moment, we are working with Edexcel - I am not suggesting that we are not happy with them, but I think we have to move forward. All these resources will stay in Mauritius. We would not have to send all these rupees outside and, in time, as I said, I do not have any doubt that it is going to prosper.

We have plans to have new university campuses and FDI has already identified space within these new construction sites which is due to start this year. The hon. Vice-Prime Minister has promised me that, tomorrow, we will have a meeting of the Building Plans Committee which will approve the construction projects; they have already prequalified their contractors and it is just a question of time before works start on the three identified sites.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as I said, I am very positive for this institution. I have not used the word 'University'. It is a Fashion and Design Institute. I do not know if the hon. Member knows or not, but probably in this part of the world, in the African Continent, we do not have many schools which offer textile and fashion design programmes. We have certain strength in this field and I do not see why we should not be pushing forward.

I do not want to rebut any more what was said, but I think what matters here is that we are now set to get all the infrastructure ready so that we can start. *Et en ce qui concerne le* ministerial intervention, the reasons why we thought that the Minister can institute an enquiry is to prevent the Minister from poking his nose in the day to day running of the institution. If he so wishes, if he finds that there are abuses, etc, he has to do it in writing so that he does get into the day to day running of the institution.

With this, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would like to wish all the best to this new institution. Once again, as I said, I do not have any doubt that it is going to flourish and I have the pleasure to commend the Bill.

Thank you for your attention.

Question put and agreed to.

Bill read a second time and committed.

PUBLIC BILL

COMMITTEE STAGE

(The Deputy Speaker in the Chair)

The Fashion and Design Institute (Amendment) Bill (No. V of 2013) was considered and agreed to.

On the Assembly resuming with the Deputy Speaker in the Chair, the Deputy Speaker reported accordingly.

Third Reading

On motion made and seconded the Fashion and Design Institute (Amendment) Bill (No. V of 2013) was read the third time and passed.

Second Reading

The Attorney General (Mr Y. Varma) gave notice of his intention not to move the Second Reading of the Police and Criminal Evidence Bill (No. IV of 2013) today.

ADJOURNMENT

The Deputy Prime Minister: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that this Assembly do now adjourn to Tuesday 07 May 2013 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.

The Deputy Speaker: The House stands adjourned.

(6.48 p.m.)

MATTERS RAISED

CAMP PASSY, LA SOURCE - REFUSE COLLECTION

Ms K. R. Deerpalsing (Third Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes): M. le président, je me lève pour attirer l'attention de la Chambre sur un sujet qui est...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: We have got as many as 14 hon. Members who are going to intervene in the short lapse of half an hour. I make an appeal to hon. Members to be reasonably short so that we make an allowance for the Ministers to respond.

Ms Deerpalsing: M. le président, je voudrais attirer l'attention de la Chambre sur une question concernant ma circonscription - qui concerne le ministre des administrations régionales qui n'est pas là, mais il y a l'*interim Minister*. Cela concerne le traitement que la région de La Source est en train d'avoir avec la municipalité de Quatre Bornes.

M. le président, ce n'est pas moi, mais les habitants de La Source à Quatre Bornes qui sont systématiquement pénalisés depuis décembre. Dans la région de Camp Passy à La Source, cela fait 22 jours que les ordures n'ont pas été ramassées.

(Interruptions)

Mais ce n'est pas la première occasion ! Les habitants de La Source sont en train d'être discriminés. Je mesure mes mots ; ils sont en train d'être discriminés *against* et ils sont en train d'être pénalisés. Je n'habite pas à La Source ! Ces habitants là ont le droit, comme tout le monde, d'avoir les services de la municipalité de Quatre Bornes. Ensuite, au centre communautaire de La Source, il y avait un *Fitness Centre* que l'honorable Duval et moi avons fait pour les habitants de La Source. Qu'est-ce que la municipalité de Quatre Bornes a fait ? C'est horrible pour pénaliser les habitants de la Source comme ça ! Ils ont fermé ce centre. Ils ont retiré les équipements de ce centre; ils les ont envoyés autre part. Ils ont pris deux mille poubelles et ils les ont enfoncées dans ce centre. C'est honteux, M. le président, ce que la Mairie de Quatre Bornes, avec l'équipe MMM/MSM, est en train de faire envers les habitants de la Source!

(Interruptions)

C'est...

(Interruptions)

Oui, mais je suis outragée.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Member, your time is over!

Ms Deerpalsing: Yes, I am finishing! I am just finishing.

The Deputy Speaker: Please round off!

(Interruptions)

Ms Deerpalsing: C'est, M. le président,...

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Member will have to round off. Time is over! Yes!

Ms Deerpalsing: *Yes, it is my last sentence.* C'est juste que je suis outragée et je demande au ministre concerné de mettre fin à cette discrimination contre les habitants de la Source.

(Interruptions)

The Minister of Environment and Sustainable Development (Mr D. Virahsawmy): M. le président, je voudrais assurer la Chambre que je me servais de toutes les lois disponibles pour m'assurer que la municipalité gère la ville convenablement.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Ms Anquetil! I am sorry, I will allow you to raise only one issue. Please go ahead.

(06.51 p.m.)

**MORCELLEMENT POUSSON, MORCELLEMENT SEETARAM, CAMP BELIN & PONT
VANTARD, VACOAS – POLLUTED WATER**

Ms S. Anquetil (Third Member for Vacoas & Floreal): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, my request is addressed to the Deputy Prime Minister. The inhabitants of Morcellement Pousson, Morcellement Seetaram, Camp Belin and Pont Vantard have been complaining several times to authorities concerned, but no actions have been taken.

The polluted water that emanates from La Marie filter bed is poured out into Rempart River on Saturdays, Sundays and public holidays by the contractors engaged by the CWA. I am tabling three pictures of the polluted river. I would like to draw the attention of the hon. Deputy Prime Minister that

the site of the river at Trois Ponts is a meeting place during the Hindu festival, especially during the *Ganesh Chaturthi* and *Ganga Snaan*. The polluted water...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Please!

Ms Anquetil: ...causes bad smell...

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Member's time is up, she has to round off!

Ms Anquetil: Yes. The polluted water causes bad smell and affects a lot the children. I met the inhabitants on Thursday 18 April at Henrietta and they are requesting a site visit with the hon. Deputy Prime Minister.

Thank you.

The Deputy Prime Minister: A site visit will be effected tomorrow afternoon with the *forces vives*.

(06.53)

APEIM – SCHOOLS - CLOSURE

Mrs F. Labelle (Third Member for Vacoas & Floreal): Merci M. le président de m'accorder le temps de la Chambre pour faire la voix des enfants handicapés.

En effet, M. le président, je parle des enfants des écoles de l'Association de Parents d'Enfants Inadaptés de l'Ile Maurice (APEIM) dont la fermeture de neuf écoles spécialisées a été annoncée, mettant presque 250 enfants handicapés dans une situation très, très difficile. Une lettre a été envoyée, M. le président, le 8 mars 2013 au ministère de l'Education. A hier, lundi 22 avril, aucune réponse du ministère n'a été reçue.

M. le président, hier deux officiers du ministère ont fait une visite surprise dans les neuf écoles. Et pour aller très rapidement et très brièvement, c'est quoi la demande de l'APEIM ? Que le gouvernement, à travers son ministère de l'Education, assume sa responsabilité vis-à-vis des jeunes handicapés. C'est-à-dire, s'assurer que ces enfants aient accès à l'éducation. Que le gouvernement respecte ses engagements pris à travers la ratification de la Convention des droits des enfants et la Convention relative aux droits des personnes handicapées. Je vous fais l'économie de cet article 24 (2) (b)

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« L'éducation est obligatoire jusqu'à l'âge de 16 ans (...) »

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Mrs Labelle, your time is up. Please round off!

Mrs Labelle: *Yes.* Dois-je rappeler à la Chambre que l'État Mauricien, à travers son ministère de l'Education d'alors, avait pris l'engagement de parité en 2005 tout en disant que les enfants handicapés doivent recevoir plus que les autres enfants? Cette décision n'a pas été mise en pratique et l'APEIM est fatigué de se battre pour que les enfants handicapés aient accès à l'éducation. Le même sujet a été pris dans cette Chambre en 2010 et le ministre de l'Education avait déclaré...

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Mrs Labelle, you'll have to round off! I am sorry.

Mrs Labelle: Mais, M. le président, c'est un...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: No, you have been given...

(Interruptions)

Round off, please!

Mrs Labelle: Non, mais si on ne peut pas parler des enfants handicapés...

The Deputy Speaker: We have got a time constraint; we should allow the other hon. Members to intervene!

Mrs Labelle: Oui, mais, M. le président...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Time is very limited as I have said, I am very sorry!

Mrs Labelle: M. le président, il est clair que les enfants handicapés n'ont pas...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: I am sorry! I am sorry!

Mrs Labelle: ... l'intérêt de ce gouvernement!

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Mrs Labelle, you have got to round off!

Mrs Labelle: Les enfants handicapés n'ont pas l'intérêt de ce gouvernement et vous le confirmez en m'empêchant de terminer en quelques secondes!

The Deputy Speaker: No, I am not doing that at all. I am not doing that!

(Interruptions)

Mrs Labelle: Yes, parce que si on ne peut pas 250 enfants qui n'auront pas d'écoles.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Mrs Labelle, I am on my feet now!

(Interruptions)

It is no question of restraining anyone from expressing himself or herself. You understand that we have got a time constraint; we have got as many as 14 hon. Members who are going to express themselves. That is why time is limited!

(Interruptions)

Yes, who is going to react?

(Interruptions)

No, no that is not the question. I am sorry!

(Interruptions)

The Minister of Education and Human Resources (Dr. V. Bunwaree): M. le président...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order, Mrs Labelle!

(Interruptions)

Order, please!

(Interruptions)

Dr. Bunwaree: M. le président, il y a beaucoup de choses qui...

(Interruptions)

Il y a beaucoup de choses à dire sur ce que vient de mentionner l'honorable membre. Je viendrai avec une déclaration à la Chambre en temps et lieu, mais je dois dire que si les lettres n'ont pas été répondues, il y a beaucoup de contacts qui ont été pris auprès des uns et des autres. Mais il y a beaucoup de choses qui n'ont pas été dites aussi à cette Chambre aujourd'hui. Je n'ai, en tout cas, aucune leçon à apprendre pour défendre les enfants handicapés. La Chambre pourra compter sur moi.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Obeegadoo !

(06.56 p.m.)

LOUIS PASTEUR MEDICAL SCHOOL - STUDENTS

Mr S. Obeegadoo (Third Member for Curepipe & Midlands): M. le président, mon propos s'adresse au ministre de l'enseignement supérieur ...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Minister of Health, please allow the hon. Member to intervene without interruption! We are running short of time, you don't realise that? Please, hon. Obeegadoo!

Mr Obeegadoo: M. le président, cela concerne les étudiants...

The Deputy Speaker: Kindly be brief!

Mr Obeegadoo: Cela concerne les étudiants de l'école de Médecine Louis Pasteur.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Mrs Labelle, you are interrupting your own colleague!

(Interruptions)

Can you remain silent?

(Interruptions)

Can you remain silent, I said?

(Interruptions)

Mrs Labelle!

(Interruptions)

Time is running out and you are interrupting unnecessarily!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Obeegadoo, I am sorry!

Mr Obeegadoo: M. le président, je voudrais soulever le cas des étudiants de l'École de Médecine Louis Pasteur.

En 2002, suite à un accord approuvé par la MQA, des élèves s'engagent sur un cursus d'étude de médecine, première année à Maurice et la moitié réussissent avec plus de 50% et s'envolent pour Paris VI. Arrivé en quatrième année, c'est-à-dire juste avant de terminer le deuxième cycle, ils sont informés qu'il n'y a aucun accord pour l'internat et donc tout s'arrête avec le diplôme de deuxième cycle.

La *Tertiary Education Commission* prend le relais et à partir de 2008 deux rentrent à Maurice, les autres ayant abandonné leurs études. Le Dr. Baligadoo prétend alors qu'il y a un accord avec le *Medical Council* mais que nie le *Medical Council*. Donc, les élèves et leurs parents dénoncent cet état de chose auprès du ministère de l'Éducation et du ministère de la Santé.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Obeegadoo, please round off!

Mr Obeegadoo: Oui, je termine. Donc, ces deux étudiants, les deux premiers, terminent leur internat à Maurice en 2011 et ils font ensuite leur thèse sous la supervision du Dr. Baligadoo, et arrivé en 2012, toutes les voies sont fermées. Donc, aujourd'hui nous avons deux ayant terminé l'internat et qui sont à Maurice attendant sans rien savoir ; trois qui entreprennent leur internat à Maurice ; quatre qui sont en attente de leur *pre-reg* et de l'internat, et quatorze qui sont en France, étudiant ou à Lille ou à Paris et les derniers sont partis en Septembre de l'an dernier. Il y a eu une réunion avec le ministre de l'Enseignement Supérieur, mais il le sait très bien les solutions proposées, c'est-à-dire d'aller à la Réunion alors qu'il n'y a pas d'accord avec l'université de la Réunion, de tout recommencer ou en une année de refaire le programme de six ans à l'Université de Maurice, aucune de ces solutions ne tiennent pas la route. Donc, je voudrais d'un point de vue humain faire un appel au gouvernement pour une intervention urgente afin de trouver une solution pour ces jeunes.

The Minister of Tertiary Education, Science, Research and Technology (Dr. R. Jeetah): M. le président, je suis en présence de certains documents qui suscitent pas mal d'inquiétude. Je pourrais

même citer un, si vous le voulez. Il y en a un. Il y a un monsieur qui dit « cher monsieur et cher Steeve... »

(Interruptions)

...qui a été adressé par le Professeur Baligadoo.

The Deputy Speaker: You don't have much time I said.

Dr. Jeetah: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, would you like me to answer or not?

The Deputy Speaker: Please, be as short as possible.

Dr. Jeetah: Yes.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Minister cannot quote from documents.

Dr. Jeetah: I am in the presence of ...

The Deputy Speaker: But we do not have the time to do that.

(Interruptions)

(7.00 p.m.)

L'ÉCOLE DE MÉDECINE LOUIS PASTEUR

Mrs L. D. Dookun-Luchoomun (Second Member for Quatier Militaire & Moka): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I will also make an appeal to the hon. Minister of Tertiary Education, regarding the students of *l'École de Médecine Louis Pasteur*. Not only, these students have another guidance of the Tertiary Education Commission and their parents admitted their children to this particular institution, and now, after eight years and some of them after six years of studies, find themselves with nowhere to go.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would like to table the letter from the Medical Council to *l'École de Médecine Louis Pasteur* stating that they will register the young Doctors after their 3^{eme} cycle d'internat. This is a paper that I will like to table here.

I will make an appeal to the hon. Minister to take the responsibility of these students because had it not been because of the fact that the Tertiary Education Commission had listed the institution among the recognised institutions, these students and these parents would have spent, not only, their financial resources, but also their very precious time and efforts in carrying out their studies.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I will make an appeal to the hon. Minister to take urgent action in favour of these children.

The Minister of Tertiary Education, Science, Research and Technology (Dr. R. Jeetah): As I was saying, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am in the presence of some documents that are cause for concern for everybody here. I think the students have been misled. I have letters here since 2001, when the then Minister made a mess of the situation. But, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, through the good office of hon. Dr. Boolell and the French Ambassador, we had Professor Pelayo, who has been here and we are trying to find a solution to the predicament of these students. I will come to the Assembly with a statement at some later stage.

Mr S. Obeegadoo (Third Member for Curepipe & Midlands): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, just a remark. Again, we have heard that the then Minister made a mess of the situation.

(Interruptions)

I will call upon the hon. Minister - not now - but I want him to come, and go public and substantiate what he said.

(7.03 p.m)

G. M. D. ACTCHIA & COLLINE MONNERON STATE SECONDARY SCHOOL - SPORTS FACILITIES

Mr R. Uteem (Second Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would like to raise a matter which concerns both the hon. Minister of Education and Human Resources and the hon. Minister of Youth and Sports. It is in relation to G. M. D. Atchia State Secondary School and Colline Monneron State Secondary School.

When these schools were constructed a few years ago, there was a Memorandum of Agreement, I understand, which was signed between the two Ministries, which would allow inhabitants of the vicinity to have access to sports facilities which are offered, that is, football, volleyball, basketball etc. But it is now several years and the inhabitants are still waiting to have access to these sports facilities. I understand

that for one reason or the other - I do not know why - up to now, all the clubs and the inhabitants of the vicinity of Colline Monneron are not allowed to practise sports on these playgrounds after school hours.

Can I ask the hon. Minister if he could look into the matter?

The Minister of Education and Human Resources (Dr. V. Bunwaree): I am very surprised to hear what the hon. Member is saying. In fact, the Ministry of Education has taken over and there is no restriction at all. There are only some conditions which have to be followed. I will look into that anyway.

(7.04 p.m)

MITD - TRADE UNIONIST - MR H.K. MADHOO

Mr V. Baloomoody (Third Member for GRNW & Port Louis West): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as it is the last sitting before the Labour Day, may I raise an issue of great importance with regard to yet another case of persecution and harassment of a trade unionist, according to the Federation of Civil Service and other Unions.

I am talking here about the case of Mr H.K. Madhow, Assistant Manager under the Mauritius Institute of Training and Development (MITD) who is also the President of the MITD Employees Union. That gentleman has been suspended since 21 November 2012. Subsequently, there has been a Disciplinary Committee where the Chairperson of that Disciplinary Committee accepted that whatever Mr Madhow has said on radio – he was called for an interview – was in his capacity as Manager of the MITD Employees Union.

The hearing has been over and up to now, he has not received any communication from the MITD although he has sent letters both to the MITD and to the Ministry of Civil Service. This gentleman is the President of the Union. The hearing terminated on the 19 March and according to law, within seven days we should communicate to the employee the result of the Disciplinary Committee. This has not been done in this case. This gentleman has threatened to go on hunger strike very soon.

As it is a matter of urgency, the Minister of Labour and Industrial Relations and Employment is not here, the Minister of Civil Service is here, the Minister of Education, who is responsible for MITD is here ...

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Baloomoody, time is up! Please round off!

Mr Baloomoody: ... I am appealing to Government to find a solution to that particular case, so that, we can allow trade unionists to do their activities freely, without fear and without prejudice.

Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

The Minister of Education and Human Resources (Dr. V. Bunwaree): I am aware, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that the MITD Board is looking into the matter and I will transmit to them what has been said here for the President of the Union which is not a recognised Union, but is a registered Union.

(7.06 p.m.)

CONSTITUENCY NO. 14 - GARBAGE COLLECTION SERVICES

Mrs J. Radegonde-Haines (Fourth Member for Savanne & Black River): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would like to raise an issue concerning Constituency No. 14, addressed to the hon. Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, my concern is about the garbage collection services in the following regions, namely: Surinam, Chemin Grenier, Chamouny, Rivière des Galets, Bel Ombre, Baie du Cap, Cluny, Le Morne, Coteau Raffin, La Gaulette, Case Noyale, Grande Rivière Noire, Rivière Noire, Chamarel, Flic en Flac, Beau Songe, Cascavelle, La Preneuse, Tamarin and Bambous ...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Jhugroo!

Mrs Radegonde-Haines: This service is now being carried out once a week and on erratic timetable, leading to a chaotic situation among the inhabitants and a serious environmental problem. You can imagine how many Day Care Centres there are in the regions and pampers being changed every day. You also have garbage from shops, restaurants, households etc. The garbage collection used to include weeding, sweeping and cleaning of drains. Recently, this service is being reduced to only once a week without weeding, sweeping and cleaning of drains.

This situation is becoming very alarming being given that garbage remains unattended leading to serious sanitation problem in the region. I would like to make an appeal to the hon. Minister of Local Government to take immediate and urgent action to remedy this situation before any damage is caused to the health of these inhabitants.

The Minister of Environment and Sustainable Development (Mr D. Virahsawmy): Yes, I shall look into it.

(7.08 p.m)

BAMBOUS VIRIEUX – FISHERMEN - SECURITY

Mr M. Seeruttun (Second Member for Vieux Grand Port & Rose Belle): M. le président, le sujet que je vais aborder concerne le ministre de la Pêche qui n'est pas présent ce soir, mais j'aimerais bien qu'un de ses collègues lui transmette le message.

C'est un problème qui concerne l'accès sur la mer dans la région de Bambous Virieux. Il y a une passe que les pêcheurs utilisent pour aller en haute mer et il y a la compagnie La Ferme Marine de Mahebourg qui a des activités sur cette mer et qui exploite l'élevage de poissons. Depuis quelque temps, ils sont en train d'accroître leurs activités et de s'empiéter sur la passe qui donne accès aux pêcheurs pour aller en haute mer. Donc, cela pose un problème. D'abord, ils sont en train de restreindre l'accès et de l'autre côté cela cause un problème de sécurité. Maintenant, les pêcheurs doivent faire un détour pour sortir et entrer dans les lagons.

Donc, je demande au ministre d'intervenir et de voir dans quelle mesure il peut remédier ce problème et assurer qu'il n'y ait pas de problème de sécurité pour ces pêcheurs.

Merci, M. le président.

The Minister of Tourism and Leisure (Mr M. Yeung Sik Yuen): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I will pass on the message to my colleague.

(7.09 p.m)

ROSE HILL - PROSTITUTION

Mrs L. Ribot (Third Member for Stanley & Rose Hill): M. le président, je voudrai adresser ma requête à l'honorable Premier ministre qui n'est pas là. C'est une question qui a été soulevée maintes fois dans cette Chambre et qui concerne la circonscription No. 19, Stanley & Rose Hill, je veux dire, la prolifération des prostituées dans la ville de Rose Hill.

M. le président le nombre de prostituées et de travestis est grandissant non seulement sur la route royale mais aussi dans les régions résidentielles et là les habitants vivent dans la peur et un sentiment d'insécurité prévaut. Il y a des allées et venues incessantes du coucher du soleil au petit matin, des

bagarres entre proxénètes, prostituées et clients. Il y a même des moments où certains ou certaines pour se sauver et se cacher se permettent d'entrer dans la cour privée des habitants.

M. le président, ces dernières années, nous avons eu à Rose Hill des crimes liés aux jeux et à la prostitution. N'attendons pas qu'il y ait d'autres pour agir, c'est pour cela que je demanderai à l'honorable Premier ministre de bien vouloir demander à la Police de Rose Hill de faire des rondes régulières dans le centre ville et dans les rues avoisinantes afin de s'assurer que la situation reste sous contrôle et que nous n'ayons pas à faire face à des problèmes, voire des crimes encore. Merci.

The Deputy Prime Minister: I'll make sure this is submitted to the Prime Minister.

MOTORCYCLES (EXHAUST TUBES) – NOISE POLLUTION

Mr A. Ameer Meea (First Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, tonight I will raise an issue relating to the hon. Prime Minister, that is, the Police and also the Minister of Environment. It is the same issue, but it concerns both Ministries; the Police - I have been clear - and the Ministry of Environment. It concerns the exhaust tubes of motorcycles which are being modified and as a result of that, this is causing lot of noise, lot of nuisance, lot of discomfort for not only people in my constituency, but I think around the whole island. So, today I am making an appeal to Government, to the Prime Minister, to the Minister of Environment to devise ways and means by his Ministry, by the Police so that they can try to solve this problem because as I have said, this is causing lot of discomfort, lot of nuisance to all the inhabitants of Mauritius. Thank you.

The Minister of Environment and Sustainable Development (Mr D. Virahsawmy): The Police of Environment is already looking into this.

MAULANA SHAH ABDUL ALEEM SIDDIQUE RA SOCIETY

– PARKING AREA

Mr D. Nagalingum (Second Member for Stanley & Rose Hill): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, my request goes to the Minister of Environment where a correspondence was addressed to his Ministry regarding asphalt of a concrete hard ground for a parking area which belong to the Maulana Shah Abdul Aleem Siddique RA Society situated at Hugnin Road Rose Hill, for the purpose of using it as a parking area to enable the people coming for prayers in the Mosque, to park their car in a safe place in order to avoid any nuisance in traffic road in this region.

I must point it out that hon. Reza Issack addressed a letter to the Minister on 23 November 2012 on the same issue. So I make an appeal to the Minister, please do look into this matter urgently.

The Minister of Environment and Sustainable Development (Mr D. Virahsawmy): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the hon. Member is coming very late as hon. Reza Issack has already raised the matter with me.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Your attention please!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Hossen! Silence please. The hon. Quirin and hon. Barbier who expressed their wish to intervene are unfortunately absent. So we have got some time left if hon. Labelle wants to round off her point and I'll allow Mrs Anquetil also some more time. We've got some time left.

APEIM – CHILDREN'S RIGHTS

Mrs F. Labelle (Third Member for Vacoas & Floreal): Merci M. le président. L'appel que je fais, cela n'intéresse pas beaucoup de monde, ce que je comprends. Cela concerne les enfants handicapés, nous avons l'APEIM qui a une expertise depuis les 40 dernières années et l'appel est qu'on respecte le droit des enfants et que nous ayons quand même un environnement approprié pour leur éducation.

Merci M. le président.

The Minister of Education and Human Resources (Dr. V. Bunwaree): Je voudrais dire rapidement que je n'ai jamais laissé les handicapés tomber, l'APEIM peut laisser tomber mais pas les enfants handicapés.

FLOREAL – TELECOM POLE – ACCIDENT

Ms S. Anquetil (Fourth Member for Vacoas & Floreal): Merci, M. le président ...

The Deputy Speaker: In fact, she wanted to broach two issues, I did not give her the opportunity at that time. As we've got some time left, I am allowing her.

Mrs Anquetil: Ma deuxième demande s'adresse au ministre de la santé rapidement. Le samedi matin 13 Avril 2013, deux pylônes téléphoniques de la Mauritius Telecom se sont effondrés dans le quartier de Floréal. Un des pylônes a grièvement blessé Madame Sobhee qui se rendait sur son lieu de

travail. Madame Sobhee souffre d'une fracture de la cheville, plusieurs points de suture au front et son bassin est fracturé. Elle ne peut bouger la partie inférieure de son corps. Madame Bappoo et moi avons fait le constat quand nous nous sommes rendus à son chevet le mercredi 17 Avril. Je sais qu'une enquête policière est en cours, j'ai appris du médecin soignant que cette dame restera à l'hôpital pour un long moment en raison de la fracture du bassin. Je fais un appel au ministre de la santé et de la qualité de la vie pour que les meilleurs soins soient accordés à Madame Sobhee.

Merci, M. le président.

The Minister of Health and Quality of Life (Mr L. Bundhoo): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I can assure the hon. Member that Mrs Bappoo has spoken twice to me on this issue. She has also raised the matter with me. I have personally spoken with them to ensure that proper treatment as required is being given to all and every patient equally. We can assure the hon. Member that she is being taken good care of and I know that on Sunday Mrs Bappoo and herself were personally in the hospital. Do not ask me how I know that!

At 7.28 p.m. the Assembly was, on its rising, adjourned to Tuesday 07 May 2013 at 11.30 a.m.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

RODRIGUES - HOUSING PROJECTS - IMPLEMENTATION

(No. B/206) Mr J. F. François (Third Member for Rodrigues) asked the Minister of Social Integration and Economic Empowerment whether, in regard to the housing and other projects in Rodrigues funded by the National Empowerment Foundation, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Foundation, information as to where matters stand in each case, indicating -

- (a) the amount of money earmarked therefor, and
- (b) if there is delay in the implementation thereof, and if so, the reasons therefor and the remedial actions taken, if any.

Reply: As part of the vision of this Government to eradicate absolute poverty in Mauritius and Rodrigues, a three-pronged strategy has been adopted since 2010. This strategy includes the following programmes -

- (a) Social Housing and Community Empowerment
- (b) Child and family welfare
- (c) Training and placement

As regards Rodrigues, an amount of Rs48 m. has been provided in the 2013 Budget for the construction of housing units for vulnerable families with the total monthly household earning a total monthly income of Rs5,000 excluding social benefits.

Furthermore, a sum of Rs15 m. has been obligated for other projects which among other things include the distribution of school materials to children of vulnerable families.

As the House may be aware, following the Rodrigues Regional Assembly Election held in 2012, a new administration has been elected. In the meantime, following representations made both by beneficiaries of housing units in Mauritius and Rodrigues the specifications have had to be revised. With the agreement of the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development, the specifications have now been reviewed from 22.5 m² to 31.5 m² in November 2012.

In the process, the cost for each housing unit had to be increased from Rs120,000 to Rs157,500 in the case of Rodrigues. I would like to point out that the specifications as well as the revised prices have been agreed upon by the Rodrigues Regional Assembly.

The House will appreciate that NEF is only responsible for the distribution of construction materials for prospective beneficiaries in Rodrigues. The NEF will only proceed with the distribution of the materials until and unless the beneficiary has been granted a Letter of Intent from the Rodrigues Regional Assembly for the allocation of land for the purpose of construction of a housing unit. I am informed that Letters of Intent to some 250 beneficiaries were issued on 23 November 2012.

I am informed that the tendering exercise for the allocation of contract for the supply of building materials to the beneficiaries has been launched and the closing date for the submission of bids is fixed for 24 April 2013.

I wish to reassure the House that my Ministry will ensure that the housing project is implemented the soonest possible so as not to cause undue hardship to the vulnerable families in Rodrigues.

As I mentioned earlier, a sum of Rs15 m. is available in the budget for the implementation of a number of projects, the main one being the distribution of school materials to children of vulnerable families in Rodrigues.

The list of beneficiaries has been finalised in consultation with the PTA's in Rodrigues. Tenders were floated in January 2013 by the NEF and I am informed that bids have been received and are being evaluated.

I have given firm instructions to the NEF to see to it that the project is not unnecessarily delayed.

I am also personally looking into the matter.

Information regarding the status of each project and amount of money earmarked is being placed in the Library of the National Assembly.

RODRIGUES - INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGIES

(No. B/207) Mr J. F. François (Third Member for Rodrigues) asked the Minister of Information and Communication Technology whether, in regard to information and communications technologies, he will state the progress thereof in Rodrigues, indicating -

- (a) if the decision of Government to reduce broadband entry level to Rs200 is being implemented by all the service providers thereof, and
- (b) where matters stand in relation to -
 - (i) connecting Rodrigues by undersea optic fibre cable, and
 - (ii) increasing satellite connectivity thereat.

Reply: The progress with regard to the three projects for Rodrigues is as follows -

- (a) Regarding the reduction of broadband entry level to Rs200, contract has been awarded to the designated operators on 15 January 2013 to apply the new price over the entire territory of the Republic of Mauritius including Rodrigues. Thus, for Rodrigues, Telecom Plus is providing fixed internet, and Emtel and Cellplus are providing mobile internet at the entry level of Rs200.
- (b) As regards the project for the consultancy services for Submarine Fibre Optic Connectivity in Rodrigues, the evaluation of the bids has been completed; and technical and financial 'no objection' of *L'Agence Française de Développement* (AFD) has been obtained. However, there is an issue regarding the price and a meeting is scheduled shortly with AFD and other stakeholders to discuss the way forward.
- (c) With regard to the increase in satellite connectivity, the ICT Authority has already awarded a contract to Mauritius Telecom to increase the bandwidth capacity to 155Mbps. This project is scheduled to be completed by 30 June 2013.

COMPANIES - ALLEGED FINANCIAL SCAMS

(No. B/209) Mr K. Li Kwong Wing (Second Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to the companies involved in the recent reported alleged financial scams, he will -

- (a) give a list thereof, indicating in each case, the -
 - (i) names of the Chief Executive Officers, managers, legal advisers and bankers thereof;
 - (ii) number of known victims;
 - (iii) amount of money invested therein, and
- (b) state when his Ministry became aware thereof, indicating the actions, if any, taken in relation thereto.

(Vide reply to PNQ)

SRI LANKA - COMMONWEALTH SUMMIT MEETING

(No. B/210) Mrs A. Navarre-Marie (First Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade whether, in regard to the Commonwealth Summit Meeting scheduled to be held in November 2013, he will state the stand of Mauritius as to the holding thereof in Sri Lanka.

(Withdrawn)

TROMELIN ISLAND – CO-GESTION AGREEMENT

(No. B/211) Mrs A. Navarre-Marie (First Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade whether, in regard to the Agreement pertaining to the co-gestion of the Tromelin Island signed with France in 2010, he will state where matters stand as to the implementation thereof.

(Withdrawn)

IMF – RICE, FLOUR & LIQUEFIED PETROLEUM GAS - SUBSIDIES

(No. B/212) Mr C. Fakeemeeah (Third Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether he has taken cognizance of the proposals of the International Monetary Fund to abolish the subsidies granted by Government on rice, flour and Liquefied Petroleum Gas and to introduce targeting and means tests for social aid and if so, indicate the stand of Government in relation thereto.

Reply: As the House is aware, under Article IV of the Articles of Agreement of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the latter sends every year a mission to Mauritius to review development and discuss emerging socio-economic issues as part of its standard surveillance functions. At the end of their mission, the IMF issues a report which expresses the views of the staff team of the IMF only.

In regard to Liquid Petroleum gas, rice and flour, the IMF has indicated that generalised subsidies on these products should be phased out.

I would like to inform the House that this Government has always underlined the importance of ensuring that the poor and vulnerable are fully protected.

I would, therefore, wish to underline that this Government is not envisaging to remove the subsidies on rice, flour and LPG.

PORT LOUIS WATERFRONT - FLASH FLOODS — SECURITY COMPANY

(No. B/213) Mr C. Fakeemeeah (Third Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to the flash floods of 30 March 2013, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the State Development Company Ltd., information as to the name of the Security company providing security services at the Port Louis Waterfront, indicating if -

- (a) it has carried out an inquiry from its officers as to the circumstances surrounding the losses of life in the tunnels, and
- (b) the contract of this company has been revoked.

Reply: With your permission, I will reply to PQ No. B/213 and PQ No. B/215 together as they are related.

With regard to PQ B/213, I am informed by State Property Development Company (SPDC) Limited that the contract for the provision of Security Services was carried out in accordance with established procedures and was awarded in February 2011 to Rapid Security Services for a period of 24 months for a total sum of Rs9,684,000 excluding VAT. I am also informed that the contract of the Company has been extended up to end of May 2013 and that action has been initiated to launch tenders for the procurement of Security Services.

With regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed that immediately after the flash flood on 30 March 2013, SPDC Ltd carried out a preliminary enquiry. However, in view of the fact that the Police is presently carrying out an investigation on the circumstances surrounding the losses of lives in the tunnel, it would not be appropriate at this juncture to divulge information as this might prejudice the ongoing enquiry.

Concerning part (b) of this question, I am informed that any action to be levelled against the Security firms, if required, will be in accordance with the findings of the police enquiry.

As far as PQ B/215 is concerned, I am informed that the Closed Circuit Television System was installed in the premises of Port Louis Waterfront in 2000. Out of 16 CCTV Cameras only 4 (four) are in good working conditions. However, not much reliance was being placed on the Cameras on monitoring of Security on the Port Louis Waterfront. In fact, 9(nine) Security Guards equipped with radios are patrolling the esplanade, the retail outlets and the two underpasses.

Concerning part (b) of the question, I am informed that action has been initiated for the procurement and installation of a new system of CCTV on the Port Louis Waterfront.

ECOLE DE MEDECINE LOUIS PASTEUR – TEC – REGISTRATION

(No. B/214) Mrs L. D. Dookun-Luchoomun (Second Member for Quartier Militaire & Moka) asked the Minister of Tertiary Education, Science, Research and Technology whether, in regard to the *Ecole de Medicine Louis Pasteur*, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Tertiary Education Commission, information as to if same was registered therewith in 2009 and subsequently deregistered while courses were being dispensed and if so, indicate when and the reasons therefor.

Reply: I am informed by the Tertiary Education Commission that –

- (i) The *Ecole de Médecine Louis Pasteur* formerly known as the *l'Université Scientifique et Médicale Louis Pasteur – Ocean Indien* was first granted authorisation in 2000 by the then Minister of Education in 2000 to offer the *Attestation de Fin de Deuxième Cycle de Médecine Générale*, awarded by the *Université de Paris 6*, France.
- (ii) In October 2005, after the Tertiary Education Commission was given legal authority to register private tertiary education institutions, it granted registration to the institution from 12 August 2006 to 11 August 2007. The registration was further extended up to 04 February 2013.
- (iii) The *Ecole de Médecine Louis Pasteur* has not been deregistered but its registration lapsed on 04 February 2013.

- (iv) It was only on 05 March 2013, that the institution applied for renewal of its registration. Institutions which are not awarding bodies are required to submit a duly signed agreement with a university to certify the university will award the degree or diploma. The *Ecole de Médecine Louis Pasteur* had such an agreement with *Université de Lille 2* which expired in September 2012 and which the *Université de Lille 2* has decided not to renew. I am informed by the Tertiary Education Commission that the institution has not yet submitted a legally binding Memorandum of Understanding with a recognised awarding body to provide degrees which will qualify students for registration by the Medical Council.

As regards the students at the *Ecole de Médecine Louis Pasteur*, they were enrolled for the academic year 2012-2013 in the absence of an agreement with an awarding body. Upon the intervention of my Ministry, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the French Embassy, Prof. Pelayo, Vice President of Université Lille 2 visited Mauritius in February 2013. He confirmed that the students are not enrolled with his university and has advised that these students have to take the French Concours (PACES) if they wish to continue their medical studies in a French system.

I am advised by the Tertiary Education Commission that the *Ecole de Médecine Louis Pasteur* has been requested to refund these students, failing which legal action will be taken against them.

CAUDAN WATERFRONT - CCTV

(No. B/215) Mr A. Gungah (First Member for Grand' Baie & Poudre d'Or) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to the Closed Circuit Television System Surveillance System installed in the premises of the Caudan Waterfront, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the State Property Development Corporation, information as to if they are out of order and, if so, indicate -

- (a) since when, and
- (b) if remedial measures will be taken.

(Vide reply to PQ No. B/213)

RING ROAD PROJECT - ENVIRONMENT IMPACT ASSESSMENT CERTIFICATE

(No. B/216) Mr A. Gungah (First Member for Grand' Baie & Poudre d'Or) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and

Shipping whether, in regard to the Ring Road Project, he will state if a prior Environment Impact Assessment Certificate has been sought and obtained therefor and, if not, the reasons therefor.

Reply: The first study of the Ring Road Project was carried out in 1994 by DHV International (UK). A second study was commissioned in 2000 to Consulting Engineering Services (India) to review the alignment. The proposed alignment was found feasible and CES completed the detailed design and EIA report.

In 2008, Government decided to implement the project in two phases and the Consultancy for the review of the first phase was awarded to Arab Consulting Engineering and the Consultant was also requested to review the EIA report which was submitted to the Ministry of Environment in December 2009. The Ministry of Environment issued its final clearance with conditions in July 2010.

During implementation the contractor Rehm Grinaker-Colas Joint Venture was requested to comply with all terms and conditions of the EIA clearance and these have been monitored by the Ministry of Environment.

MEDICAL NEGLIGENCE - LEGISLATION

(No. B/217) Mr N. Bodha (First Member for Vacoas & Floreal) asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether, in regard to medical negligence, he will state if Government proposes to introduce new legislation in relation thereto and if so, when.

Reply: I wish to inform the House that the Medical Council Act which has been in force since 1999 makes provision on how to deal with cases of medical negligence. Government is fully aware of the need to review the Act including streamlining and harmonising procedures regarding medical negligence. In this respect, my Ministry has already finalised a working document wherein, amongst others, pertinent issues such as organisational structure and time frame to deal with medical negligence, harmonisation of disciplinary measures and possibilities of mediation have been looked into. This Paper has been submitted to a Ministerial Committee set up by Government to conduct a review of the Medical Council Act after its circulation in Cabinet very shortly.

MITD - ALLEGED SEXUAL ABUSE - FACT FINDING COMMITTEE

(No. B/218) Mr P. Jhugroo (First Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether, in regard to the case of alleged sexual abuse at the MITD, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the fact-finding committee set up to investigate thereinto, -

- (a) a list of all the persons who had been heard;

(b) information as to if Mrs P. C. had made a request to give evidence, and

(c) and table copy of the report submitted by the committee, including copy of the medical examination report/s.

Reply: In my statement to the House on 09 April 2013, I informed that, in the context of the setting up of the Fact-Finding Committee, a Press *Communiqué* was issued on 08 January 2013 to invite members of the public at large to provide information and/or to give evidence before the Committee and that in the Report, it was highlighted that 28 persons had deponed during the hearing. With regard to part (a) of the question, I am tabling a list of the 28 persons who had been heard by the Fact-Finding Committee.

With regard to part (b) of the question, Mrs P. C. had made a request to be heard and according to the report she deponed before the Committee.

As regards part (c) of the question, I have already given a reply to Parliamentary Question No. A/63 of 16 April 2013 which deals with the same subject.

MAURITIUS & RODRIGUES – TELECOMMUNICATIONS SERVICES - DISRUPTION

(No. B/219) Mr P. Roopun (Third Member for Flacq & Bon Accueil) asked the Minister of Information and Communication Technology whether, in regard to the Mauritius Telecom Ltd., he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain therefrom, information as to the causes of the total collapse of its system in Mauritius and in Rodrigues during the recent natural disasters, indicating the remedial measures that will be taken to prevent any such recurrence.

Reply: I would invite the hon. Member to refer to the reply which I made to PQ No. B/40 at the sitting of the National Assembly on 26 March last, when I gave the reasons for the disruption experienced in the telecommunication services on 13 February 2013.

I am informed that telecommunication services in Rodrigues were also disrupted on 13 February because the mobile services there are operated on the same switching system as for Mauritius. However, there was no disruption in services on other days including on 30 March 2013 when there was further torrential rain.

With regard to remedial measures, Mauritius Telecom is implementing a project for the upgrading of its mobile network to cater for mobile coverage and growth of traffic due to increase in mobile customer base. Included in the project is an upgrade of the signalling link between the mobile switch and the Home Location Register to a higher capacity link which has 3 times the dynamic load of the existing Home Location Register. This project is expected to be completed by end of April 2013.

LE MORNE CULTURAL LANDSCAPE - MANAGEMENT PLAN

(No. A/73) Mrs J. Radegonde-Haines (Fourth Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Minister of Arts and Culture whether, in regard to the Management Plan of Le Morne Cultural Landscape, he will state the conditions thereof, indicating if the deadline for the completion of the project in relation thereto has been met and, if not, the reasons therefor.

Reply: The Management Plan is an overarching document guiding the day to day management of the Le Morne Cultural Landscape. It comprises various measures to ensure sustainable development, preservation and conservation of the Cultural Landscape on a continuous and long term basis.

These measures concern *inter alia* -

- infrastructure;
- managing structure and staffing;
- rehabilitation and conservation;
- cultural heritage management;
- research;
- public outreach awareness;
- local economic development, and
- planning policy guidance.

The Management Plan is applicable since the inscription of Le Morne Cultural Landscape in July 2008 on the World Heritage List.

There is no deadline for the completion of this project. However, the Le Morne Heritage Trust Fund has faced many impediments, including Court cases regarding land issues, landowners denying access to their land situated within Le Morne Cultural Landscape, thus prohibiting the smooth implementation of the Management Plan.

The review of the Le Morne Cultural Landscape Management Plan will be entrusted to the consultancy firm ECOAfrica Group which assists the LMHTF in the management of the site.

PRIMARY & SECONDARY SCHOOLS - REMEDIAL EDUCATION SCHEME - IMPLEMENTATION

(No. A/74) Mrs J. Radegonde-Haines (Fourth Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether, in regard to the Remedial Education Scheme, he will state -

- (a) if same applies to both primary and secondary schools;
- (b) the names of the schools found in Constituency No.14 or zone 3 and 4 which are benefitting thereunder;
- (c) the planning, implementation, time frame and cost thereof;
- (d) the system put in place for the monitoring and evaluation thereof, and
- (e) who are responsible to deliver the program elaborated thereunder in the schools.

Reply: The Remedial Education Programme is being implemented exclusively in primary schools and aims at assisting pupils with learning difficulties in Std. III to catch up with their studies. These pupils are identified through a diagnostic assessment carried out at the beginning of the year in Std. III.

As for Secondary schools, remedial education is however integrated within the teaching of the different subjects. Teachers are called upon to devise and implement appropriate remedial strategies with a view to helping those students whose performance fall below the required standards.

Special attention is given to the students and sometimes extension classes are held to help them address their learning difficulties and improve their performance.

With regard to part (b) of the question, the schools in constituency No.14 or Zone 3 or 4 which are benefiting from this programme are as follows -

Zone 3

SN	School	Address of School
1.	G. Cheetamun GS	Veeren Street, Surinam
2.	Robert Edward Hart GS	Royal Road, Surinam

Zone 4

SN	School	Address
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		of School
1.	H. Chooroomoney GS	Bassin Road, Quatre Bornes

Concerning part (c) of the question, as already highlighted, Standard III pupils who have learning difficulties are identified following a diagnostic assessment conducted at the beginning of the year. Based on this information, the requirement in terms of the number of Support Teachers for remedial education is worked out. For instance, for 2013, 17 Support Teachers for remedial education were needed to service Std III classes in 17 primary schools. The teachers assume duty around end of March after briefing sessions are conducted at the level of the Ministry and MIE. The remedial education programme ends at the beginning of October.

With regard to the cost, it is to be pointed out that same is not computed on a school-wise basis. The Support Teachers for remedial education are expected to work 6-8 hours a week against payment of a monthly allowance of Rs4,620. This project is expected to cost around Rs550,141 in 2013 representing the salary and travelling allowances of 17 Support Teachers for remedial education.

As for part (d) of the question, monitoring of the Remedial Education Programme is carried out by Primary School Inspectors and an evaluation report submitted. The collaboration of the Head Masters is also sought as they conduct class visits with a view to monitor the remedial classes in terms of improvements to be brought. Meetings are also held at the level of the Head Quarters by Directorate Primary with a view to look into the weaknesses observed and recommendations are made thereafter.

Regarding part (e) of the question, as already indicated the programme is delivered by Support Teachers for remedial education who are recruited by my Ministry on a temporary basis.

There is also the CPE Repeaters Project at primary level where assistance is provided to the pupils of CPE Repeaters classes. The programme of Std III up to Std V is reworked with the pupils of CPE Repeaters class by the Class Teacher. Focus is mainly on the Essential Learning Competencies which is the Section A of the CPE Examination Papers. Emphasis is also on the reading component. Monitoring and follow up is ensured by the Head Masters as well as the Primary School Inspectors.

FOOD SELLERS - INSPECTION

(No. A/75) Mrs L. Ribot (Third Member for Stanley & Rose Hill) asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether, in regard to the food sellers, he will state the number thereof registered with his Ministry, indicating the number -

- (a) of officers attached to the Inspectorate Division, and
- (b) thereof who have been taken to task for operating in unhygienic conditions, in the category of -
- (i) restaurants;
 - (ii) fast food stalls;
 - (iii) school canteens, and
 - (iv) street sellers, since 2005 to date.

Reply: I wish to point out that my Ministry does not register food sellers. However, regular inspections are carried out by the 13 Regional Health Offices whereby all categories of food outlets are monitored to ensure compliance with food safety standards.

Each Regional Health Office has a record of food handlers who are trained in the preparation, processing and sale of food. From 2005 to 05 June 2013, 138,628 new Food Handler's Certificates have been issued and 204,732 Food Handler's Certificates have been renewed.

As regards part (a) of the question, the Health Inspectorate Cadre comprises 137 officers.

Concerning part (b) of the question, the number of food operators who have been taken to task for operating in unhygienic conditions in the different categories since 2005 to date is as follows -

i. Restaurants

No. of Contraventions Taken	606
No. of Improvement Notices Issued	3353
No. of Prohibition Orders Issued	70
Notice before Issue of Emergency Closing Orders	35
No. of Emergency Closing Orders Issued	6

ii. Fast Food Stalls

No. of Contraventions taken	846
No. of Improvement Notices issued	3552
No. of Prohibition Orders issued	193
No. of Notices issued before Issue of Emergency Closing Order	36

	No. of Emergency Closing Orders issued	Nil
iii.	Schools Canteens	
	No. of Contraventions taken	195
	No. of Improvement Notices issued	279
	No. of Prohibition Orders Issued	50
	No. of Notices issued before Issue of Emergency closing order	01
	No. of Closing Orders issued	Nil
iv.	Street Food Vendors	
	No. of Contraventions taken	778
	No. of Improvement Notices issued	390
	No. of prohibition Orders Issued	865

BEAU BASSIN AND PETITE RIVIÈRE - ROADS - UPGRADING

(No. A/76) **Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière)** asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to Constituency No. 20, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the National Development Unit, information as to if consideration will be given for the urgent upgrading and tarring of -

- (a) the Colonel Maingard Street extending to Cité Barkly up to Corner Père Laval;
- (b) the Nelson Mandela Street-ex railway, from the Pope Hennessy to the Barkly Police Station;
- (c) the Schuman, Belcom Bizet and Remy Ollier Streets, Cité Barkly “Béton”, and
- (d) the Gaetan Raynal, Volcy Goupile, Shand and Victor Hugo Streets, in Beau Bassin.

Reply: A survey is being carried out by officers of the National Development Unit and appropriate works will be undertaken in the light of the report.

PETITE RIVIÈRE - IRRIGATION CANAL

(No. A/77) **Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière)** asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to the project for the covering of the irrigation canal at Petite Rivière from the Princess Margaret Street to the Nundloll Lane, he will state where matters stand.

Reply: The irrigation canal crossing the residential area in Petite Rivière also known as the Nermont Branch of the Magenta Canal is maintained and used for distribution of irrigation water to planters of La Ferme and Magenta Water Users Association.

Due to major way-leave issues and non-availability of funds, the project could not be implemented. However, the project is now being considered.

TRANQUEBAR – CANALS - CONSTRUCTION & REHABILITATION

(No. A/78) **Mr R. Uteem (Second Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central)** asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to the proposed construction and rehabilitation of the canals in Tranquebar, he will state where matters stand.

Reply: The National Development Unit issued Works Order on 04 March 2013 for the upgrading of Canal Kitchri, Tranquebar for the sum of Rs9,774,085.75 (inclusive of VAT). The scheduled completion date is September 2013.

Moreover, the consultancy firm GIBB Ltd, at the request of the National Development Unit, has undertaken a study to identify flood-prone areas in the region of Port Louis and its surroundings and come up with a holistic solution to prevent flooding during flash floods.

TRANQUEBAR - FOOTBALL STADIUM - CONSTRUCTION

(No. A/79) **Mr R. Uteem (Second Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central)** asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether, in regard to the proposed construction of a football stadium in Tranquebar, he will state where matters stand.

Reply: The National Development Unit is undertaking the construction of a football ground at Cremation Road, Tranquebar.

The contract has already been awarded in November 2012 and the works are expected to be completed by end of June 2013.

LADY TWINING STREET, BEAU BASSIN – FLOOD-PRONE AREA - DRAINS

(No. A/80) Mr K. Li Kwong Wing (Second Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to the flood-prone area at the end of Lady Twining Street, in Beau Bassin, he will state if consideration will be given for remedial actions to be taken to provide for adequate drains thereat.

Reply: The National Development Unit will cause a survey to be carried out at Lady Twining Street in Beau Bassin and based on the findings, remedial action will be taken.

VUILLEMIN STREET, BEAU BASSIN – FLOOD-PRONE AREA - DRAINS

(No. A/81) Mr K. Li Kwong Wing (Second Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to the flood-prone area at the Vuillemin Street, near the Mauritius Housing Corporation flats, he will state the measures taken, if any, for the provision of adequate drains thereat.

Reply: The National Development Unit has carried out a survey at the Vuillemin Street, near the Mauritius Housing Corporation flats.

The cost estimate is being worked out for consideration.

GRAND'BAIE & POUDRE D'OR – FLOOD PRONE AREAS

(No. A/82) Mr A. Gungah (First Member for Grand'Baie & Poudre D'or) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land

Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to Constituency No. 6, Grand' Baie and Poudre D'or, he will state if a survey has been carried out to identify the floor prone areas, following the torrential rains of February 2013, indicating the measures taken to prevent the recurrence thereof.

Reply: Following the torrential rains of February 2013, in regard to Constituency No. 6, the village of Fond du Sac was severely affected.

Owing to the fact that the village of Fond du Sac is in a low-lying region and there is no nearby natural water course, no immediate solution could be found.

Lux Consult Ltd has been appointed as consultant to effect a holistic survey and propose solutions. It is worth noting that major works are underway by the NDU at Poudre d'Or and Pereybère.

MORCELLEMENT GUIBIES, PAILLES - DRAINS

(No. A/83) **Mr P. Jhugroo (First Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien)** asked the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the Crecerelle 3 Avenue, in Morcellement Guibies, in Pailles, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Municipal Council of Port Louis, information as to if –

- (a) consideration will be given for the construction of drains thereat and, if so, when and, if not, why not, and
- (b) it has been informed of the abandoned state of the plot of land situated next to the house of one Mr B. and of the presence of wastes thereat and, if so, indicate if remedial measures will be taken.

Reply: I am informed by the Municipal City Council of Port Louis that Crécerelle 3 Avenue is situated on the hillside of Colline Pailles and as such is subject to surface water run off from that hill in view of the topography of the area. There is a justification for the construction of a drain thereat and which should integrate other lanes similarly affected such as Avenue Colline 2, etc.

I am informed by the Council that with the recent change in its administrative boundaries whereby Pailles is now under its jurisdiction, no project identification has been compiled for the area. However, the Council is now working with the National Development Unit for compilation of such

projects and to include, *inter-alia*, Perruche network found nearby. The project would be implemented once design and funding would have been finalised by the National Development Unit.

With regard to part (b) of the question, the Council has never been informed of the abandoned plot of land. Nevertheless, following a site that, it has been noted that there is a plot of land with overgrown bushes. The owner is untraceable and needful is being done by the Cadastre Section of the Council in this respect. Meanwhile, the plot of land in question will be cleaned by the Council in a perimeter of 8m².

ROBERT EDWARD HART GARDEN - UPGRADING

(No. A/84) Mr P. Jhugroo (First Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien) asked the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the Robert Edward Hart Garden at Les Salines, in Port Louis, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Municipal Council of Port Louis, information as to if it has been informed of the –

- (a) bad state of the roads leading thereto and to the surroundings thereof with the presence of pot holes;
- (b) defective and lack of street lanterns and bollards thereat, and
- (c) overgrown trees hindering street lighting at night and, if so, indicate the remedial measures that will be taken in each case.

Reply: I am informed by the Municipal Council of Port Louis that it is aware of the bad state of the roads leading to Robert Edward Hart Garden at Les Salines and the surroundings. The last time patching works were carried out by the Council was at the end of year 2012 and following the recent heavy rains, pot holes have reappeared. These works will be attended to by the Council as programmed.

With regard to part (b) of the question, I am informed by the Council that defective street lanterns have been repaired. However, decorative lanterns "*Boules de neiges*" which are subject to frequent vandalisms, will be replaced shortly. Defective bollards are replaced as and when required pending alternative to bollards in view of damages caused by vandals/illegal parking.

As far as part (c) of the question is concerned, the Council has informed that lopping of the overgrown trees hindering the street lighting at night has been undertaken on Saturday 20 April 2013.

LATANIER RIVER - WASTES

(No. A/85) Mr A. Ameer Meea (First Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Minister of Environment and Sustainable Development whether, in regard to the Latanier River at the Corner Saint Marin and Abattoir Roads, in Roche Bois, he will state if he has been informed of an accumulation of wastes and of branches thereat and, if so, indicate if remedial measures will be taken, including the dredging thereof.

Reply: I am informed that the Municipal Council of Port Louis is looking into the problem of accumulation of wastes and branches at the site. A clean-up campaign of the river reserve at the corner of Saint Martin and Abattoir Road has been scheduled for 04 and 05 May 2013.

ABDOOL RAMAN ABDOOL GOVERNMENT SCHOOL – CLASSROOMS - CONSTRUCTION

(No. A/86) Mr A. Ameer Meea (First Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether, in regard to the project for the replacement of existing blocks of classrooms by new ones at the Abdool Raman Abdool Government School, he will state –

- (a) the detailed scope of works thereof;
- (b) the cost thereof, and
- (c) where matters stand as to the implementation thereof.

Reply: In regard to part (a) of the question, the project comprises the construction of a new three-stream school and the detailed scope of works includes the construction of -

- i. 19 classrooms;
- ii. 5 classrooms with movable partitions for Asian Languages;
- iii. 1 Library cum Mediatech;
- iv. Administrative Block with kitchenette;
- v. 1 staff room with mess room;
- vi. 1 store;
- vii. 1 canteen;
- viii. Pre-primary unit;
- ix. Toilet Block;
- x. Courtyard and parking;
- xi. Covered link to classroom blocks;
- xii. Playground;
- xiii. Site amenities, and
- xiv. Demolition of old blocks.

Regarding part (b) of the question, the whole project has been estimated by the Ministry of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping (MPI) at about MUR 89 m.

In so far as part (c) of the question is concerned, the project will be carried out in phases such that the school is operational during the construction period.

Consequently, the first phase will include demolition of an old classroom block and construction of three-storey classroom block with pre-primary unit and a new entrance gate. Preparation of bidding documents is underway at the level of MPI and same are expected to be ready by end of April 2013. Should everything proceed smoothly, tenders would be launched shortly and works may be expected to start in August 2013.

Upon the completion of the first phase, the remaining works will be carried out sequentially as follows -

- i firstly, the demolition of a single storey building, construction of new toilet block, an L-shaped 2-storey classroom block with covered link and kiosk linking pre-primary unit and the newly constructed classroom block;
- ii secondly, the demolition of the existing toilet block and construction of an administrative block, a 2-storey classroom block, and
- iii lastly, the demolition of the remaining old block & construction of playfield and associated works.

FIRE STATIONS - INFRASTRUCTURAL CONDITIONS - UPGRADING

(No. A/87) Mr D. Nagalingum (Second Member for Stanley & Rose Hill) asked the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the women Fire Officers, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Government Fire Services, information as to if infrastructural conditions of the Fire Stations have been reviewed to cater therefor and, if so, when and, if not, why not.

Reply: I am informed that in line with recommendations of the Pay Research Bureau Report 2008 for the Fire Services Department to become gender neutral, female fire fighters had been recruited in 2012. Presently there are five female firefighters who have been posted at the Head Office and Fire Prevention Unit respectively whereat facilities in terms of separate changing rooms and provision of sanitary conveniences are available. These facilities have also been extended to the Training Unit at Coromandel where these female firefighters are called upon for training purposes.

I am further informed that the Fire Services Department has also worked on projects for the upgrading of existing infrastructural conditions at Piton, Mahebourg, Curepipe, St Aubin and Coromandel

Fire Stations so as to accommodate female firefighters. However, due to financial constraints, priority is being given to Coromandel Fire Station where the project is underway.

FIRE SERVICES - VEHICLES

(No. A/88) Mr D. Nagalingum (Second Member for Stanley & Rose Hill) asked the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the vehicles of the Government Fire Services, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Fire Services, a list thereof aged 10 years or more, indicating -

- (a) the make, model, type and date of purchase thereof;
- (b) the services/stations to which they are attached, and
- (c) if a renewal of the fleet is being envisaged, indicating where matters stand as to the proposed acquisition of 20 semi-urban mobile firefighting vehicles.

Reply: The information requested by the hon. Member at parts (a) and (b) of his question has been compiled and is being placed in the Library.

With regard to part (c) of the question, I am informed by the Fire Services Department that the replacement of vehicles is carried out each year based on the conditions of vehicles and their operational usage and subject to availability of funds.

I am informed that the Project Plan Committee has, in its 11th report recommended that the project for the acquisition of six semi-urban fire-fighting vehicles at the estimated cost of Rs78 m. be included in the Public Sector Investment Programme. The implementation of the project will therefore be subject to financial clearance being obtained.