



REPUBLIC OF MAURITIUS

FIFTH NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

PARLIAMENTARY

DEBATES

(HANSARD)

SECOND SESSION

FRIDAY 22 NOVEMBER 2013

CONTENTS

QUESTION (*Oral*)

MOTION

BILL (*Public*)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

ADJOURNMENT

Members

Members

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

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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
<i>Clerk of the National Assembly</i>	Dowlutta, Mr R. Ranjit
<i>Deputy Clerk</i>	Lotun, Mrs B. Safeena
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<i>Clerk Assistant</i>	Gopall, Mr Navin (Temporary Transfer to RRA)
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MAURITIUS

Fifth National Assembly

SECOND SESSION

Debate No. 31 of 2013

Sitting of 22 November 2013

The Assembly met in the Assembly House, Port Louis,

At 3.30 p.m.

The National Anthem was played

(Mr Speaker in the Chair)

ORAL ANSWER TO QUESTION

CEB - PEAK DEMAND FORECAST & PRODUCTION CAPACITY

The Leader of the Opposition (Mr P. Bérenger) (*by Private Notice*) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to electricity, he will -

- (a) for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Central Electricity Board, information as to -
 - (i) the 2013 and 2014 expected -
 - A. peak demand therefor, and
 - B. effective production capacity thereof, indicating the safety reserve capacity margin thereof and the share therein of Pielstick and Sulzer engines and gas turbines;
 - (ii) the time frame within which new production units therefor will come into operation, and
- (b) state the coal, coal/bagasse, renewable energy and Liquefied Natural Gas energy mix being proposed for the production thereof in the medium and long terms respectively, indicating where matters stand as to the CT Power Project.

The Deputy Prime Minister: Mr Speaker Sir, the Central Electricity Board (CEB) has a specialised Corporate Planning Department to, *inter alia*, carry out its integrated electricity planning and demand forecasting, taking into account the economic development and major projects in the country. For this purpose, the CEB makes use of models developed by the IAEA, which are internationally recognised and widely used.

With respect to part (a) of the question, the CEB has forecast peak demand as follows -

2013 : 447 MW

2014 : 461 MW

In reply to the Private Notice Question of 19 April 2011, I informed the House that the peak demand forecast for the years 2013 and 2014 would be 450 MW and 464 MW respectively. This was in my answer in 2011.

In fact, Mr Speaker, Sir, demand registered so far in 2013 is 439 MW, which is in line with the forecast.

Part (a) (i) B

- The effective available production capacity for both 2013 and 2014 is 565 MW.
- With the forecast figures of peak demand of 447 MW in 2013 and 461 MW in 2014, the safety reserve capacity margin is 118 MW and 104 MW respectively.
- This safety reserve capacity margin provides for an allowance of 60 MW for scheduled maintenance, and 37 MW - I repeat, 37 MW - in case of breakdown of the biggest unit.
- The share of the different power stations for both 2013 and 2014 are as follows -

	2013/2014 (MW)
St Louis Pielstick	25
St Louis Wartsila	39
Fort Georges Sulzer	40
Fort Georges MAN	87
Nicolay Gas Turbines	72
Fort Victoria	100
Hydro	25
IPPs	177

	2013/2014 (MW)
TOTAL	565

I am informed by the CEB that one Sulzer engine is presently running at a capacity of 16 MW. This engine will be subject to repairs at the end of this month until mid December.

The second engine is currently under repairs for structural cracks, and will be back in service by the end of this month.

On account of these repairs, the safety reserve capacity margin until mid December 2013 would be, at least, 94 MW. As from 15 December 2013, with both repaired engines back in service, the safety reserve capacity margin would be 110 MW in 2013, and 96 MW in 2014.

With regard to the Pielstick engines, I am also informed by the CEB that five engines are currently being operated at only 40% of their initial rated capacity, with an output of 25 MW. In this mode, the engines have no operational risks, as they are run for only a few hours daily, and sometimes not at all. Their contribution in the overall electricity generation is minimal, at less than 2% of total generation.

The effective contribution of the gas turbines is still 72 MW. These units are planned to operate to a maximum of 150 hours a year because of high running costs at around Rs14.83/kWh.

Part (a) (ii)

Mr Speaker Sir, based on the demand forecast, the CEB has phased its generation expansion plan, which includes both firm power and renewable energy projects as follows -

- (i) Redevelopment of St Louis Power Station by the installation of 4 x 15 MW, to be operational by the end 2015, as announced in the Budget;
- (ii) CT Power Project of 100 MW, to be operational by end of 2016;
- (iii) Wind Farm at Plaine Sophie of 29.4 MW, to be operational by end of 2015;

- (iv) Wind Farm of 9 MW at Plaine des Roches (EOLE), formerly Aerowatt, expected to be operational by the end 2015.
- (v) Solar PV Farm at Bambous of 15 MW, expected to be operational in January 2014, and
- (vi) Solar PV Farm at five locations, each of 2 MW, expected to be operational by 2014.

Mr Speaker, Sir, with regard to part (b) of the question, the long term energy strategy 2009-2025, approved by Government in 2009, provides for the medium to long term energy security by diversifying the energy mix, so as to reduce dependency on fossil fuels.

The energy mix targets by 2025 are as follows -

Coal	-	40%
Fuel Oil	-	25%
Renewable Energy	-	35%

Mr Speaker, Sir, the objective of Government is to increasingly use renewable energy. By 2015, an additional 64 MW of renewable energy capacity will be on the grid.

However, in the absence of commercially viable storage technologies, the characteristics of renewable energy remain intermittency and lack of predictability and, therefore, the need for back-up facilities.

As technologies improve and the cost of renewable energy decreases, penetration is expected to accelerate.

As regards LNG, a study is being undertaken by the Consultant Worley and Parsons of South Africa to assess its viability both for electricity generation and transportation. The report is expected by April 2014.

Mr Speaker, Sir, actually, at the CEB, there are 150 MW operating on fuel oil, convertible to LNG. The long-term strategy is to substitute coal and heavy fuel by LNG which is a cleaner fuel.

With regard to coal and bagasse, I am advised that the CEB has not received any proposal for new projects. However, the CEB has recently received a proposal from Consolidated Energy

Limited (CEL), to operate the existing plant solely on coal as from 2014-2015, giving an additional capacity of 10 MW during the crop season. This is subject to Deep River Beau Champ ceasing its sugarcane milling activities by the end 2013.

As regards the CT-Power, I am informed that the CEB is presently updating the Power Purchase Agreement and other related Agreements in the light of the conditions in the EIA licence. The Agreements are expected to be finalised by the end of this year. The plant is expected to be operational by the end of 2016.

Mr Bérenger: I did not get all the figures which the hon. Deputy Prime Minister gave us on part (i) of my question, Mr Speaker, Sir. If I heard correctly, the peak demand is expected to reach 440 MW this year and 461 MW next year. I tried to get the figures for the safety margin, it was not easy. Am I right in saying that the safety margin is being arrived at by withdrawing from total capacity the biggest unit which the hon. Deputy Prime Minister mentioned, 37 MW, 60 MW for maintenance, which is the practice worldwide and has been the practice in Mauritius until now, but also a 10% spin safety? Therefore, my question is: are the three elements being taken into consideration when we have the safety margin, and if not, why not, if yes, when the three are taken into consideration? What is - can I ask again - the safety margin for this year and next year?

The Deputy Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, traditionally, we have talked about spinning reserve and safety margin and so on. But, the spinning reserve which is an arbitrary figure, varies from country to country; Reunion is different from Mauritius, it is less. In Mauritius, we have never used this spinning reserve for peak. We have used it, on the contrary, below the peak. So, the spinning reserve is just a term that has been used for years and never used it.

Mr Bérenger: Could the hon. Deputy Prime Minister agree with me that, in fact, this has been the practice until today in Mauritius, until we are presented with today's figures - and is the practice worldwide - that we extract the biggest unit, we extract figure for maintenance, and we have a spinning safety reserve of 10%? Is it not a fact that this has been the practice in Mauritius, and is the practice worldwide?

The Deputy Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I repeat, it has been on the books, but never practised.

Mr Bérenger: But, then, if we leave out this 10% spinning reserve, can we have the figure for the safety margin for this year and next year, and then we will work in the 10% spinning safety margin?

The Deputy Prime Minister: I will repeat the answer. With the forecast figures of peak demand of 447 MW and 461 MW in 2013 and 2014, the safety reserve capacity margin is 118 MW and 104 MW respectively. Then you deduct the 60 MW and 37 MW, which are for breakdown and 37 for the biggest unit provided for. But, as I have said last year, in the previous PNQ, the schedule maintenance is flexible.

Mr Bérenger: Now we have the figures, but we will have to work in the 10% spinning reserve which, as I said, has been the practice in Mauritius and is the practice worldwide. Is the hon. Deputy Prime Minister confirming that those figures of production capacity include very unreliable elements, the Pielstick engines and the Sulzer engines, all adding up to 68 MW, and that it is very dangerous to rely on these very old - and some in danger of exploding - engines, a very dangerous situation having been reached, that the safety margin, therefore, includes these very outdated engines?

The Deputy Prime Minister: The Pielstick will be decommissioned in two years' time and they are running satisfactorily. They are not the best available, but they are there and they are being used, as I said, to the minimal output for peak demand. So, it is very minimal, I don't think we should exaggerate its input.

Mr Bérenger: I did not hear the hon. Deputy Prime Minister giving us figures for the usage of gas turbine. As we know, Mr Speaker, Sir, it costs us some Rs22 per unit as far as gas turbine is concerned, compared to Rs4.66 for CEB and Rs3.44 for IPPs (Independent Power Producers). Can we know what is the frequency of the use of the gas turbines these days, especially at the end of the year when we will reach the peak demand?

The Deputy Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, the Nicolay Gas Turbines of 74 MW is used every year up to a certain capacity and this year it is no different from the others. Up to

now, it is about 150 hours. In the past, it has been 200 hours, it has been 135 hours; it's varied. There was a time when the bill came up to Rs400 m. and it is not with this Government.

Mr Bérenger: Taking everything in consideration, including the 10% spinning margin which I referred to, and we say should be taken into consideration, is the Deputy Prime Minister in a position to give the guarantee - because only last night, there were cuts all over the place, and it is occurring regularly - to the country that, when we reach peak period at the end of this year, there will be no power cuts, there will be no power shortage?

The Deputy Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I can most emphatically give the guarantee that there will be no shortage, there will be no power cut. From what the hon. Leader of the Opposition has said, there has been power cut, but there are scheduled power cuts for repairs.

(Interruptions)

In Beau Bassin, Rose, Hill, Curepipe, all the time, there is *panne*.

(Interruptions)

Mr Bérenger: Mr Speaker, Sir, this has never happened in Mauritius that you have power cuts because there are repairs. When you work the safety margin, you put in repairs, you put in maintenance and you put in this 10% spinning margin, precisely not to reach the point - I am surprised to hear that - that it is because of repairs that there have been cuts over all the place these recent days and last night.

The Deputy Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, it is not a question of capacity. What happened last night was a question of faults on the line. Localised cuts due to faults on the line and repairs. I said it, and I repeat it. That's what happened; it was not a question of not having enough generation capacity. Emphatically, I repeat it; it was not a question of generation.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: I don't want any interruption!

Mr Bérenger: Mr Speaker, Sir, if we can move on to the second part of my question. We have heard that the 4 X 15 MW new engines, heavy oil engines, are expected to come into operation end of 2015. Can I know what stage the tender procedures have reached, and whether

emergency procedures are being resorted to for the CEB to buy these 4 X 15 MW heavy oil engines?

The Deputy Prime Minister: No emergency procedures but fast track has been used. The only difficulty has been, and quite rightly so, to address all the problems of environment. The inhabitants there have been most vocal in the expression of objections and they had to be listened to. This, Mr Speaker, Sir, has made us wait for one year to have the final EIA license.

Mr Bérenger: I heard the hon. Deputy Prime Minister stressing that the heavy oil engines already in operation are adaptable to Liquefied Natural Gas later on, if required. This will bring me to two questions: one, this tender for 4 X 15 MW, does it include, therefore, the possibility of switching to Liquefied Natural Gas in the future?

The Deputy Prime Minister: Yes, it does.

Mr Bérenger: Secondly, we have been told - I'll get to that next - that there is a feasibility study on Liquefied Natural Gas utilisation in Mauritius, and yet, we are told that CT is supposed to be operational, if I heard correctly, by the end of 2015, which would mean that Government has already decided to go ahead with the CT Power Project. Is that the case?

The Deputy Prime Minister: CEB power project of what? For 15 MW?

Mr Bérenger: Not CEB, the CT Power. My question is: the hon. Deputy Prime Minister - if you will allow me - gave us that the CT Power Project is expected to come into operation by the end of 2015, if I heard him correctly. My question is: does that mean that Government has decided definitely to go ahead with the CT Power Project?

The Deputy Prime Minister: Yes, Mr Speaker, Sir, the CT Power - one Member of the Opposition rightly pointed out - there has been never a project in Mauritius which has taken six years to go through various departments ending up with EIA license. As long as they satisfy all the requirements of the EIA, which includes the best available technology in terms of emission, which includes also ash disposal which is contrary to what is being done at CTDS, it is a shame!

(Interruptions)

It is a shame. Contrary...

(Interruptions)

Yes, contrary to what is being done there.

(Interruptions)

Before anyone over there asks questions on coal, think of your past!

(Interruptions)

Think of what you did!

(Interruptions)

Two weeks! Record! Congratulations! Two weeks to get an EIA licence!

(Interruptions)

And there will be no transport from the harbour.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Silence!

The Deputy Prime Minister: ...with heavy lorries destroying our roads day by day. This will be done by ship. So, there it is! The project will take shape as long as it satisfies the requirements.

(Interruptions)

Mr Bérenger: *C'est ce qu'on ne doit pas entendre*, Mr Speaker, Sir. My worry is the following: we are at a turning point. As a country and a Government, there is need to take a decision *qui va nous engager pour 50 ans à venir*. Although we are being told that Liquefied Natural Gas is the future - this is what I heard - both in terms of cost and environment especially, and being adopted all over the place, including in Uruguay, more and more - we are told that - we are told also that there is a feasibility study being carried out financed by the CEB. Will the hon. Deputy Prime Minister agree with me, and are the Prime Minister and others conscious that if we go for CT Power now, we are stuck for 50 years to come with coal? If we go with a 100 MW pure coal at Pointe aux Caves, we are stuck for 50 years; inevitably we will have other coal stations after, and the idea of using LNG in the next 50 years will be dead!

The Deputy Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir...

(Interruptions)

...the consultant has yet to give his report but from preliminary information that we have the LNG will come in around 2020 with 100 MW which, by that time will be accommodated. There will be no problem with accommodating by 2020 and all the information that we have with LNG being found off the East African coast. But with the problems of transport and conveyance, stockage and storage, it will be resolved. But it will take time and there is heavy investment initially.

So, I can tell the House, yes, the CT Power will come in but it will not, in any way, hamper the introduction of LNG.

Mr Bérenger: Will the hon. Deputy Prime Minister and the Government as a whole agree with me? Because this is a decisive moment on what will be the decision we are going to take on CT Power and on LNG gas. My question is the following: why has Government made the CEB pay for a feasibility study on Liquefied Natural Gas? CEB is judge and party; CEB produces electricity; it buys heavy fuel engines and so on; it is going ahead with four new ones. Why has not Government taken the responsibility of having a full-fledged feasibility study carried out on the use of LNG gas? The hon. Deputy Prime Minister told us that the feasibility study is supposed to be for both electricity production and transportation cost. Transportation cost will impact on the *métro léger*, will impact on the bus transport system, will impact on the harbour because more and more shipping lines are using Liquefied Petroleum Gas for transport of ships. Why give that to the CEB? The CEB is concerned with electricity production. The CEB is judge and party. Why has not Government decided to go ahead with its own finance by Government of the feasibility study which will decide for 50 or 100 years to come on the use of Liquefied Petroleum Gas for both electricity production and transportation?

The Deputy Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, this consultant will report to Government through CEB but Government will have the last word. CEB has expressed its interest to have LNG replacing heavy fuel oil. It has already expressed its interest. It is making allowance for the new engines that we are importing to be convertible to LNG. So, we cannot say that they are against LNG or anything else. Let us wait for the independent, and then I will produce it in the House and there will be a debate.

Mr Bérenger: I think the hon. Deputy Prime Minister does not get my point. In what we are discussing, time is of the essence both as far as the end of this year is concerned and next

year is concerned, but especially concerning the strategic choice that we have to make for production of electricity over the next 50, 70, 100 years. Time is of the essence! My point is: on the one hand, I do not know how many years we are going to spend again with CT Power, arguing about the EIA and this and that. I do not know how long this will take. In the meantime, we buy 4 X 15 MW, and that's it! On the other hand, we are going to wait for a feasibility study financed by CEB rather to decide on the long term strategy. Would not the hon. Deputy Prime Minister agree with me that, to save time, because time is of the essence, instead of feasibility studies, instead of ongoing *interminables* discussions with CT Power, should we not go for a tender to invite producers to come forward, CEB, Liquefied Natural Gas, coal, coal/bagasse, whatever, including CT Power to come forward, tender as rapidly as possible following all the procedures, for producers to come forward with their proposals? Not waiting years for CT Power, and years for feasibility studies. Why not go for a tender, open technology, coal, coal/bagasse, Liquefied Natural Gas within the shortest time frame as possible, and then, as a Government, take the decision on what will be the medium and long term strategy in terms of electricity production?

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, this issue was already discussed in this House and I gave the information. In 2012, we launched an expression of interest for proposals, any technology, and it was a bazaar. It was impossible to decide. They were so mixed that it made no sense whatsoever.

For the information of the House, the CEB, through a consultant from South Africa, is looking at the issues we have discussed, but they are not related to CEB. It's an independent expert who will tell us the state of the situation.

Mr Bérenger: I think, again, the hon. Deputy Prime Minister is not getting my point. That tender that was made by this Government was a total mess. Just asking people to come forward with any suggestion; and this is not what I am saying! I am saying call for a tender, well prepared by the required consultant, asking for concrete proposals to produce 50 MW or 100 MW out of coal, coal/bagasse, Liquefied Natural Gas, or whatever state-of-the-art technology. We are not talking about the same thing. I am talking about a specific tender, well prepared by the required consultant that will allow the country to decide as soon as possible.

The Deputy Prime Minister: It smacks of the past, Mr Speaker, Sir. Are we going to go back again to that formula that we used in the past, that anyone comes up, he has land, he has everything, he gets a contract? This is what is going on.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Hon. Bhagwan!

Mr Bhagwan: *Ecouté do foutou!*

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Hon. Bhagwan, withdraw the word!

(Interruptions)

Mr Bhagwan: I withdraw.

(Interruptions)

Ecouté ! Toujours Jeetah même! Surement line aster la terre là-bas sa!

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Please! You should address the Chair, not the hon. Member!

(Interruptions)

Mr Bhagwan: *Eta alé do. Mo pena...*

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Put the question, time is running!

Mr Bhagwan: *Mo péna chassé dans Cité Barkly kuma toi!*

(Interruptions)

I will come to the CT Power Project, Mr Speaker, Sir, which is supposed to be a project in my constituency. Can I know from the hon. Deputy Prime Minister whether he is aware that the CT power promoters these days are having consultations with the people of Albion and Pointe aux Sables region? According to the conditions of the EIA, these are fake, I would say, meetings. These meetings are attended and headed by Mr Dulthumun, and bringing people

outside the region of Albion. This is creating a lot of problems in the region. Is the hon. Deputy Prime Minister aware?

Mr Speaker: No! I am sorry to interrupt you, hon. Bhagwan! You have to put a question and not to make a statement.

Mr Bhagwan: I am asking a question: whether he is aware that Mr Dulthumun is organising fake meetings for the promoters at Albion. I know the Deputy Prime Minister will say no.

Mr Speaker: Alright! The hon. Member has put a question.

(Interruptions)

Stop it now, hon. Bhagwan!

The Deputy Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I have visited the site on several occasions and I can give a guarantee to the House, with the EIA licence as provided, it will not produce any deleterious effects on the neighbourhood. What I gather, the lobby against this is so strong and yet the same lobby is to have coal projects elsewhere.

(Interruptions)

Elsewhere!

(Interruptions)

I am not aware of what Mr Dulthumun does. But what I do know is that there is a lot of people who complained and have never been there. They have not even seen the site.

Mr Speaker: Last question to the hon. Leader of the Opposition!

Mr Bérenger: If I have a last question, I will ask the hon. Deputy Prime Minister the following. Being given he is telling us that the discussions around the CT Power Project are ongoing, and what I have heard is that if the conditions put are abided by, the end result is that the cost of production of the CT Power Project will be much higher than the CEB cost of production itself and still much higher than the IPP cost of production per electricity unit, at this stage, has an agreement been reached on the price at which CT Power will sell electricity to the national grid?

The Deputy Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, the price is not finalised yet. But, let's not compare like with unlike. Whatever happened in the past with the price that was provided by the IPP, it was years ago. Today, things are quite different.

Mr Speaker: Time is over!

(Interruptions)

Silence now!

MOTION

SUSPENSION OF S.O. 10(2)

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

The Deputy Prime Minister rose and seconded.

Question put and agreed to.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Hon. Bhagwan, you are interrupting me!

PUBLIC BILL

Second Reading

THE APPROPRIATION (2014) BILL

(No. XXIII of 2013)

Order read for resuming adjourned debate on the Second Reading of the Appropriation (2014) Bill (No. XXIII of 2013).

Question again proposed.

(4.16 p.m.)

Mr N. Bodha (First Member for Vacoas & Floreal): Mr Speaker, Sir, it is always a great honour to address the House on a Budget Speech, because it impacts on the life of our nation and our people for a whole year.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the country is poised for change, the country is poised for change of leadership, the writings are on the wall. Mr Speaker, Sir, when I was watching the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development reading his Budget, I am sure that he was asking himself whether he will be in that post until the end of the financial year. In fact, he did not present to the House an implementation chart of the measures. It was only later.

Mr Speaker, Sir, a lot has been said about leadership. In each and every speech of the hon. friends and colleagues of the other side of the House, we have been having comments on the able leadership of the hon. Prime Minister, the vision, and we have gone through most of the speeches. This has been there. And we know the Labour Party. For them, the best defence is always to attack, to throw a number of arguments. But let me go through the Budget, Mr Speaker, Sir, address the issues of leadership, address the key issues and challenges of our country today, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Speaker, Sir, we have a broken Mauritius. *Une île Maurice avec les ressorts qui sont cassés*, and yet, this broken Mauritius, when we see figures, staggering figures, raise a number of questions about the financial situation in our country. We had a hedging saga of Rs10 billion at Air Mauritius. We had another hedging saga at the STC for almost Rs5 billion, Mr Speaker, Sir. We know the case of Bungaleea going around with Rs600 m. in foreign currency in Switzerland, signing a cheque of 3 million dollars in Singapore. We have heard of the Ponzi Scheme of Rs1 billion, Mr Speaker, Sir. We have the Betamax saga of Rs15 billion. We have the Beta Oil of more billions to come. We have the duty-free paradise contract of Rs1 billion. We have the SICOM Tower of Rs600 m.; staggering figures, Mr Speaker, Sir. Let me add to a few other figures. I have been told that the betting for one racing day is Rs50 m. So, for 40 racing days, it's Rs2 billion. The Lotto collects Rs10 m. every week.

This is the country that we have today, but the whole issue, Mr Speaker, Sir, is how much of it is underground black economy. What are we doing to harness the structural movements in those transactions, and what are we doing to make Mauritius a safe place as a financial centre, an economy which is well structured, and an economy which is there for the betterment of our people?

Mr Speaker, Sir, today is the 50th anniversary of the death of John F. Kennedy. He was a leader, a man I have heard a lot of times about his able leadership. My question is: how able is

the leadership of the Prime Minister? What hasn't happened during the leadership of the Prime Minister between 1995 to 2000? I leave it to what hon. Bachoo said in Hansard, and which was quoted by hon. Veda Baloomoody. He made...

Mr Speaker: Not 'he'!

Mr Bodha: Yes, the hon. Vice-Prime Minister made a vitriolic statement on the leadership of the Prime Minister between 1995 and 2000. What haven't we seen since 2005, Mr Speaker, Sir? The hedging sagas! The broken Mauritius! The social fabric, the insecurity, law and order being broken! What haven't we seen, Mr Speaker, Sir, for the last eight years! Our hon. friends on the other side of the House continue saying able leadership, but I have always asked one thing to the Prime Minister. *Pourquoi est-ce qu'il y a cette culture d'inaccessibilité*, that none of his Ministers, none of his Vice-Prime Ministers have access to him to raise urgent issues? Is that leadership, Mr Speaker, Sir? My definition of leadership is somebody who can harness the best in every man and in every nation for the betterment of our people, Mr Speaker, Sir. When we see John F. Kennedy, the day he died, Mr Speaker, Sir, there was a function, and everybody on that day remembered what he said –

“Don't think what the country can do for you, but think what you can do for your country.”

And they have been saying all the time 'putting people first', 'putting the country first'. But we know who is being put first. We know this, Mr Speaker, Sir. We know that there is a Labour business incorporated. We know the contracts that have been given. We know to whom they have been given. We took an acre of land in Ebène and we built the Cybercity. They gave an acre of land to somebody to have a loan, and then to sell it for the tower to SICOM for Rs600 m. Is that leadership? Is that able leadership, Mr Speaker, Sir? When we see the Leader of the Opposition in Burma, Aung San Suu Kyi, she is the leader who has inspired her people for democracy and prosperity. But Robert Mugabe also is a leader. *Il y a les fossoyeurs du pays. Il y a les fossoyeurs d'un peuple*, Mr Speaker, Sir. So, when it comes to the whole issue of leadership, later I will end up saying what I feel, because hon. Mrs Sheila Bappoo said that we had an alliance *qui était contre nature. Je vais dire ce que je pense de l'Alliance de 2010.*

Mr Speaker, Sir, let me now come to a number of things which have been said in this House. First of all, hon. Assirvaden said that –

« *Chaque fois que le MSM arrive au pouvoir, il profite du pays.* »

Well, Mr Speaker, Sir, history has it that the making of modern Mauritius is an MSM leadership. The making of modern Mauritius, Mr Speaker, Sir, is the making of the MSM leadership over the years.

Mr Speaker, Sir, let me give a few figures. En 1983, le BIP par *tête d'habitant était de 12 milliards. En 2005, il est passé à 148 milliards.* This is a performance, Mr Speaker, Sir ! *Le BIP était de 10 milliards et c'est passé à 185 milliards ; 18 fois.* This is the economic miracle we did in alliances, Mr Speaker, Sir. *Les réserves en devises étrangères en 83, R 392 millions ; en 2005, R 56 milliards.* All the time they speak of Sun Trust. They speak of Illovo deal. You have to speak facts, Mr Speaker, Sir. The making of modern Mauritius is the making of the MSM together with - 1991-95, 2000-2005 - the MMM. Strong leadership! Effort, values! The country was poised for change because the country wants a new leadership, new principles, new vision, and a new team of men and women, Mr Speaker, Sir. This is my answer to hon. Assirvaden.

Hon. Faugoo has made a brilliant speech, and he mentioned about agriculture. He answered hon. Mrs Hanoomanjee, saying that the production in agricultural products had increased dramatically. But let me tell a few things to the House. Between 1995 and 2000, there was no reform of the sugar sector. The hon. Minister of Foreign Affairs was the Minister of Agriculture. He has always explained that the reforms of the sugar sector came in 2000 to 2005. We worked on what you have done, but we did the reforms, Mr Speaker, Sir. Let me tell you one thing. The hon. Minister said that the agricultural production has increased during his tenure of office between 2005. But what has happened? Is it that the sugar crop of 2005 was 572,000 tonnes? What is the sugar crop in 2010? It is only 457,000 tonnes. And for the calendar year 2012, it is only 409,000 tonnes. So, the acreage and the sugar are decreasing, and many farmers are leaving the sugar cane sector to grow crops. The hon. Minister did not mention at all the sugar sector. Now, Mr Speaker, Sir, we did the reform under the able, if I can say, Primeministership of Sir Anerood Jugnauth and Paul Bérenger. We discussed, hon. Pravind Jugnauth and I, for the budget support, and we are among the rare ACP members to have a direct budget support of an injection of Rs2 billion for eight years, starting in 2007.

Two other things, Mr Speaker, Sir. The hon. Minister was talking about onions and potatoes. May I tell hon. Faugoo that the price for potatoes for five years stayed Rs 5 between 2000 and 2005. Can you imagine the impact on the purchasing power of the households? The price of onions stayed the same for five years, Mr Speaker, Sir. And worse, small planters were 35,000 in 2005. They are 19,000 today. The sum of Rs2 billion was supposed to be given to the sugar sector; Rs1 billion for budget support and Rs1 billion for the industry. The small planters were supposed to have one-third of it. Where is that money? What has been done, Mr Speaker, Sir, of the magic deal, under the able leadership of the hon. Prime Minister, about the 2,000 *arpents*?

In one of the paragraphs, it is stated that the price of sugar had to be liberalised. The price of sugar in 1999 was Rs5.50. Today, it is Rs45 a kilo. That's Rs5 billion given to the sugar sector, Mr Speaker, Sir. Now, the hon. Minister of Agriculture is saying that he has done well. These are figures; they speak for themselves, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Now, let me come to indebtedness. Dr. Rama Sithanen wrote lengthy articles between 1995 and 2000. The debt burden in 1995 was Rs37 billion. In 2000, it has doubled; Rs74 billion. In 2005, with us, it came to Rs111/112 billion, and we built schools, the cyber tower and the conference centre. We built infrastructure, and used the money as money has to be spent; public money has to be spent diligently and judiciously, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Between 2005 and now, what is the debt burden today? It is above Rs215 billion, Mr Speaker, Sir. Rs215 billion! And if we are to add the debt to be contracted for the light rail and the Dream Bridge, the toll, we will end up with the Labour Party leaving us a slate of almost Rs300 billion. He never mentioned the billions; he mentioned it in percentage of GDP. Dr. Rama Sithanen was doing that, but hon. Jugnauth did not do that. He put the figures. It's good for each person to know. But, then, Mr Speaker, Sir, what has been said for a better stewardship of our indebtedness? *Est-ce qu'on a fait quoi que ce soit dans ce budget sur le gaspillage?* Nothing has been said, Mr Speaker, Sir. Dr. Rama Sithanen had the courage to put a cutthroat squad, which was never implemented, of course, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Now, what are we doing for a better stewardship of our indebtedness, Mr Speaker, Sir? The other thing is that all our parastatals have a broken management, mismanagement of funds, incompetence. We have seen the incompetence of the CWA, CEB and the NTC. What has been

put in this Budget to take them to task? Even China is taking to task its parastatal bodies, Mr Speaker, Sir. This is an area where a lot has to be done, because we cannot continue having parastatals - *ce sont des gargantuas de fonds publics*. It is a huge burden, Mr Speaker, Sir. What has this Budget said about this? *Tous les corps parapublics sont malades, M. le président*.

To buy buses for the NTC and others, we are taking a levy of one rupee on the price of petrol. This will bring Rs450 m., and we are giving only Rs200 m. *Ça aussi c'est une sorte de subterfuge pour gagner encore R 250 millions*.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the hon. Vice-Prime Minister is very intelligent about things. You remember I put a question about the 10 cents on the SMS. Do you know how much this collects? - He is smiling. The 10 cents on the SMS collects Rs350 m., Mr Speaker, Sir.

(Interruptions)

Oui, il y a un million de SMS par jour. You have more than one million mobiles.

Mr Speaker: Address the Chair!

Mr Bodha: Yes, Mr Speaker, Sir. I come to the structure, the good stewardship of all our parastatal bodies, so that they can deliver the service that we require from them, so that they can have the management that we require from them, so that we can have the best practices that we require from them, Mr Speaker, Sir. But, then, the able leadership of the Prime Minister has put Mr Naroo as Chairperson of the Board of the CEB. We have given all our beaches, which is a precious resource of our country, to Mr Seeruttun. What can we expect Mr Speaker, Sir? *C'est une braderie des corps parapublics*; and then I am not talking about recruitment in the parastatal bodies. We know how it is done. Hon. Bachoo said something very interesting. We mentioned somebody, and he said that he has been recruited 21 years ago; that was 1992. Who was the Minister? He was the Minister! He said it was 21 years ago. So, that was in 1992. But hon. Bachoo was a Minister in the MSM/MMM Government in 1992. *Il ne faut pas noyer le poisson*.

So, I come back to the parastatal bodies, Mr Speaker, Sir. There is a dire need for us to harness the potential of our parastatal bodies. We cannot continue, Mr Speaker, Sir. What has been done under the, I will not say dictate, but under one of the conditions of the EU reform strategy that we had, for example, with all the service providers in the cane industry? We had to

do it for the cess. What are we doing with our parastatals? Nothing is being done with the parastatals.

But, then, there is something else, Mr Speaker, Sir. *Les dépenses astronomiques*. In which country do you start a project with Rs125m. - for the Caudan roundabout - and you end up almost to Rs200 m.? You start the airport at Rs11 billion, and you end up with Rs15 billion. Let us take the light rail, Mr Speaker, Sir. The light rail was dumped by hon. Bachoo between 2005 and 2010. He was against it. We came back! We really went with this idea of the light rail, and it was costing about Rs15 billion. When the then hon. Vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Finance said 'let us go on the light rail', and then we included Ébene and Bagatelle, they said it would cost Rs18 billion. Now, Ébene and Bagatelle are not being included; we are talking of Rs20 billion.

The Dream Bridge, I don't know how much it is going to cost! But, in which country do we have that sort of spiralling of expenditure, where you can't have the estimates, and then the good stewardship shows that you have been able to keep the project in time, and the amount of money spent was what had been budgeted? What is the hon. Vice-Prime Minister doing about all this, Mr Speaker, Sir?

He is talking about growth, more growth, Mr Speaker, Sir. It is growth based on public investment, on infrastructure. This is a good thing, but we cannot have a country where growth is based only on public investment. We should have economic growth based on economic activity, on investment, job creation, and value added revenue.

So, Mr Speaker, Sir, I don't know whether he has got it all wrong, or whether his mind was elsewhere. I said that, while he was reading, I am sure he was asking himself whether he will be there for the whole calendar year. I am sure he was thinking about this, Mr Speaker, Sir, because we have been asking him to rebuild a broken Mauritius, and he has not the imagination, the innovative genius and the capacity to man this, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Let me now come to poverty, because I heard speeches about philosophy and spirituality. The problem of poverty is urgency, Mr Speaker, Sir; *Roti, Kapra aur makane*, and education. Now, what is terrible in this country, today, is that we have the means, but we have the poor, and the number of poor people is increasing.

(Interruptions)

The Vice-Prime Minister is saying no. I am going to give a number of figures. The number of poor people is increasing in this country. Who invented the whole term of ‘absolute poverty’? It was Rama Sithanen and the Labour Government. Who invented the term of ‘relative property’? Again, the same Government, Mr Speaker, Sir. But poverty has to be addressed with efficacy, urgency, and dignity, Mr Speaker, Sir. And this can be done, because we have the means today.

We went on this trip to a number of spots. We met some people. You need to have a squad, because the causes of poverty are multipronged, complex; it’s social security, it’s health, it’s alcoholism, it’s failure in education, it’s unemployment, it’s a single mother, it’s handicapped people. So what is happening? These people are running left, right and centre, some going to social security offices, some going to schools. No! We need to have a taskforce handling each family as one specific case, because the equation for the poverty trap is not the same for each family.

Today, we have the money. The hon. Minister of Social Integration was giving us a lecture about empowerment, about *l’assistanat*. No! It is a question of urgency, Mr Speaker, Sir. We need somebody, *un homme de terrain, un homme de cœur, un homme de passion, un homme de moyens*.

(Interruptions)

Ou une femme ! Une personne qui veut à cœur régler le problème de la pauvreté, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Let me give the figures, Mr Speaker, Sir. In 2008-2009, we mentioned the figure of Rs5,500. In 2011, we mentioned the figure of Rs6,200, and in 2013 you have mentioned the figure of Rs8,000. Now, what we call the poverty intervention line, you have 33,000 families, Mr Speaker, Sir. This is the figure you have for income support. It is 107,000, hon. Vice-Prime Minister! For absolute poverty, we have 122,000 people getting income support!

Mr Speaker, Sir, when it comes to what they call relative poverty, it is 72,000 earning less than Rs13,000. So, we need to be bold. We need to know for each family where are the real

problems, what is the equation for each family, Mr Speaker, Sir, *de les suivre, de leur donner, et j'ai parlé de* dignity, efficacy and urgency, Mr Speaker, Sir.

It is very rare that I speak about tourism, but have to. Hon. Ramano has made a very nice speech, a good analysis of the sector. But, today, Mr Speaker, Sir, I am asking myself: *est-ce qu'il y a un pilote à la tête de l'industrie du tourisme? Concernant l'accès aérien, est-ce qu'il y a un pilote?* The able leadership of the Prime Minister for air access has not led to much. I will talk about it. I know that *c'est un secteur que tient à cœur le* Vice-Prime Minister, and we have the Minister who, himself, does not know where he stands in the alliance, Mr Speaker, Sir.

The industry today is one billion Euros. Three of the big groups in tourism are indebted to Rs30 billion. *Les trois grands groupes – R 10 milliards au moins.* One of the biggest groups, Appavou, is in bankruptcy, but the horrible side of it, Mr Speaker, Sir, is that we have reached an end of a cycle, and the Government does not want to sit with the stakeholders to understand that we have reached an end of a cycle. *C'est la fin d'un cycle.* We have to reengineer the sector completely, Mr Speaker, Sir. It has to be totally reengineered, reinvented. The image of Mauritius has taken a battering in Europe. It has taken a battering on French TV, France Ô, *l'émission 'Capital'* on M6. What are we doing, Mr Speaker, Sir? It is a terrible battering of the image of Mauritius. The hon. Vice-Prime Minister has been, I am sure, a proud Minister of Tourism in Paris. I am sure! When you speak about tourism and you say you come from Mauritius, it's amazing. Some people when they entered Air Mauritius asked: what has happened to Air Mauritius? Formerly, when we entered Air Mauritius, we had the feel of Mauritius, we were already travelling. Some tourists did not want to get out of the plane, because getting out of the plane in the cold of Paris, at Charles de Gaulle, was *un déchirement*. So, what has happened to Air Mauritius, Mr Speaker, Sir?

Before coming to Air Mauritius, let me talk about the terminal, which has cost us Rs15 billion. The Prime Minister has said that those who have the commercial shops are the same, but space has increased. I forgot to ask him whether, as regards to catering, there are three restaurants now or only one, and for shops, whether we have the same number of shops, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Let us come to the air terminal. The success of Dubai, which is becoming geopolitically the centre of the world, is linked with an extraordinary terminal, now providing for A380, an

extraordinary airline, Emirates, and a very efficient air access policy. What do we have, Mr Speaker, Sir, in Mauritius? Where is our airline? What is our air access policy?

The hon. Vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Finance was responsible for aviation between 2005-2010. He knows what I am speaking of, because he engineered the air access policy which brought in increase in numbers. I was the Minister of Tourism, Mr Speaker, Sir. I asked the Prime Minister for 14 months an appointment to sit down together with all the other Ministers involved to address the issue of air access. We never met. I did not have access to him. What is our air access position? Mr Speaker, Sir, we have to define our air access policy today. There was a study on air access which the MSM/MMM Government had ordered. It was in 2002. But now this is totally out of tune, Mr Speaker, Sir. What is happening?

Let me now take air access and Air Mauritius together. We were flying to 12 destinations in Europe. Twelve, Mr Speaker, Sir! We are reduced to two; London and Paris. We have four aircrafts A340 which are too old, consume too much jet fuel, which are 30% non-competitive. We don't know what to do with the four airlines. You cannot sell, because you will get 10 million dollars with each plane. We don't have the money to buy new planes. I am asking the hon. Vice-Prime Minister what does he intend to do with new planes that are required by Air Mauritius. When we see the reckless management of Air Mauritius and the politicking inside in the management, we understand what is happening to Air Mauritius. Is Air Mauritius now becoming a regional airline? Are we going to depend totally on Emirates to bring all our visitors from Paris, London and the other European cities, Mr Speaker, Sir? Who can beat the competition between an A380 leaving London to Dubai, Dubai to Mauritius? How can Air Mauritius fight this? How can Air Mauritius fight Emirates on the Paris-Dubai-Mauritius flight, Mr Speaker, Sir? We have to sit down, we have to inject money – a plane cost Rs7 billion, Mr Speaker, Sir. We have to take on lease. We are talking about strategic partnership, and the Prime Minister is sitting on it. There is urgency, Mr Speaker, Sir, *parce que les trésors de la famille, le trésor du pays ...*

(Interruptions)

What Mauritius was and what it is becoming, Mr Speaker, Sir! So, we have to buy planes, we have to be able to fly to Europe, to all the major cities, to Frankfurt, to Milan, to Munich, to Zurich, to Geneva. We even flew to Madrid *grâce au vice-premier ministre*. We were thinking

of flying to Manchester, of flying to Scandinavia. Can we depend on a foreign airline for our tourism industry? Can our tourism industry have, as an engine, another airline?

(Interruptions)

We have seen what has happened to the death blow that Emirates has given to Air Seychelles. So, the time has come for us to buy new planes, Mr Speaker, Sir, re-engineer Air Mauritius, start flying to our market, and then to be able to fuel our tourism industry.

Let me now come to the tourism industry itself, Mr Speaker, Sir. I had to plead with the able Prime Minister to fly to China. It took me months. In the end, there was the expo in Shanghai. We pleaded, we said: “come to Shanghai and give some visibility to Mauritius”. The Chinese should know who the Prime Minister of Mauritius is! He never came. We went. Then, we had a flight to Shanghai, but then Air Mauritius imposed that it should be via KL. We stopped the flight when I was no longer Minister. We stopped the flight to Shanghai.

We were doing the bid for Indian weddings. We did ten of them with one million dollars a day in many hotels. They stopped that as well. Sabotage! Because the idea came from us, and one thing which is sad, Mr Speaker, Sir, is that nowhere in this Budget we have the duty-free concept which is the future of Mauritius. It is because it comes from the MSM. It comes from the MSM and from hon. Pravind Jugnauth’s Budget of 2003-2004.

Let me come back to China, Mr Speaker, Sir. Here, in the Budget, it has been written that there were no flights, but they stopped the flight. Now, we are flying direct to China. Mr Speaker, Sir, we have a potential of a hundred thousand Chinese in a year. Two thousand per week; it is six flights, and if you have the six flights, one hundred thousand Chinese spending 1000 Euros, Mr Speaker, Sir, is 10 billion Euros. This is the way forward! Now, the hon. Minister is saying that he is going to China, and he is doing his best to be able to bring more. But what are we doing as regards the product?

Nous sommes un produit franco-français, franco-européen. Nothing is being done, Mr Speaker, Sir, to adapt the Mauritian product to the Chinese, to adapt it to the Indians. The solution for Mauritius - I am telling it because often we say that the Opposition just criticises - *est de faire de l’île Maurice la plaque tournante du tourisme de l’Océan Indien. La solution pour Maurice, M. le président, c’est d’être la plaque tournante entre l’Asie et l’Afrique pour les*

nouveaux voyageurs. La solution pour Maurice, M. le président, c'est que l'île Maurice puisse exporter son expertise, ses investissements, ses hommes et ses femmes qui ont une expérience extraordinaire du tourisme, exporter dans la région, au-delà de la région, et faire de sorte...

(Interruptions)

Exporter why? Because we cannot build hotels anymore! The mismatch is the same. But, if you tell the Chinese people: "Come to Mauritius and in half an hour you go to see a volcano in Reunion Island. You fly in the helicopter...

(Interruptions)

The hon. Prime Minister did one thing...

(Interruptions)

He was able to do one thing, he talked to President Sarkozy for Chinese, Indians and Russians coming to Mauritius to have a visa at the French Embassy in one day to go to Reunion Island. He did it, Mr Speaker, Sir. We are 30 minutes away from...

(Interruptions)

Reunion Island. We are one and a half or two hours away from Madagascar. We are three and a half hours away from South Africa and Victoria Falls. We are three hours away from Nairobi and the safari. We are two hours away from Seychelles, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Speaker, Sir, we have to see what are the new trends in tourism.

(Interruptions)

What the Chinese want. The Chinese can come to Mauritius in three days! They want photo opportunities. They want to see. They want to learn. They want to know, but they do it fast. *Il n'y a pas de farniente avec les Chinois.* The Russians are coming, but, at the same time, Mr Speaker, Sir, we have taken a battering. *L'île Maurice n'est plus un plaisir! Certainement. Mais je peux aussi dire tristement que l'île Maurice ne peut plus se vendre non plus comme ayant été créée par une main divine.*

Mark Twain is very, very far away, Mr Speaker, Sir. There is something which has to be done, and I am sure the hon. Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance will agree with me. We

have something to do *pour réveiller, refaire, révolutionner le carat de l'île Maurice sur les principales destinations.*

Mr Speaker, Sir, let me come to tourism. I saw one paragraph, and they were speaking about a national troupe. I set up a cultural pillar, Mr Speaker, Sir, and the hon. Vice-Prime Minister gave me Rs10 m. as seed money. I took the best artists in Mauritius; Mr Dev Virahsawmy, Mr Alain Gordon-Gentil, all the best singers and dancers. I brought somebody from Paris to come with an international show, Mr Speaker, Sir. It was called the 'Soul of the World'. And what was the project? It was that for 40 nights we would have 400 tourists with a dinner with Mrs Jacqueline Dalais, paying 50 Euros, coming every night; 50 Euros for 400 people, Mr Speaker, Sir, per night for 40. It was one million Euros, Mr Speaker, Sir. It would have created the best cultural pillar, with the best writers, with the best artists. And the next session, we would have done Paul et Virginie. I did not want to start with Paul et Virginie because it was a known, very well famous show which could be made.

What did they do, Mr Speaker, Sir? They sabotaged the project, and they asked my colleague, hon. Ms Anquetil, to ask a question, *planter...*

(Interruptions)

To say what? That I had lost money.

(Interruptions)

But it was a project of 2 m. Euros. That is the cultural pillar. All the Chinese would have gone to see that show. They sabotaged it, Mr Speaker, Sir!

(Interruptions)

Non, c'était pour les répétitions. Les shows étaient en novembre et décembre, et on avait fait les répétitions en août pour mettre tout en œuvre. Vous n'avez rien compris.

(Interruptions)

Non. C'était pour les *rehearsals*. Do it again!

(Interruptions)

Alright, Mr Speaker, Sir, and we ended up ...

(Interruptions)

On a fini par avoir, dans un Flic en Flac enclavé de travestis...

(Interruptions)

...dans un carnaval pour faire des photos, M. le président !

(Interruptions)

Now, Mr Speaker, Sir, this is ...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker, Sir...

(Interruptions)

The time has come...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker, Sir, to salvage that industry, and I will make an appeal to the Minister - it is very rare that I do that - to bring everybody together, come with brilliant ideas, re-engineer that sector, so that we reach the one million tourists. I am the one who says...

(Interruptions)

...that the solution for Mauritius is not in figures; it is in spending. It is a slow controlled growth, with visitors spending more money. That is how we came with the Golf Map of Mauritius, Mr Speaker, Sir; that is how we came with the wellness, with the honeymooning. But, today, a lot has to be done. Il faut un pilote de l'industrie, et le Premier ministre doit jouer le jeu...

(Interruptions)

...surtout sur l'accès aérien, parce que c'est fondamental pour l'avenir de l'industrie.

Mr Speaker: Combien de minutes vous avez encore ?

Mr Bodha: Beaucoup!

Mr Speaker: So, this is a proper time to break for half an hour.

At 5.01 p.m. the sitting was suspended.

On resuming at 5.41 p.m. with Mr Speaker in the Chair.

Mr Bodha: Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. I was talking about the battered and broken image of Mauritius abroad, about the shrinking map of Air Mauritius as a national airline, but there is one other ingredient which is a fundamental ingredient for the tourism industry, and for the safety and security of Mauritian people. It's the whole issue of law and order, Mr Speaker, Sir.

When you buy a property, a villa of one million Euros in an IRS project, or you pay more than Rs15 m., that is, half a million dollars to be able to have an occupation permit to stay in Mauritius, Mr Speaker, Sir, the least you can expect is that there should be law and order. This security is a *sine qua non* condition. But there are some incidents which have occurred recently in the IRS and RES villas, some incidents which have occurred in villas or bungalows where tourists were spending their holidays in Mauritius. These incidents will do a lot of harm to the country, Mr Speaker, Sir, because these horrendous experiences are taken in the hearts of these people when they go abroad, and we are again losing another carat of ours, Mauritius as safe haven.

Mr Speaker, Sir, when you go to Grand' Baie at night, at about ten or eleven o'clock on a Saturday and a Sunday, then you realise how we have a five-star destination and a two-star country.

Let me come to law and order, Mr Speaker, Sir. A lot of my friends on this side of the House have mentioned this. Again, we talked about the able leadership of the hon. Prime Minister. Each time, we have a PQ or a PNQ on law and order, the hon. Prime Minister speaks of statistics, that criminality is diminishing in this country, Mr Speaker, Sir. A statistic can be made to say whatever we want to say, Mr Speaker, Sir. *Il y a eu un subterfuge, M. le président, et le subterfuge a été très simple; c'est que certains délits mineurs, les cybercrimes, les contraventions, des vols rapportés mais n'aboutissant pas à des arrestations, ne sont pas prises en compte par le Statistics of Mauritius.*

Let me just give a list of sad events : commando en opération, plus d'un mois ; crime à China Town, colère des habitants ; trafic d'armes. Où est-ce qu'on en est avec l'enquête de l'ICAC ? Dans l'affaire Khamajeet, est-ce qu'il y a eu l'enquête de l'ICAC? En septembre, vol chez un juge, objets emportés d'une valeur de R 700,000 ; l'affaire Bungaleea ; 22 cas de vols

dans les hôtels ; le *Ponzi Scheme* ; l'affaire MITD ; l'affaire Varma. M. le président, de janvier à juillet, il y a eu 18 cas d'assassinat, et ce rythme a continué jusqu'à la fin de cette année. *There were hit men who were present in Mauritius. Mr Speaker, Sir, a lot has to be said about law and order.*

Mr Speaker, Sir, a lot has to be said about law and order, and the hon. Prime Minister comes again and says: we are doing this and this. But the truth, Mr Speaker, Sir, is that there is a psychosis of insecurity in this country. And when the CP came for once to address the nation, what did he say? There was a gang lurking around, and he asked for the collaboration of the public, Mr Speaker, Sir.

The Mauritian people love the peace, the safety, the security, and they want this land to be a safe haven and a peaceful place, Mr Speaker, Sir; and this is not the case. This is not the case, Mr Speaker, Sir, because we know that the Police are demotivated. I can make a list of a hundred enquiries. We don't know where things are. What has happened? What has happened to the Varma case, the main case? What has happened to the Bungaleea case, Mr Speaker, Sir? What has happened to the Khamajeet case - I mentioned it? What has happened to the case involving the hit men? How many of the other cases have remained as *des dossiers* somewhere else in a cupboard, Mr Speaker, Sir? But, the terrible thing about it is this idea *de deux poids deux mesures*, this *Epée de Damoclès* that you call 'under warning', the provisional charge, Mr Speaker, Sir; how this is used in a very fascist manner. And I am going to give only one example, because others will most probably speak better than me on law and order.

Nous avons un système policier à deux vitesses, deux mesures. Je vais prendre deux cas. The case of the teacher at the MITD who has not yet been charged, a year after, with any provisional charge regarding his relationship with a minor, Mr Speaker, Sir. We know what has happened. We know who are the people who have been giving him the support - the legal adviser, Mr Speaker, Sir. And we know also that, so far, nothing has been done. He is somebody from my constituency, and we know also that on a Budget day the wife of that gentleman sent an SMS to a Minister here, Mr Speaker, Sir, complaining that something had happened to her, and that she could go to see the Police, and the hon. Minister answering: 'please, don't do it. I have talked to my colleague, he will take care.' Mr Speaker, Sir, this is one case. In that case, Mr

Speaker, Sir, everybody has been given a provisional charge except *les témoins sont devenus des accusés comme dans l'affaire Varma*.

Now, I am going to take another case. I am going to take the case of Nitin Chinien. The treatment which has been meted to him, Mr Speaker, Sir, *d'Alcatraz à la prison de Beau Bassin. Et qu'est-ce qui s'est passé ? Ce que j'ai compris, et je pose la question : pourquoi sa famille et son homme de loi n'ont pas été informés de sa comparution en cour? Pourquoi on le traite ainsi, d'Alcatraz à la prison de Beau Bassin?* He may have committed an offence, Mr Speaker, Sir. But why do we have this fascist regime on the one side, and this red carpet treatment, we know, for the other cases? I am not the one to speak lengthily and extensively about this, Mr Speaker, Sir, but this has created a fascist regime of repression, of brutality, and of the use of some people within the Police to deter, to prevent, to harass the people who are not in the good books of the regime.

Let me now come to Eastern University. This has been a crusade; a crusade since 2007, for six years. For six years, do you know what has happened, Mr Speaker, Sir? 600 students are paying a hundred thousand every year. It is Rs60 m. per year. Going in whose coffers? What is happening in six years? Let us go just on a list chronologically. In 2007, UGC informed the TEC that EIILM University was not listed as a recognised institution. This letter was sent to the Director of TEC, and the letter was not tabled at the meeting of the Board. Why? Mr Speaker, Sir, the TEC gave recognition to EIILM University in Mauritius. That was in 2007.

In 2008, EIILM University, Sikkim, when applying for recognition themselves in Sikkim, they said they don't have an offshore campus anywhere in the world, neither in India nor in Mauritius. You know what the hon. Minister was saying all the time, Mr Speaker, Sir; the University Grants Commission was not a regulator. The hon. Minister said that University Grants Commission only gives grants, and Sikkim does not receive any grant, so we are not concerned by UGC. This reason was given to us for years on the radio, in Parliament, saying that UGC was only a provider of grants, and Sikkim University did not have any grant; so, we don't have anything to do with the UGC. Then, Mr Speaker, Sir, afterwards, what was said is "We have the laws of India and the laws of Mauritius. EIILM Mauritius falls under the jurisdiction of the law of Mauritius. We have nothing to do with the laws of India. We have our own judiciary. *Nous sommes fiers. Nous avons la législation de l'île Maurice.*"

This was the second reason given by the hon. Minister: we have our laws. No need to respect the laws of India. And you know what has happened, Mr Speaker, Sir? In 2007, when the application was made to the TEC, there was no written official agreement between EIILM Mauritius and EIILM Sikkim. That was in 2007. Yet the TEC gave its recognition, and the University started. Mr Speaker, Sir, that was in 2007. In 2008, EIILM Sikkim was recognised by the UGC. You know when was the agreement between EIILM Sikkim and EIILM Mauritius signed? It was in 2010. And signed with whom? With a one shareholder company: Sunil Jeetah! One shareholder company signing an agreement with EIILM University Sikkim in 2012. So what has been happening between 2007 and 2012? Five years! What was the status of that University? What was the standard of the University, and under whose regulatory body that University was functioning, Mr Speaker, Sir?

So, the first agreement between Mr Jeetah and EIILM Sikkim was in 2010. You know what the hon. Minister started saying? At the beginning they said it is University Grants Commission. We have nothing to do with it. The second reason given was that we have the laws of Mauritius and we have the laws of India. We have nothing to do with the laws of India. Then, he said we have an agreement from Government to Government. The hon. Minister was supposed to table it. We have never seen it, Mr Speaker, Sir. The agreement was signed, as I said, in 2012. EIILM has been operating without recognition of Sikkim since 2007, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Let me continue on what has happened recently. UGC has set its foot down as a regulator. UGC has asked EIILM University Sikkim to ask EIILM University Mauritius to close down immediately. This is the order coming from UGC, as a public notice. What has the TEC done? Mr Speaker, Sir, the TEC has given a letter to EIILM Mauritius to show cause why the University must not be closed down; for the University of EIILM Mauritius to show that they have all the appropriate clearances with the mother University to be able to operate. That was given 15 days. Nothing has happened, Mr Speaker, Sir! So, EIILM University Sikkim has flouted the law in India. EIILM University Mauritius has flouted the law in Mauritius, Mr Speaker, Sir. Section 12 (b) (ii) says that -

“A university with a brand name has to commit self, and cannot give it to a one man company to promote its name in the tertiary education sector.”

Mr Speaker, Sir, our position is clear, and my friend, hon. Obeegadoo, is somebody who has gone through this crusade, hon. Alan Ganoo as well. We have been a crusader in this, Mr Speaker, Sir. So, what is our position today? Because we have heard that the Minister of Human Resources who was supposed not to be working in India but is on overseas mission in Mauritius, and the Chairperson of the UGC is in Mauritius say that they maintain what they have said, but they are trying to find a solution in the interest of the students, Mr Speaker, Sir. But our position, Mr Speaker, Sir, is clear. EIILM University Mauritius has to close down. EIILM University in Mauritius has to close down because Mr Speaker, Sir...

(Interruptions)

... it is in the interest of the integrity, the reputation of Mauritius as a knowledge hub and as a centre for excellence. Now, what is happening? The victims want a solution. They want a solution because they have lost time, money, and they have lost their dignity. So, the victims want a solution, Mr Speaker, Sir, but the solution is not the recognition of EIILM University Mauritius. The solution for us is that EIILM University Mauritius should close down, and for the students, Mr Speaker, Sir, I believe that the University of Mauritius should enable them to have a degree which would be valid in Mauritius and abroad. We have to salvage the interest and the future of these young people, and we cannot continue *avec cette grande escroquerie au sein de l'université*, M. le president.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I would now like to say a few words on the NID card. The hon. Prime Minister is not here, Mr Speaker, Sir. Let me ask him how is it that the National ID card project costs Rs1.5 billion. How can he explain this to the nation, Mr Speaker, Sir? When there was a tender, it cost Rs300 m. beyond the two, the biometric photography and the fingerprints, with which we don't agree at all, because we believe that it is a non-respect of human rights. Beyond these two facts, Mr Speaker, Sir, I am asking the Prime Minister: how is it that the National Identity Card costs Rs1.5 billion? Let me tell you what is happening? It is Government to Government, and the Government of Singapore has given the project to a company called CrimsonLogic. CrimsonLogic has subcontracted this project to NEC Asia Pacific Ltd PLC. So, what is the relationship between Mauritius and CrimsonLogic? What is the contractual relationship between CrimsonLogic and NEC Asia Pacific? NEC Asia Pacific has hired the services of one company in Mauritius called OneValdus Company to implement the project in

Mauritius. What is the contractual agreement between the NEC Pacific PLC and the OneValdus Company?

Mr Speaker, Sir, let me tell you two things now. The OneValdus Company is a company whose Head Office is in St Antoine, in Annuth Building. The turnover of that company is Rs2 m.; the profit of the company is Rs2,000 for the last year, and that company is implementing a project of Rs1.5 billion. I am asking the Prime Minister, Mr Speaker, Sir; I am asking the Minister of Finance to explain to us what is being paid to CrimsonLogic, what is being paid to NEC Asia Pacific, what is being paid to OneValdus Company. I think it is his duty to explain to the nation why this project is costing Rs1.5 billion. How was CrimsonLogic chosen? How was Net Asia Pacific chosen?

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: No cross-talking! You are interrupting the hon. Member.

Mr Bodha: How was OneValdus Company chosen? Mr Speaker, Sir, for the refurbishment of all the centres, they have chosen one company called RSK Construction; somebody again close to the Labour Party incorporated company.

My question is very simple, Mr Speaker, Sir: who is being paid how much in this business? I think he owes it to the nation to explain how much we are paying to CrimsonLogic, how much we are paying to NEC Asia Pacific, how much we are paying to OneValdus Company, and how much this is costing the country, Mr Speaker, Sir. We hope to be able to cancel this project, because we need an ID card whose cost will be reasonable, and an ID card without the biometric photography and without the fingerprints, Mr Speaker, Sir.

There is one topic which nobody has taken, so far, and it's foreign policy. So, I think it is my duty, and I would like to say a few words on this issue. I am glad that Dr. A. Boolell will be speaking after me.

My first thing is that there is not one single word about economic diplomacy in this Budget. Where is our economic diplomacy, Mr Speaker, Sir? Where? He is Minister *des Affaires étrangères*; just landed! Where is our economic diplomacy? I will take two examples. I will take Jin Fei.

Mr Speaker, Sir, China decided to have four exclusive economic zones in Africa. One is in Zambia for raw materials; one is in Angola for marine resources, and one is in Sudan for oil products. The fourth one is in Mauritius. All the three exclusive economic zones are doing well, with billions of Chinese investment, with job creation, with an extraordinary synergy between those countries and China. But what has happened to us? We have a lease for 99 years, starting with Tianli, going to JinFei, and now it is Cin-Jin, Mr Speaker, Sir.

When I was on mission to Beijing with the then President, we organised a meeting with Jin Fei, with Tianli, with the Exim Bank of China, and the question is what you promised, which was 15 billion dollars of investment, 15,000 jobs created. So, the question was: why are you not doing it in Mauritius when you are doing it in Zambia, in Angola and in Sudan? Why has our economic diplomacy failed, Mr Speaker, Sir? This is a question I would like the hon. Minister for Foreign Affairs to answer. And what is happening now, Mr Speaker, Sir? We spent about Rs300 m., Rs350 m. for the infrastructure in the Jin Fei area. We have asked the small planters '*lev packé aller*'. What is happening now, Mr Speaker, Sir? *On est en train de parler de morcellement et de lotissements.*

What are the property developers in Mauritius saying? The hon. Vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Finance is aware. You have given infrastructural costs to Jin Fei to do a *morcellement*, and they are competing with us, local estate developers who are paying for our own infrastructure. How can we be so unfair, Mr Speaker, Sir? How can we do this? We gave it to Jin Fei for 99 years, and now our estate developers are saying that it is unfair, because they are not competitive. Those who are doing it are building, are investing in the infrastructural works, in the drains, in the CWA infrastructure, the CEB infrastructure, and they have to compete now with the Jin Fei people. They have come; they were supposed to create an economic exclusive zone, that is, an engine of economic activity, Mr Speaker, Sir, to use our Freeport, being a gateway from China to Africa, to use the financial platform, the offshore centre. The Chinese were supposed to do it. It is a total failure of our economic diplomacy, Mr Speaker, Sir, and I would like the hon. Minister to reply.

Let me come now to India, Mr Speaker, Sir. May I ask the hon. Minister where we are with the free trade area between Mauritius and India? Singapore started long ago; it has been signed. What has happened to the Non-Double Taxation Treaty? *C'est une montagne à*

surmonter, M. le président. What is happening? The battering that our offshore sector is getting on the international scene has an impact on our positioning as the offshore centre which is the favourite one for investment into India, Mr Speaker, Sir. I would like to ask the hon. Minister - most probably he will speak about Sri Lanka - how is it that India, when it came to the continental shelf, asked for the extension to the United Nations for research and exploration? How is it that the request was made to the United Nations, and that we were not informed about it? I am asking: *y-a-t-il un refroidissement dans les relations sacrosaintes entre l'Inde et Maurice?* This is not only economic diplomacy. It is political, it is economic, it is cultural. We are brotherly States. Has mother India turned her back to us? I am asking. I would like the hon. Minister to reply, Mr Speaker, Sir.

On the Sri Lanka issue, I better not venture now. I would like to hear what the hon. Minister of Foreign Affairs has to say, because the Prime Minister has said that he has been instrumental for the Commonwealth Summit to take place in Australia in 2011, for the Commonwealth Summit to take place in Sri Lanka in 2013, and for the Commonwealth Summit to take place in Mauritius in 2015. He says he did it! It was his making, Mr Speaker, Sir.

It is true we got the glare of the international media because the Prime Minister said that he is not going to Sri Lanka, and we know why he is not going to Sri Lanka. I would like the hon. Minister to say now, what are we going to do, first, with a President of the Commonwealth who is the President of Sri Lanka. Second, we know that Sri Lanka will not toe the line of the Commonwealth. If they had to do it, they would have done it, Mr Speaker, Sir. The track record of Sri Lanka is - we know as regards to atrocities, as regards to the independent enquiry - a track record which is against everything which can be set to promote human rights, Mr Speaker, Sir. I would like to have the answer of the hon. Minister of Foreign Affairs.

Let me say one word on Chagos. Mr Speaker, Sir, what has our diplomacy achieved from 2005 to 2013 on the Chagos Archipelago issue? I would like to know what we have achieved so far, Mr Speaker, Sir. We are at the dawn of the renewal of a lease of 50 years, 1966-2016 and 2016-2066. What have we achieved? We know that we are not party to any talks between Washington and London, Mr Speaker, Sir.

On Tuesday, the British have come with another subterfuge; the hon. Minister is aware of it. They are coming with a feasibility study for the resettlement of the British Indian Ocean

Territory, Mr Speaker, Sir. Mr Simons, the Minister for State at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office has made it clear. The terms of reference are there, but it has been made very clear *que cette nouvelle étude ne devra pas se prononcer sur des questions de souveraineté, sur des questions de nationalité, et sur des questions de paiement de compensation.*

The Foreign and Commonwealth Office has announced that 400 Chagossians have been interviewed in that context. I called Mr Olivier Bancoult, and he has mentioned to me that, in fact, an officer came from Britain, and there was a meeting with 200 Chagossians about this issue, where they were asked what they would like, what are their complaints, and what they would like for the resettlement, Mr Speaker, Sir. We have a deadline of 12 months. The feasibility study will take place in 12 months, and after the enquiry of the 400 Chagossians, the Minister says that a clear majority of Chagossians expressed a preference to return to BIOT. My question is: are they returning to BIOT as Mauritian citizens, or are they returning to BIOT as British citizens? Are we not paving the way, the British Government is paving the way for the whole issue of autonomy and self-determination among the community settled there? Mr Speaker, Sir, I would like to be enlightened by my learned colleague, the hon. Minister of Foreign Affairs.

I think it was very important for me to say a few words on this issue of diplomacy, because the Vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Finance has not written one single word on this issue of diplomacy, and we want to be a land where we want to play a role on the international scene.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister of Foreign Affairs knows in what state are our embassies abroad, about the staffing, about the nomination of a number of ambassadors who are based here, in fact. So, what I would like the hon. Minister to say is how this Budget calls for re-engineering of our diplomacy, calls for a new boost for us to be able to speak with a powerful voice on the international scene, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I will end on two issues. One is football. Mr Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister is here. A month back, a Mauritian footballer of 20 years left with a group of Reunion young players to England. They were on a tour where they played a number of matches against Second and Third Division teams in Britain, where you had people who, in fact, come *pour détecter les talents*. One of the Mauritians was chosen, and he is waiting for Barnsley, which is a

team of Second Division to send him a letter for him to do another *essai*. *Tout cela pour dire quoi, M. le président ? Tout cela pour dire que l'avenir du football c'est une équipe nationale professionnelle, et des talents qui jouent en Europe. Le jour où un Mauricien va jouer dans le Premier League ou en première division en France, ce sera l'explosion de notre génie de football et de notre capacité à attirer les foules, M. le président.* That is the way forward.

My friends have spoken brilliantly. They have spoken with a lot of passion, that we should not go towards the old traditional system, Mr Speaker, Sir. *Ce que Désiré Periatambi a réalisé en France, à Bastia, au Mans, à Auxerre, en première division, ce que Jean Marc Ithier, meilleur scorer en Afrique du Sud a réalisé, M. le président, ce que Willy Vincent a réalisé en Belgique est réalisable, parce que nous avons des jeunes aujourd'hui qui ne sont pas moins talentueux, qui ne sont pas moins bons que le Réunionnais. Il y a deux/trois Réunionnais dans chaque club français de première et deuxième divisions, M. le président.*

And we have people at Celtic, we have people at Aston Villa, we have people at Barnsley. All these people are waiting for us to send our young people. This was done only on a friendly basis, Mr Speaker, Sir. What we need, Mr Speaker, Sir, is a professional team, and I remember I made a proposal some time back when I was Leader of the Opposition. I said we need ten big companies to give Rs12 m. every year; one million per month for a professional league, and these players will play with their *dossard*, and they will highlight those companies. Take the best hotel companies, take Mauritius Telecom, take Air Mauritius, take the banks and create a football team, and then *on commence avec l'Ecole du football*. As I have said, the day one Mauritian will be playing on TV, then we know that the whole country will be behind. It was just like when Buckland was running for the 200 metres at the Olympics, Mr Speaker, Sir. It was one soul, the runner, the athlete, and the nation, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Let me end up with a youth of Mauritius, Mr Speaker, Sir. We did the economic miracle. What is the young generation of today expecting, Mr Speaker, Sir? They are expecting a future, values and principles. What are we telling our young people today, Mr Speaker, Sir? Are we telling them that they should not make any effort? *Qu'il n'y a pas d'effort à faire, qu'il n'y a pas de méritocratie, qu'il faut seulement être* in the good books of the party? What are we telling our young women, Mr Speaker, Sir? There is a fast track to success and being a successful businesswoman? What are we telling our young people, Mr Speaker, Sir? That you go to a

university, you give your money, and you come back with a degree which is not valid at all? What is the message we are giving? Who are the role models of Mauritius, Mr Speaker, Sir, today? Is it an athlete? Is it a businessman? No! The role models today, a lot of people are saying, Mr Speaker, Sir, *c'est le moindre effort. C'est passer par la voie politique d'un régime fasciste, M. le président*; that you have to be in the good books, that you will be given a loan at the MPCB. We know how loans are given at the MPCB, Mr Speaker, Sir. We know what hon. Khamajeet said with regard to the PSC.

(Interruptions)

We know, Mr Speaker, Sir! This is not the Mauritius that the young people want. They want a Prime Minister who is a role model. They want a Prime Minister who is a man of principle. They want a Prime Minister who will show the way, Mr Speaker, Sir. They want a Prime Minister who feels and knows what their future is. Not writing extraordinary paragraphs in speeches! The hon. Prime Minister will come in two days, and he will turn the pages and talk about his commitment. He will talk about his ideals. He will talk about his principles. He has been doing it since 2005 year in year out. But the country has been going down the drain year in year out, and we have a broken Mauritius today.

What have we done, Mr Speaker, Sir? We have done nothing to create the environment for jobs for our young people. I forgot about it - Hon. Minister Mohamed and myself. There is a golden opportunity on cruise ships. We can send one thousand, two thousand of our people to work. More! Why has not this been done? We started it. We recruited the people. We trained them. But it was not done, Mr Speaker, Sir. One thousand young people working on cruise ships, sending one thousand dollars a month. It is one million dollars every month, Mr Speaker, Sir. How much money is that? And our young people are travelling. Why did not we do it? Because, again, sabotage! You do not have the ideas, and when you are given the ideas you sabotage them, just like I mentioned, Mr Speaker, Sir. The lesson for the young people of today, Mr Speaker, Sir; young people need a job, but they need values, *l'effort, la méritocratie, l'égalité, la justice, la dignité*. It is true that they are glued to their monitor. It is true that they are glued to their PC and laptop. But it is true also that they love this country, and they want to stay in this country, Mr Speaker, Sir.

We want a land of opportunities. We talk about democratisation of the economy. A lot of people have spoken about it. Our young people are lost in a broken Mauritius, broken promises, broken hopes. They face a broken dream, looking to a future elsewhere, Mr Speaker, Sir. We propose them a new dream, what we call forward for change. I would like to say one word, Mr Speaker, Sir, about what hon. Mrs Bappoo said: “*C’était une alliance contre nature.*” *Mais c’est cette alliance contre nature qui a fait qu’elle a été élue dans ma circonscription.*

(Interruptions)

C’est cette alliance qui a fait que le Premier ministre est Premier ministre aujourd’hui...

(Interruptions)

Had it not been for the MSM, you would not have had a majority! You know this! And you will see this, Mr Speaker, Sir!

(Interruptions)

You will know this, Mr Speaker, Sir.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Hon. Bodha, address the Chair!

Mr Bodha: Had it not been for the MSM, you would not have won a majority. This is the truth, Mr Speaker, Sir. Had it not been for the *transfuges*, you would not have a majority, Mr Speaker, Sir. But, let me tell you one thing, Mr Speaker, Sir, and I say this from the bottom of my heart.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Silence!

Mr Bodha: I say this from the bottom of my heart, Mr Speaker, Sir.

(Interruptions)

Je suis fier...

(Interruptions)

Je suis fier, M. le président, d’être de ce côté de la Chambre.

(Interruptions)

Je suis fier que l'alliance, ce qu'elle appelle contre nature, n'ait pas marché.

(Interruptions)

Vous savez pourquoi ?

(Interruptions)

Oui, bon débarras ! Mais je préfère être ici...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Address the Chair!

(Interruptions)

Mr Bodha: ...qu'être là-bas, avec un Premier ministre qui m'appelle Judas, traître !

(Interruptions)

Qui m'appelle transfuge !

(Interruptions)

Je préfère rester ici, M. le président !

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: I want some...

(Interruptions)

Mr Bodha: *Je préfère rester ici!*

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Okay!

(Interruptions)

Mr Bodha: A côté de mes amis. Here, Mr Speaker, Sir, we are offering a dream.

(Interruptions)

We have formidable men and women who love this country, who will bring the change, Mr Speaker, Sir, because the days of the other regime is coming. The Prime Minister knows it. *Toutes ces cartes aujourd'hui n'existent pas ; la réforme électorale, le Media Bill, toutes les cartes politiques. Le Premier ministre le sait bien;* and we have on this side of the House, Mr Speaker, Sir, the leadership, the vision, and the love for our country, so that we can bring a new future to our Mauritius.

Thank you, Sir.

(Interruptions)

Mr Jugnauth: On a point of order, Mr Speaker, Sir, I have, together with Members of the Opposition, taken cognizance of the last amended version of the list of orators. We have consulted, and we have three objections with regard to the way that it has been drafted.

First of all, the principle of having alternative speakers, that is, one from Government and one from Opposition is not being respected. Secondly, if we go according to this list, it would mean that, on the last day of debates, there would be four Members of the Government who would be intervening successively, that is, the hon. Vice-Prime Minister, Mr Bachoo...

(Interruptions)

Yes, but...

(Interruptions)

Yes, but four would be in the order of the last interveners. It would be the Vice-Prime Minister hon. Bachoo, the Deputy Prime Minister, the Prime Minister, and then the summing-up...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: I am on my feet! Why are you shouting? Well, according to the hon. Member, he is raising a point of order.

(Interruptions)

Raising a point of order! This is not a point of order, hon. Member!

(Interruptions)

Wait! I do not want to be interrupted, okay! If you have certain reservation about the list, you could have informed me and I could have asked you to come and see me. I would have talked to you, and talked to the Government Whip and the Opposition Whip! But this is not a point of order, and you should not have raised it here!

(Interruptions)

Mr Jugnauth: May I, in that case, ask for your guidance which you have just mentioned now, because we have discussed with the Government Whip, and they have still maintained this list. If we are given time; at least, we are making a request that the list can be amended.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Yes, you can make the request, but I said...

(Interruptions)

Let me...

(Interruptions)

I want some silence.

(Interruptions)

What I am simply saying is that you could have sent me a note. I could have seen all those concerned. The Whips...

(Interruptions)

Wait a minute! We could have talked and discussed about it. But rising on a point of order, this is not proper!

Mr Bhagwan: Can I make a point, Sir? I have made representations, and discussed with the Government Whip who has consulted the Leader of the House. Our problem is that our request has been turned down, and I discussed with you in the morning also that we are unhappy.

Mr Speaker: No, hon. Bhagwan, I have to interrupt you. We cannot discuss this matter here! If you want to see me, I am prepared to suspend for a few minutes. I will listen to all of you.

(Interruptions)

So, I would rather suspend for ten minutes. I will invite both Whips to see me in my Chambers.

At 6.29 p.m. the sitting was suspended.

On resuming at 7.49 p.m. with Mr Speaker in the Chair.

ANNOUNCEMENT

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY - WHIPS – DUTIES & RESPONSIBILITIES

Mr Speaker: Hon. Members, following representations made to me in my office, I wish to refer the House to Erskine May, 24th Edition, page 51, where the duties of the whips are spelt out.

I quote -

“The efficient and smooth running of the parliamentary machine depends largely on the Whips. By far, the most important duties devolve upon the Government Chief Whip. He is concerned with mapping out the time of the session; for applying in detail the government’s programme of business; for estimating the time likely to be required for each item, and for arranging the business of the individual sitting. In drawing up the programme he is limited (...) by certain conventions which make it obligatory upon him to consult the Whips of opposition parties (...)”

I also wish to refer the hon. Members to Shakhder 5th Edition at page 145 - The Practice and Procedure of the Lok Sabha, where it is mentioned that the Whips, I quote -

“(...) have to know their men. This involves a close contact with all members and knowledge of their interests, special aptitudes, qualities and potentialities. The Whips take these aspects into account while sending the list of speakers to the Chair in the interest of quality of debate and deliberation (...)”.

In our legislature, the Whips have the same duties and responsibilities.

In the circumstances, I am of the view that, during the course of actual working, the Government Whip and the Opposition Whip should come into contact with each other to sort out matters of common interest, and to understand and accommodate each other.

This is a proper time to suspend for one hour and fifteen minutes.

At 7.51 p.m. the sitting was suspended.

On resuming at 9.22 p.m. with Mr Speaker in Chair.

Mr Speaker: What is the point of order, hon. Member?

Mr Ganoo: I take the floor on behalf of the Opposition. We have read your ruling. We have taken cognizance of the opinion in the ruling you just gave. The Opposition Whip has tried to come to an agreement with the Government Whip, as you have suggested. Unfortunately, the usual channels have not worked. It would seem that there is a deadlock. Mr Speaker, Sir, I am raising the following point of order by virtue of section 77 of the Standing Orders. I quote -

“Mr Speaker shall have power to regulate the conduct of business in the Assembly in all matters not provided for in these Orders.”

I am of opinion that by virtue of section 77, Mr Speaker, Sir, you could prevail upon Government side to rearrange the order of speakers because this list is a departure from what has obtained in the past years.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: I want some silence! There is a point of order, and I want some order! Proceed with your point of order!

Mr Ganoo: It is the first time for debates around a Budget Speech or for any Bill for that matter, Mr Speaker, Sir, that four Members of Government side will speak each after the other in line! For the first time, Mr Speaker! This is a departure from past practice. You, as the upholder of the privileges of this House and as guardian of the dignity of the House, as protector of the minority in the House, Mr Speaker, Sir, we are appealing to you by virtue of section 77 of the Standing Orders to see to it that the list of speakers which has been suggested by the Government Chief Whip be looked into, be rearranged, so that a Member of the Opposition be able to speak just before the hon. Prime Minister. The Standing Orders provide...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Let us, at least, listen to what...

(Interruptions)

Hon. Minister, please!

(Interruptions)

Silence!

(Interruptions)

Mr Ganoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, the Standing Orders...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: There is no reason Members should get excited. The hon. Member is raising a point. Let us listen to it.

Mr Ganoo: The Standing Orders provide that it is only the hon. Prime Minister who has the right, if he so wishes, to talk before the mover of a motion or the Minister who introduces a Bill...

(Interruptions)

This is provided for in the Standing Orders! I repeat, Sir, it is only the hon. Prime Minister who can intervene just before the Minister of Finance or any other mover of a motion or any Minister piloting a Bill. Now, in past years, as you will see, for example in year 2010, it was a Member from the Opposition who took the floor before the hon. Prime Minister. In year 2010, it was hon. Li Kwong Wing. He spoke just before the hon. Prime Minister. In a spirit of fairness...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: I am on my feet! Hon. Jhugroo!

(Interruptions)

Look, I am on my feet and I want Members from both sides to keep quiet!

(Interruptions)

I want all Members to keep quiet! I am on my feet!

(Interruptions)

I say all Members quiet!

(Interruptions)

I say order to all Members! I am not going to repeat now! If any hon. Member becomes disorderly, he will be out! Let me listen to hon Ganoo!

Mr Ganoo: In a spirit of fairness, and I will not take the time of the House more, by virtue of section 77 of the Standing Orders, since as the Speaker of the House, the Standing Orders provide that it behoves upon you to regulate the conduct of the business in the Assembly...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Don't interrupt the hon. Member! Proceed!

Mr Ganoo: In a spirit...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: I have said that I do not want to hear murmur or any noise at all. There is a point of order which has been raised by hon. Ganoo. I was listening to the point of order, and Members from both sides of the House are making a lot of noise. How can I listen and understand properly the point that has been raised!

(Interruptions)

Have you finished, hon. Ganoo? I do not want any interruption!

Mr Ganoo: Therefore, in view for the three reasons that we are providing, firstly last year, hon. Pravind Jugnauth spoke after hon. Minister Bachoo - It has never happened in this House that four Members of Government side speak each after the other. By practice and convention, we alternate, Mr Speaker, Sir. The second reason, Sir ...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: What is happening to Members!

Mr Ganoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, in a spirit of fairness, equity...

(Interruptions)

... the convention that has always been respected in the House, that is, we alternate; one Member of Government and one Member of the Opposition. This is the convention that has been followed, has been adhered to and respected at all time by all Members of this House, all

political parties of this House, Mr Speaker, Sir. This is a departure from all our past practice. You can check from the record, Mr Speaker, Sir. This is why we think, in all fairness, in view of the fact that the Government is maintaining the order of the orators, as has been circulated in this list, we would like, from the Opposition side, that Government confirms to us that they do not want to change the order as circulated. Then the Opposition will know, because our Opposition Whip has liaised with the Government Whip, and he...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Silence!

Mr Ganoo: ... is maintaining, unfortunately, the order; Government side is maintaining the list as it is, as it has been circulated. Can we have the confirmation that Government is insisting on this list which has been circulated?

Mr Speaker: First of all, I have to inform the hon. Members that I have given a ruling, and I maintain my ruling. In fact, precisely, it is an opinion to be technically correct. It is an opinion. It is not a ruling because the point raised by hon. Jugnauth was not a point of order. Now, it is not even a point of order, but it is a request for the Chair to interpret the Standing Order 77, which reads as follows -

“Mr Speaker shall have power to regulate the conduct of business in the Assembly in all matters not provided for in these Orders.”

So, it is a request to interpret. Of course, I need some time, and therefore, the Deputy Speaker will take the Chair!

At this stage the Deputy Speaker took the Chair.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Resume your seat, please!

(Interruptions)

I want some order in the House! Hon. Minister Boolell, please!

(Interruptions)

Silence, please!

(9.21 p.m.)

The Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade (Dr. A. Boolell): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir,...

Mr Ganoo: I am sorry...

Dr. A. Boolell: Is it is point of order?

(Interruptions)

Is the hon. Member standing on a point of order? Is he standing on a point of order?

The Deputy Speaker: Have you got a point of order? Please!

(Interruptions)

Mr Ganoo: We want the Government Whip to inform the House whether the list provided for, as circulated, is still maintained.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: There is a point of order. I would like hon. Members to maintain silence. The Speaker has withdrawn just for the specific purpose to come back with...

(Interruptions)

So ...

(Interruptions)

Mr Bachoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the list, as circulated, is being maintained.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order!

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

(Interruptions)

Hon. Minister Boolell, please! Order! Order! Order! Order now! Allow the hon. Minister to intervene.

Dr. A. Boolell: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it's a shame, and they have brought this House into disrepute.

(Interruptions)

They will be condemned outrightly by the public, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, if they want to stage a show, and staged a walkout...

The Deputy Speaker: I would like hon. Members to allow the hon. Minister to intervene uninterrupted now.

Dr. A. Boolell: ...at least, there is decorum. The Members of the Opposition should have ...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: You are interrupting your own colleague.

Dr. A. Boolell: ... acted responsively, at least, to listen to some of the points which they have raised.

Let me come to the first point, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in respect of allegiance sworn by hon. Bodha that, on the day of election, he was loyal to the Leader and to the Alliance.

In fact, we know how he tried to undermine the process, to the point that he was taken to task by the Prime Minister, and asked to fall in line. He even acknowledged that he had acted irresponsibly and contrary to the best practice in respect of allegiance to an alliance and to the leader of the day, and the best thing that could have happened to this alliance, when they tried to threaten by saying that they would walk out of Government. It was pre-planned, but we don't succumb to blackmail, as my distinguished friend has stated.

(Interruptions)

They should know that we have a Prime Minister who is resolute and never gives in to any threat, because he is a person of moral principle, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. And they chose to stay away from Government! We know how, during the electoral campaign, they operated under false pretences of being loyal to the alliance, and we know what really took place is many constituencies.

Mr Speaker, Sir, they are talking of the writings on the wall. Their writings on the wall! Former Minister Bodha, now Member of the Opposition, should know! When he was in India, allegedly as Leader of the Opposition, you recall who stripped him naked of his power, Mr Speaker, Sir! And, today, allegedly, there is purpose of unity. We have been sitting on Opposition bench with the MMM, but there was unity of purpose. We came with amendments to the number of measures spelt out in the Budget. And these amendments had to be debated. Where is unity of purpose?

Hon. Jugnauth claims that he had a legitimate right to make his intervention before or after the Vice-Prime Minister. We ask one basic question. He should reconcile with the fact that he is political midget, that he does not have a locus! He has been reduced to a naught without a figure, relegated to sit behind hon. Bérenger when the latter is giving his press conference! So, we have a so-called Leader of the MSM reduced to nothing, who operates in a vacuum, and constantly have to appeal to Mammy and Daddy to come to his rescue.

Let me remind the House, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that the remake is, as we call it, sell by past date; expiry. They have become stale, and I would have expected them to come up with constructive criticism. Even if they wanted to be on the offensive, we would have expected substance. They don't even have an agenda, not clear on issues relevant to our economy. They have got only one agenda. Try desperately to bring down this Government. They can try. They will never succeed, because we are resolute and bold when it comes to take decision, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. We have never vacillated nor shy away from our responsibility. We have always acted without fear or prejudice. And had there been honesty of purpose, they should have stayed to listen to the arguments that we are going to put across.

On the specific issue raised by hon. Bodha relating to the Jin Fei project in Riche Terre, let me make it quite clear that an appeal was made to the hon. Prime Minister by the former President of the People's Republic of China that more time should be given to the Jin Fei Company. In the meantime, they have invested massively in infrastructure, notwithstanding, of course, support being dispensed by Government in respect of specific utilities. Only last week, 15 prominent Members from the Sin Chi province had a meeting with the Vice-Prime Minister and the Financial Secretary to express interests in respect of specific projects for which they have shown interest to invest. Of course, we are keen to have regional headquarters of Chinese

companies which, today, have become global, operating on the African Continent, and they have expressed interests, projects relating to property development which, of course, will be sold to our Chinese friends, projects relating to back office, projects relating to aquaculture, because the site is not far from the port. So, there is a host of projects identified.

In China, it is the Central Government which decides on issues which are relevant to investment, which gives the blessings to the province Government, and now, we have been told that the Deputy Governor of the province of Shanxi will visit Mauritius in September and will move the process in respect of agreement or in respect of pledges already made. So, there is a great possibility that there will be an agreement. Not only that, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, after the visit of the Vice-Governor, 40 prominent Chinese businessmen are coming over. So, there is a process which is being moved, and there is a firm commitment to invest in land which we have allocated to Chinese company. So, I see no reason why they should show concern when they know very well that there are ongoing discussions.

Let me come to another issue which has been raised in respect of human rights. On the issue of Sri Lanka, I am not going to put things within its proper historical perspective. But, in Port of Spain, where CHOGM was held in 2009, had it not been for our Prime Minister, a deal would never have been brokered for Australia to host the Summit in 2011, and the Prime Minister impressed upon the Vice-President of Sri Lanka that time is being given to them to address issues which are relevant to human rights. Notwithstanding the fact that, in 2009, in Geneva, Mauritius sponsored a resolution to condemn Sri Lanka on flagrant violation of human rights, and we have remained steadfast in respect of our stand, I have always made it a point, whenever representatives from Sri Lankan Government coming to see us, to discuss bilateral issues. I have always made it a point for them to meet our brothers and sisters of the Tamil/Hindu community in Mauritius, because this is the kind of policy that we preach, that we practise, and transparency, in the name of this Government.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we have also told them that there has been the report submitted by the UN Commissioner for Human Rights, Mrs N. Pillay. The findings are crystal clear, and the findings outrightly condemn the Sri Lankan Government, again on violation of human rights and being not in conformity or in conformity with pledges which they made to be also in full compliance with the findings of the lessons learned and the Reconciliation Commission. We told

them. Of course, these are issues that you don't raise in plenary session. Either you take them bilaterally with your counterpart, you press upon your counterpart as to the merits of implementing the findings of report which has been submitted and widely circulated, or else they have to pay the consequence.

When we travelled to New York, the President wanted to have a meeting with the Prime Minister. The Prime Minister, being a man of principles, be it on the issue of Sri Lanka, Fiji, Myanmar, has never departed from his principles, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. Mauritius has a strong track record on human rights, values and compliance to human rights issues which are relevant to a nation, which value nationhood, which value national unity and solidarity.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we are giving thought to seriously - when the time comes - move a resolution in Geneva on human rights, if we are called upon to either cosponsor a motion, as we have done in the past. We shall do it in full compliance with human rights values, in full compliance with the Charter of the Commonwealth. We are going also to be watchful and mindful of decisions to be taken by the Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group (CMAG). I had the opportunity to talk to Professor Piris, and he has confided in me in respect of some existing problems in Sri Lanka, which to some extent they are addressing. But they need to address them in a meaningful and effective manner, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

Let me now come to the issue of Chagos Archipelago. I have made it a point to have a copy of the reply given by the Prime Minister on 12 June, last year. The Prime Minister rightly conveyed to our friends sitting on the Opposition bench that this is an issue which transcends political barriers. It is a sensitive issue and complex in nature. The nature of discussions has to be such that certain information cannot be made public.

In fact, in June 2004, our friends from the Opposition made headline because information was published that Mauritius intended to leave the Commonwealth. That was the intention of the Opposition. If my memory serves me well, the then Minister of Foreign Affairs, hon. Bérenger, did make an open statement that Mauritius intended to leave Commonwealth in order to take the UK to the International Court of Justice, and they were literally caught with their pants down! Why? The British Government promptly came up with a declaration - as the Prime Minister stated at UN - stating that it did not recognise the jurisdiction of the International Court of Justice

in relation to any dispute with the Government of any country which is or has been a member of the Commonwealth.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I do not intend to refer lengthily to the reply given. But let me, again, make it quite clear that we are exploring - and that's what we are doing - all legal and diplomatic initiatives with the assistance of our local and external lawyers or advisors, as the hon. Prime Minister has stated. There is no opportunity which escapes us whenever we have to raise the issue of territorial integrity. And the Prime Minister is right. Our independence is not complete unless and until we can exercise full sovereignty over our territory. Territorial integrity is sacrosanct. The number of times we have moved resolution in the Non-Aligned Movement meetings and at the level of the African Union, and we have the political support. The political will is there to raise it forcefully, to make it quite clear that the British acted in flagrant violation of human rights when they uprooted Chagossians, who are Mauritians; when they were uprooted from our territory.

Unlike the Opposition, whenever Mr Bancoult comes to see us, we do not consider it an opportunity where an opportunity photo has to be taken, as they did in the past. It is as if it is a big event. We made sure that Mr Bancoult accompanied the Prime Minister as a member of the Mauritian delegation, led by the Prime Minister of Mauritius, to the African Union. He was given the opportunity to convey his message loud and clear to the nation. If I am not mistaken, it was broadcast on our television.

In my office, Mr Bancoult has stated in no uncertain terms that we are here to work together as Mauritian citizens. It is true that when he has to lodge his case, he lodges it as a British citizen. But united we stand on our territorial integrity which is sacrosanct, and the fight is on. I recall, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, when the former British High Commissioner came to see me - Parliament was sitting; it was on a Tuesday - with a copy of the decision of the British to set up a marine protected area, and it was a ploy; and we know what the agenda was. The Consultation Paper was circulated, and when he came to see me, he shuddered with fear because he knew that his Government had acted contrary to guarantees given to our Prime Minister when the Heads met in CHOGM in 2009. We knew what the agenda was, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, so much so, today, a case has been brought by Mauritius against the United Kingdom, under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, to challenge the legality of the marine

protected area which the United Kingdom has purported to establish around the Chagos Archipelago.

In its application, Mauritius contests the legality of the MPA on the basis of different grounds. I am not going to go into the details. But we are a Government totally committed, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, to our territorial integrity, and we know that, next year, discussions will start in respect of exchange of letters between UK and the US. And we have made it quite clear to them that in these discussions, if they value human rights, if they understand the significance of human rights, if they are party to the decision taken in Geneva, Mauritius which has legitimate claim in respect of resolution voted in the United Nations, Mauritius legitimately has to be party to these discussions. We have taken up the issue, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in Washington, in London. They have a moral obligation and a legal obligation. If, as they claim, they are strong proponents of human rights, then, in the inner conscience, there should be no double standard. The fight is on. It is a relentless fight that we are waging, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. So, we have no lessons to learn from anybody on our commitment to defend our territorial integrity.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, there was another point raised by hon. Bodha in respect of public debt. We all know that public debt is not counted only in rupees and cents, but it is the total public debt as a percentage of your GDP which matters.

Let me then come to matters which are relevant to the people of this country. First, I extend warm congratulations to our Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development, hon. Duval, mover of the Appropriation Bill, and we have to say that this Bill, in respect of the measures announced, has been well received by the population. When you look at the host of measures, incentives and facilities are being extended to the Mauritian people, facilities which have been unbundled and regrouped under relevant sectors.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we have to be proud, and we have to see to it that no one undermines the process, and we have to expedite in respect of implementation. We are committed. It is not a pledge. But those who dare think that they can make an attempt to undermine the process of Government will have to think twice, over and above measures announced and implemented; implementation at a speed acceptable to all of us, first and foremost to the nation. Implementation is mandatory. The hon. Prime Minister will be relentless and, of course, will see to it that the measures announced are fully implemented.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in his quest for growth, the hon. Minister of Finance and Economic Development has left no stone unturned, and we have to extend further congratulations, because he has done us proud. For two consecutive years, he has been voted as Africa best Minister of Finance. But, of course, it is teamwork and team spirit that constantly prevails.

When we look at the Budget in respect of measures announced, there is a common thread. I call it the golden thread, and it's a feat that today it is on the agenda of many international meetings. We call it growth with equity through inclusive development. The hon. Minister puts on his best endeavour to make us partners in development and investment. This is a Budget that goes beyond 2015, consolidating existing sectors, and looking at new poles of growth, the blue or ocean economy. We have done the preliminary works, put in place the relevant institutions, and hopefully we are going to come with the relevant legislative frameworks. The green economy; there are so many projects in the pipeline which are to be implemented and, of course, we are looking at the film industry, and we want Mauritius to become a prominent location; as prominent as Switzerland or New Zealand. So, we constantly have to re-invent, and we constantly have to be mindful of events falling on international scene.

But, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we have to be true to ourselves, and in as much as we are full of praise for ourselves, we have to be mindful also of the harsh realities, because after all we are not merely beneficiaries of our forefathers' success, but stewards of our children's heritage. My criterion call, which is an awakening call in the light of ongoing crisis in the euro zone, is that we should not live beyond our means, and as the hon. Prime Minister is in the habit of saying: there is no free lunch; the days of free lunch are over. What we consider to be acquired rights today may not be the acquired rights of tomorrow. Just let me remind you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, of what the High Commissioner of UK told. Yesterday, we gave a send-off party to the Indian High Commissioner. The Dean is the British High Commissioner, and he was telling us that one-third of the total household income in UK - their income - is subsidised by 50% by the State. The State cannot sustain this, and they are asking the question: for how long will the State be able to sustain?

Let me remind the House that - my very good friend, the hon. Minister of Agro-Industry and Food Security is here - if there is, according to a report from the FAO, a reduction in the

production of food commodities, the price of those commodities can go up by 25%. One has to understand, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that there are lessons to be learned, and we have to reconcile with the harsh realities. It is precisely because we have erred on the principle of caution and we have put in place mixed policies relevant to socioeconomic development that today we have become a showcase. We can re-invent ourselves; we can be innovative and creative.

There was a time, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, prior to independence, when king sugar ruled, and though we had a Chief Minister, the decisions were taken by the British. Our poor young Mauritians; whose legitimate ambitions at the time were to write to the Queen, according to Mr V.S Naipaul, to be enrolled as nursing students in UK. Those were the days, and we have travelled a long, long way. We were branded as an overcrowded barracoon, and today we have become a showcase. If we are a showcase and cited as a model of economic reform, first and foremost, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we owe it to the leadership, to the stewardship of our Prime Minister; bold, resolute, maverick, and determined to challenge *status quo*.

This is why, as a responsible Government, we have embraced the politics of empowerment and the golden thread, and I will come back to this. Growth with equity through inclusive development, partners in development and investment, and politics of empowerment has become the act of faith of the Labour-led Government. We have turned the Labour Party into a sea of faith, and the Opposition has been receded. They have receded from the high-water tide, which they think they could see from far, but they are going into oblivion. And they have all the time to understand the purpose of Government; the eagerness with which we work, not selling dreams or creating unnecessary expectations, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, our endeavour, of course, is to forge a strong nation, and since then we have constantly widened our economic base to be relentless in our endeavour to be pro-poor, pro-youth, pro-women and pro-development. And the politics of empowerment which is our golden thread became the turning point in 2005 when we took bold decisions. At the time, what was it that we inherited? What was the legacy that was bequeathed to us? What were the skeletons that were in the cupboard? What about the debt that was left to us for repayment, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir? What was the public debt that we inherited? The Budget deficit was 6%. We had a Herculean task. We introduced sound macroeconomic policies, and we embarked

upon sectoral reforms, on a wide range of far reaching and comprehensive reforms, including fiscal consolidation, efficient management of scarce resources, labour reforms, reduction of regulatory cast of doing business to address the concerns of our society for more jobs and social justice. At the time when we were about to have an early harvest - as the former hon. Vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Finance used to say - we were hit by four F's: food, feed, financial and fuel crisis. Yet, we created the fiscal space to come up to the rescue of ailing factories, and to save jobs.

You recall when there was phasing out of Multi-Fibre Agreement. What happened? A high number of people lost jobs without any social safety net to rescue them. This is the difference between them and us, between a caring and an Opposition which is heartless, reckless, hell-bent upon destruction, devoid of feelings and ideas, which had one objective when they were in Government. We knew then what he was up to; the midget trying to swell - trying to swell, Mr Speaker, Sir - his war chest. Like Don Quixote, he was probably going to charge at the wrong windmill. We know what his objective was, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

We have travelled a long way, and today there is a deflationary trend in some of the euro zone countries. Demand has been dampened, and we can assess the impact upon destinations like Mauritius, because after all Europe remains our remunerative markets. But these are facts, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, and in spite of financial crisis which has turned into an economic crisis, we have resilience. At a time when our friends in Europe are doing away with subsidies, have embarked upon deep cuts, here in Mauritius, we, as a responsible Government, have disbursed Rs7 billion to meet PRB. What were they saying in spite of all the criticisms that they levelled against us? What was their appeal to pay PRB *in toto*, as if we had to learn lessons from them! They who have wrecked and almost brought the economy to its knees in 2005, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, some of the criticisms that were levelled is that some countries on the African continent are doing far better than us. I would advise them to refer to the African Development Bank Report, the African Outlook, which includes the poorest countries. True, some of them are doing well, but they have an extremely low base. It is like pitching a bantamweight against a heavy weight. You can't do that, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. When you analyse the development indicators of these economies, what is it that we see? Last year, Sierra

Leone sat at 177 out of 188 countries ranked by United Nations in respect of its Human Development Index on education, life expectancy, health, per capita income, poverty and equality, etc. Mauritius ranks very high in the Human Development Index. This is social justice. This is the politics of pro-poor. This is the politics of empowerment, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. When you look at all the relevant indices, Mauritius does well and has become a show case.

Let me come, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, to some of the other criticisms which have been levelled. While our Budget deficit stands at 3.7 of GDP, in the euro zone countries, many of them are struggling. The credit rating of France has been downgraded. France, Slovenia, Spain and Poland have been given a time extension of two years to bring the Budget deficit under control and comply with EU budgetary deficit rules. When we look at public debt as a percentage of GDP, we are on track to meet our target of 50% debt to GDP ratio. What does it mean? It is that we have the space and the resources to invest in projects to meet social expectations of people in the housing sector, the investment that is going in road infrastructure, public utilities.

Let me look at a country which, in the past, was cited as a success story; Japan. The public debt has ballooned over the last 20 years, rising from 60% to 220% of GDP, with the result that much needed funds and resources for infrastructure development, adequate health and education are crowded out by debt payment, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. Germany, long considered the cornerstone of euro zone fiscal discipline; the public debt in Germany stood at 80% in 2012. Whenever you look at public debt as a percentage of GDP in OECD countries, many financial analysts say that their debt as a percentage of GDP, which has reached 110%, is unsustainable. What does that mean? No money, potholes in the road! No money to attend to the old, the weak, the vulnerable and the handicapped, whereas here we have set up a Ministry specifically to address the concern of the poor, the weak and the vulnerable. And when we made our case before the working committee of the Universal Periodic Review, Mauritius again was looked up to as a success story. When we told them that we have, by way of legislation, introduced the Equal Opportunities Commission, that the concerns of those who have been dispossessed of their land unfairly are being addressed by the Truth and Justice Commission, they looked up to us in respect and with all the respect that we deserve, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. Then, life is not easy. It is a constant battle of wits and challenges. There are many challenges on the horizons.

My friend earlier was talking of economic diplomacy. If you want to learn the art of economic diplomacy, it is written in gold in the golden book of the Labour Party; the decision of the Father of the nation for Mauritius to be a member of the *Organisation de l'unité africaine*. The decision of the Father of the nation to opt for short term pain in respect of the lion share of sugar quota protocol which we obtained when we became a Member of the ACP, then Yaoundé Convention. The justifiable reason to leverage our cultural heritage with China, India, Pakistan, and other relevant countries like Mozambique. But, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, there are challenges. There are daunting challenges. 2014, we have to conclude a full EPA with the EU. What does it mean when you have a full EPA? When you conclude a full Economic Partnership Agreement, it means investment with a legal security. And Mauritius has become a service-oriented economy. 80% of our economy in a couple of years will be service-oriented. So, we want to attract investment. How can you talk of growth if there is no trade, if we don't facilitate trade, if we don't look at rules of origin, if we do not create the enabling environment to attract investment? Who are we but a small island with a high vulnerability index? And we have no choice but to be outward looking.

AGOA, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir; African Growth and Opportunity Act. President Obama, after his election, though Africa was not high on the agenda during the electoral campaign, travelled to Tanzania and stated in no uncertain terms, notwithstanding the politics of transparency and accountability, that there would be seamless extension of the AGOA, and that the Third-Country Fabric would run concurrently. What does it mean for the gentleman or the lady who works in the textile and garment factory? Why does it mean, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, for those who work in the tuna canning factory? It means export, market access, value addition, competitiveness, innovation, skilling and re-skilling of the people to stay ahead of the curve. But, the only factor that remains constant is re-engineering, adapt to changing circumstances. We, in Mauritius, are in a position that we can graduate when the time comes, and conclude a FTA with the United States of America. Of course, as a second step, before we conclude a FTA eventually, we are looking forward to conclude a bilateral investment treaty.

Again, American investors coming to Mauritius, using Mauritius as a springboard for onward investment to Africa and India, companies that can be domiciled in Mauritius. So, as far as AGOA is concerned, our entrepreneurs have been active and proactive. The CIEL Group has become a global company in anticipation of whether AGOA-type preferences will be extended to

LDC, to Bangladesh and Laos. They are now in India, next in Vietnam. They are going to Vietnam, and they have state-of-the-art technology enterprise in Bangladesh. The back office, the design and creative work is being done here, notwithstanding what Aquarelle is doing to go up market.

When I talk of EPA, my friend, the Minister of Fisheries, knows that we have obtained an additional quota for tuna in respect of derogation. So, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, has anybody given thought to what is going to happen post 2020, when there will be probably no Cotonou agreement?

Some time back, in respect of the European Development Fund, we obtained 10 m. Euros, which was credited as general budget support. Today, that has been reduced to 1 m. Euro. But we have created the fiscal space; we have widened our economy base; we are consolidating existing sectors; we are looking at emerging sectors, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. So, we have to put on our best endeavour, and this is what we have been doing since 2005, to ensure that we don't get caught in the middle income trap.

We need to make the leap, and to make the leap everybody should be on board. That's why we turn our gaze towards Africa. Africa which can become our hinterland like Jersey is to UK, or like Mauritius is to India; Mauritius the gateway, the star and key of the Indian Ocean. Wherever you look, Mauritius remains the springboard. The International Arbitration Centre; the representative from Hague will Chair the International Arbitration Centre. We are always ahead of the pack. The legal hybrid which we have, based on British Common Law and French *Code Civil*, which others do not have. So, when they are negotiating for onward investment to Africa or elsewhere, there is always a dispute clause in their contracts, where disputes can be settled.

So, we constantly need to re-skill our people. Africa, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, holds a lot of promises. In 2050, it will have a population of 1.8 billion, with a burgeoning middle class of almost 600 million, and a young, hopefully energetic and not restless population; the continent with the youngest population. And all the resources which are not found elsewhere are in virgin Africa.

Today, there are 70 Mauritian companies which have invested in Africa and in sectors where we have comparative advantage, renewable energy, sugar industry, which we have converted into sugarcane industry.

Our young people drive the car, park it in the car park at the airport, and take the plane to work on the African continent. Today, we have a Cooperation and Coherence Committee, which we have put in place to ensure that the symbiotic relationship between private and public sector gains better momentum.

We have identified Like-Minded Countries, and we have put in place an accelerated programme for economic integration. We have established a template to look at issues which are relevant to empower businessmen, and to ensure free mobility of people; the only country on the African continent, where you get visa on arrival or no visa entry.

This is the kind of Mauritius which we are building, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. A legacy which we intend to bequeath to our young, so that they are not restless. We are working with many countries to have mutual recognition of diploma, transnational diploma, and Mauritius has become a knowledge-based economy, notwithstanding a few hiccups. It is bound to happen, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. But look where we are, and where we are travelling to. My good friend, the Minister responsible for Tertiary Education - notwithstanding what is being done fundamentally at primary, pre-primary and secondary schools, where we are having a reality check to ensure that our people are prepared, that the level of preparedness makes them responsive to needs on the international scene - had a phone call from Rahul Gandhi.

Talking of IIT, the best in the world; and we are going to attract the very best. There are almost 2,500 foreign students studying in Mauritius, and more are coming. Two ministers, friends of mine, want their children to come and study in Mauritius. This is the premium that we have on the African continent, forged by the leadership of our Prime Minister. Africa, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the land of plenty.

Today, there is political dialogue. Africa is being peer reviewed. Today, we are talking of simplification of tax, transparency, trade facilitation. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the trade facilitation will happen when we travel to Bali in two weeks' time, where the ministerial meeting is going to be held, and we hope that there will be a mini package to ensure that there is trade facilitation, that financial and technical assistance is being given; prepare countries which are

willing to facilitate trade; that the concern of African countries - and we need to give them all the support; that the LDC countries have a common position on duty free, quota free, on rules of origin, that the poor farmers in India and the poor consumers have a bowl full of food, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

So, basic commodities should not be subject to unfair treatment, people have to walk on a full belly, not an empty bell. Some basic commodities, not meant for export, but meant for local consumption at an affordable price. That's why we want a peace clause to be introduced. So, we want this mini package, an outcome on trade facilitation, on the concern of LDC, on special and differential treatment, so that when we defend our case in respect of our trade in goods or service, there is special and differential treatment which make us become more competitive.

We have travelled a long way, but there are miles to go. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, what is it that we need to do, notwithstanding what we have done to ensure that we don't walk into the middle income trap, the social and economic transformation policy that we have put in place for the next ten years. We are living in a world where there is global outsourcing with value addition, and this is an era of Third Industrial Revolution, where, probably, in the years to come, energy will be digitised and transferred like phone calls which you make, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. This is the kind of world we are living in when investment has to flow in research and development, where the mindset has to change, because no one owes us a living.

Let me come to bilateral, Mr Speaker, Sir. At the level of bilateral, so many things are happening with France, China and with India on the issue of double taxation. Next week, there will be a meeting. I had several meetings with the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Salman Khurshid, on this issue. They have promised - and I hope they'll keep the promise - that we have to operate in a win-win situation. There is a need for certainty that, as a responsible Government, we have walked more than the extra mile. We have allowed them to post an officer from the Central Bureau of Direct Taxes at the High Commission of India. There is an officer from the Revenue Department working at the Bank of Mauritius.

We have been very perceptive, and we will use our leverage with India to turn our financial services into services of international repute. Only this morning, I was asked to be main speaker at a conference organised by the African Legal Network. And Mauritius is becoming the host for many regional headquarters: AFRINIC, Regional Multi-Disciplinary

Centre for Excellence, IMF Training Centre to train our friends from the region, to ensure that they put in place sound macroeconomic policies, trade, transparency and simplified taxation policies. This is the kind of Africa we want, the amount of foreign direct investment that is flowing into Africa; and Africa is becoming service-oriented, more service-oriented than India and China as matters stand. So, you can imagine the potential of Africa that has to be unleashed.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we don't sell dreams, but we make it happen for our people, and our people have to be responsive to our needs, because when events unfold on the international scene, they remind us - and it becomes a criterion call, an awakened call - that no one owes us a living and the days of free lunch is over. In our endeavour to innovate and to protect the services sector, we are coming with a comprehensive legislation on intellectual property rights.

My Ministry is working on a new Intellectual Property Policy that is aimed at mainstreaming intellectual property into our economic and social development, and to promote innovation and creativity.

We have a pool of young talents; we have to re-energise their mind, and we have to create the space for them to operate, because Mauritians like to work in the services sector. We are proud of our young and because they are our best asset, and precisely for them, and for those artists who do us proud, we are modernising IP laws and adopting a more unified approach by bringing our laws on trademark, patents, geographical indication, industrial design and other industrial property laws under one single umbrella. The main benefit of the intellectual property rights policy will be to encourage creativity, support business and to having economic growth and innovation, and I can go on and on, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. But we constantly need to create the living environment to attract foreign investors, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

Let me talk on an issue which is also very relevant to Small Island Developing States. Today, we are talking of existential threats to Small Island Developing States. My good friend, the Minister of Environment, knows better. He is due to attend a conference which will be held in September, in Apia, Samoa.

(Interruptions)

As the hon. Minister of Fisheries is saying, you know what was the main attraction of Maldives - they branded Maldives as an Island which was going to sink; so come and see them before they

go down under. We are talking of the existential threats of small countries. I met the Prime Minister of Tuvalu - we got on very well - and they are worried. But then, we thought that there would be an outcome in Poland on the United Nations Framework Convention for Climate Change, that it would become a legally binding instrument, but many developed countries chose to stay away and undermine the process, with the consequence that capitalisation of the Climate Fund or the alleged Fast Track Fund or operationalisation of the Fund becomes very, very difficult. So, we took the decision to set up a cell which is going to be hosted in Mauritius.

The former President of Guyana, Mr Jagdeo, was asked to prepare a report on ways and means to set up a financial climate hub; spark, they call it. They have established a template as how best to unlock those resources and not having to go through undue process. This cell is going to be hosted in Mauritius. We have conceptualised the idea; now it is becoming a reality.

The President of Tuvalu can pick the phone and ask for resources to be disbursed, and they have to be responsive because of existential threat. When I talk of Small Island Developing States or heavily indebted poor countries, there is the problem of debt, of course, that has to be addressed. The issue was taken up by the Prime Minister of Saint Kitts and Nevis. Proposals were made to the IMF, Mrs Lagarde, and they came up with the idea that there is a need to have, what they call, countercyclical loans. If tomorrow we are hit by a disaster - and we pray that we are going to be spared from any major disaster - we will have to displace more than 65,000 persons, and the cost can be extremely high. It is a phenomenal cost, anyway.

So, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the existential threat is real. But you have to unlock the resources to make sure that the Climate Fund becomes operational. We have to recapitalise the Climate Fund. This is the message that we conveyed to members of the G20, so that they take up the case of Small Island Developing States, and put across our case very forcefully...

(Interruptions)

... because they are the culprits, as my good friend is saying. We account for less than 2% of depletion of ozone, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

(Interruptions)

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, all these issues were raised and discussed very forcefully. Mauritius, as I told you, is becoming headquarters of many regional organisations, and we are

going to set up a virtual university for oceanography. We have already conceptualised the idea, and Mauritius will host it. That decision was taken in Perth at the last Indian Ocean RIM Association Meeting. We are going, of course, to partner with countries which have the resources. I mentioned Sri Lanka, which is a Centre of Excellence for oceanography, and I do not know what the hon. Leader of the Opposition heard! I do not know what! And then, when he put a PNQ to the Prime Minister, he said that we have talked of Sri Lanka as a Centre of Excellence for human rights!

(Interruptions)

They have to lend their ears properly! They are spent force, devoid of ideas. We are innovative, creative, and we are on a winning streak, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. The people know very well that, in spite of undue hardship, this country has not suffered what I would call the pig syndrome; the syndrome that Portugal, Italy, Spain and Greece are constantly suffering from. I have told you earlier, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the likelihood of deflationary trend in those countries has become real. If US slow down quantitative easing or monetary easing, the consequences can be very drastic. We have seen what has happened to the Indian rupee.

So, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we no longer live on an island, we have become ocean citizens of an ocean State, and we are mighty proud to be citizens of an ocean State! This sector has become the sector of today and tomorrow. We make it a point to canvass our case very forcefully in all regional and international fora. Today, ocean economy hails prominently on their agenda. Next year, there will be a conference organised by World Bank. We are preparing our roadmap as an outcome of the National Dialogue on Ocean Economy which we held. Together with Seychelles, of course, we have obtained an extended continental shelf, and we have made history before the United Nations Convention of the Limits on Extended Continental Shelf.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we are resolute and bold, and determined to take decisions, however painful they may be initially, to be responsive to the needs of our people, to empower our people, to ensure the level of preparedness – prepare them to be responsive not only to domestic needs, but to regional and international needs. There is an ageing population in Europe, and when the crisis would be behind us, in respect of agreements which we have entered with France and other countries, Mauritians can take up jobs not only locally, on the African

Continent, but anywhere in Europe, in Canada and elsewhere. I pray that on Sunday our friends from United Emirates will be chosen as the country to host Expo 2020. Do you know what it means? I just came from the Afro-Arab Summit, where Kuwait has disbursed USD 2 billion to address problems of food security and for investment on the African Continent. Do you know what it means when the United Arab Emirates will host Expo 2020? Three hundred thousand new jobs will be created! And they have appealed to Mauritius - my friend knows very well - to supply them with the skilled labour!

Forward we move, forward with the Labour Party and its ally, under the able leadership of the hon. Prime Minister. We are creating history, and we are creating a Mauritius incorporated for generations of today and tomorrow, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

Thank you.

(10.38 p.m.)

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

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have had the pleasure, I must admit, of listening to a lot of our friends from the Opposition and on Government side. There is one thing that strikes me, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, and I will tell you what that is. It is a question that haunts me because I am convinced that we are at crossroads, and the crossroads we find ourselves at will be decisive as to what direction our country takes, whether we are to continue succeeding or not. We are also not only at economic crossroads but also at political crossroads.

I have the impression, and I am obliged to make reference to this, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this bad habit that the Opposition has, each and every time, whenever they feel that their ego is hurt, whenever they feel that something for them that is so important, their image is hurt, whenever they feel that what is more important for them is not national interest, but their own personal interest is hurt, they find nothing else so easy to adapt and embrace than the easy choice of choosing the flight, because this is precisely what the Opposition has done today, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. They have chosen not the courageous move, they have not chosen to stand their ground and speak what they believe in. They have chosen the easy way out, to go home instead of being in this august Assembly trying to participate in what we believe is important for our democracy. What is the purpose of this debate? It is not an exercise of a pre-written document that one shall read. It is only an exercise of exchange of ideas, a confrontation of ideas, a

confrontation of beliefs, and the purpose of such a confrontation in a democracy is for the advancement of our country, for us to move forward. It is not a question of one's ego. It is not a question of anyone's ego.

So, that is why, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I realise that now we are at crossroads. Let us all imagine what historians in 200 years or more will talk about our *époque*, what will historians or students at universities and research centres in those 200 years from now - a century from now, when we will not be around here, we will no longer be walking this earth - say when they think about Mauritius 2013. Actually, I am convinced that there will be part of a dialogue in 200 years from now. We have the laptops. I guess it will be another technology altogether in those days. They will go through the equipment available to them and will start saying: well, we are sure - because they would not have lived this *époque* - that, at some stage in the history of Mauritius, something went wrong in certain people's mind, and they really needed the treatment of a medical doctor, the assistance of a psychiatrist.

They will, then, look at the people who walked this earth, this country that is Mauritius, and they will, with certainty, say that there was something wrong in this country. And what was wrong in this country? Because I have heard Members of the Opposition talked about the moral high ground. It is open to them to talk about the moral high ground. Yes, they are entitled to talk about the moral high ground, but then again, when one talks about the moral high ground, one must be able to substantiate what moral high ground supposedly they think they are at.

They talked about leadership, and said that we have a leadership in Mauritius that is not a strong leadership. They criticised the hon. Prime Minister of this country, Dr. Navinchandra Ramgoolam. What, in return, do they propose? And this is *où le bât blesse*. That is where I am scared for my country. I am scared for this country. What are we dealing with? Are we dealing with people who have something that is called reasoning, or are we dealing with people who are simply concerned about creating a scandal out of nothing? Are we dealing with people who really make a living every morning when they wake up, or even during their sleep they dream of only one thing? How to turn everything white; how to turn it black; how to blacken one's reputation; how to invent issues about people; how to make people of this country be afraid and live in constant fear, because this would help their political career! That is the Opposition of the MSM and the MMM.

One day, 200 years from now, historians would come across an interview in *l'Express* of 02 April 2010, of Sir Anerood Jugnauth. They will come across that interview in *l'Express* written by Alain Gordon-Gentil. They will come across that interview, and what they will see in 2010 was what Sir Anerood Jugnauth was saying, and I quote him -

“Quand je look back (...).”

And I can assure you he is not talking about him in any way peeping into anyone else's backyard. He is talking about ‘*quand je look back*’. He means looking back.

« (...) je me rends compte que personne n'avait cette sincérité que j'avais moi. »

Who does he mean? He means, when he looks back in history, he is attacking the Leader of the Opposition, hon. Paul Raymond Bérenger, saying that this man *n'avait pas cette sincérité que j'avais moi*.

« On se servait de moi. »

They used me.

« C'est pour ça que les frictions sont nées très vite quand nous sommes arrivés au pouvoir en 1982. »

And he goes on to say - that very same Sir Anerood Jugnauth, in the interview -

“Quand je regarde en arrière (...).»

He says it in French this time.

« Maintenant, je dirai, excusez-moi je vais être bien franc là-dessus, ma conclusion aujourd'hui c'est que très probablement Bérenger avait un hidden agenda, et il se servait de moi. »

It's the second time he says it. And then, we don't finish there. They asked him in that interview: if ever you have to choose your route again, the road, your career again -

« Si vous aviez à refaire votre route, quel est le chemin que vous n'emprunteriez pas ? »

And he says, here, very, very direct -

« En politique, je crois que je choisirai, si c'était à refaire, de ne pas entrer dans le MMM. Vous savez, j'ai dit à Pravind (...) »

And here, he means his son who sits here very often, and because of some very strange reason that has nothing to do with national interest, he decided to choose the easy way out and fly away from this august Assembly, and he is not here today. This very same person, the fatherly advice that he got from Sir Anerood Jugnauth is written black and white on *l'Express* paper, and he says here -

« Il vaut mieux être dans caro cannes que d'aller travailler avec le MMM et Bérenger. »

He says to his son it's better to be in the middle of a sugarcane field, 'dans caro cannes'. Disaster is better to embrace than to go with the MMM and to go working with Bérenger. They talk about high moral ground. Imagine what historians would say one day. How is it that this man talks about what he said in 2010? And in that very same interview, they told him: how is it that in year 2000 he went into an alliance with him?

« Et en 2000, vous vous retrouvez avec lui, et vous avez gouverné ensemble. »

How is it?

« Comment faire comprendre ces choses à un homme normal? »

And he says –

« C'était purement tactique. En 1991, Bérenger voulait contracter une alliance avec Boolell, Uteem, de l'Estrac, et Nababsing n'en voulait pas. J'ai envoyé Satcam en mission à l'étranger, et pendant qu'il n'était pas là, j'ai signé un accord avec le MMM. »

This is what he said. This is tactical and he goes on to say, in this very same interview, *que même en 2000*, it was tactical on his part to accept to go for an alliance with Paul Raymond Bérenger.

If this is what he said in those days, in 2010, less than two years later on, he talks about something else altogether. *Un revirement de situation qui nous démontre, M. le président, qu'on a affaire avec quelqu'un de spécial, qu'on a affaire avec quelqu'un, pour moi, qui a je ne sais quoi. Mais ce n'est sûrement pas quelqu'un en qui on peut faire confiance. Ce n'est sûrement pas quelqu'un en qui le peuple peut faire confiance. J'ai l'impression - et je suis vraiment*

sincère dans ce que je vais avancer aujourd'hui, M le président - que Sir Anerood Jugnauth a la capacité incroyable de subjuguier Monsieur Paul Raymond Bérenger, l'honorable membre, leader de l'opposition. Je suis convaincu que Sir Anerood Jugnauth a une capacité, une maîtrise dans l'art d'hypnotiser quelqu'un, en particulier l'honorable leader de l'opposition, et il arrive à tomber dans le panneau à chaque fois que Sir Anerood Jugnauth se pointe avec l'idée d'inventer quelque chose d'autre. Moi, quand je vous dis, M. le président, qu'on parle de la moralité, que soi-disant on a un leadership qui n'est pas fort, qui ne vaut pas la peine d'être respecté, permettez-moi alors to refer to an article in another newspaper, 'The Telegraph', Calcutta, India. The date is 08 August 2003.

If they talk about moral ground and they want to talk about the next Prime Minister of this country being Sir Anerood Jugnauth, let us talk about something very important. An article in the Indian press 'The Telegraph' that talks about Indian Hotels Company, a firm that owns and manages the Taj chain of hotels, signing a franchise agreement with Mauriplage Beach Resorts Mauritius for an initial term of ten years. Mauriplage! And what is this agreement? It is an agreement between a company in Mauritius, the running of hotel, and another company in India, Taj. A private company! This is a private agreement. The same Mauriplage, in the same article, whose Chairman was Kailash Ramdanee, signed the agreement.

What is really shocking? The hon. Prime Minister of Mauritius then, Sir Anerood Jugnauth, and Ratan Tata, the Chairman of the Tata Group of Companies, and Mr Krishna Kumar, vice-Chairman of Indian Hotels, were also present. My question is as follows: you talk about the moral ground, you take the easy way out, you choose to run away. I wish, and my dream was that they were here today. My wish and dream was that hon. Pravind Jugnauth could have been here today. He should not have chosen the easy way out to run. He should have faced me when I am putting it to him! How is it, therefore, that when Mauriplage, owned by the father-in-law of hon. Pravind Jugnauth, whose father was Prime Minister in those days, at the same time that plot of land over 60 acres, *pieds dans l'eau*, belonging to the State of Mauritius, was given to that same family by a Cabinet decision chaired by the then Prime Minister, hon. Sir Anerood Jugnauth? Did he declare his interest then? What about his interest? Did he declare it? But then, again, maybe, it is that there are certain things that run in the family. There are certain things that run in the family. *Peut être il y a une ressemblance de famille ici ou une coïncidence familiale!* I will say that most probably it runs in the DNA that people don't declare their

interests. But what is shocking here? How is it that this hotel, now run by the Jugnauth family, Ramdane family, was given to those people when the Prime Minister was Sir Anerood Jugnauth? He chaired over that committee. He chaired over it.

Later on, they are going to have a press conference and say “Hon. Mohamed, the Minister talks about that.” Most probably they will say that hon. Choonee was Minister. Yes, he was Minister! How do you think I know that it was hon. Jugnauth who chaired the Cabinet meeting? How do you think I know that it was under his chairmanship that this was approved? How do you think I know that he was at the signature of the agreement? Because you cannot run away from the truth. They talked about the moral high ground. Moral high ground! I listened to hon. Bodha. Before I get to hon. Bodha, let me talk about the moral high ground again. I heard hon. Uteem when he was talking, praising this new alliance of theirs, the remake. He praised the new alliance. But that very same hon. Uteem - and here I am reading another article dated 25 April 2010. In there, Paul Bérenger, the hon. Leader of the Opposition states –

« Pravind Jugnauth doit des excuses à la famille Uteem »

They talked about the high moral ground! In that article, it is clearly stated - this one is ‘Le Matinal’ of 25 April 2010. Here, hon. Bérenger attacks hon. Jugnauth. He says –

« Ce même Pravind Jugnauth a eu le culot de dire que Reza Uteem est un fils à papa et il a ajouté que, moi, Paul Bérenger, je sais quelque chose que Cassam Uteem ne sait pas », a-t-il déclaré. « Ou pena droit pou insulté ène famille. »

And he is right! The hon. Leader of the Opposition is totally right when he says this. You have no right to insult the member of anyone’s family. So, what hon. Pravind Jugnauth did when he insulted the Uteem family, the head of the Uteem family, Cassam Uteem, former President of Republic, when he insulted a woman in the mother of hon. Reza Uteem? Hon. Paul Bérenger was totally right in drawing the attention of the public at large and the press that this is not acceptable. We are in 2013; we are in the 21st century. We can’t have people going about like that. But then, when hon. Lormus Bundhoo said exactly that two days ago to the House, hon. Uteem says “hon. Bundhoo, I am not like you. That’s the difference between me and you.” What does he mean? He means; insult my mother, insult my father, I have no problem with it because what is more important is my political position. Is one ready to give away what is called self-respect and dignity? One can’t even stand up and defend the interest and dignity and respect

that one owes to the woman who brought you to this world! To a father that fathered you! But one chooses what? Political position! One chooses what? The front bench! One chooses what? Photo opportunities with the very same person that insulted your lineage! Then, again, I say if this is the difference between this side and that side, thank God Almighty that there is a huge difference between us and them, because I would not have sat down and accepted it. I must say it here solemnly that if anyone says that about my father or my mother, I would have violated the law and accepted to pay a fine in a criminal court. I would have not! Because believe me, this is something which is the very essence of manhood, it is dignity and honour. They talked about moral ground again, and I have not finished with them.

The hon. Member talked about moral ground. The hon. Member talked about how important it is; they are so clean, they are so white, they are snow white. One has forgotten. I am happy to see here that hon. Cehl Meeah has come, and I must say it aloud that he is totally right when he said during his intervention; and we should not make that mistake, we should not confuse him with them. There is a big difference.

(Interruptions)

The hon. Member has come here today because he is a responsible Member of the Opposition. What I want to say here is: let's not forget what hon. Cassam Uteem, as he was then, Member of Parliament, said. What did he say when hon. Prime Minister Anerood Jugnauth pulled away the Muslim Personal Law? What happened then? The Muslim Personal Law was something which was given to the Muslim community of this country by Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam and Sir Abdool Razack Mohamed. This is fact, this is history, that is truth! It was given not only to the Muslim community, but religious marriage was also recognised for the Indo-Mauritian community; not only Muslims, but Hindus as well. It was recognised; a religious marriage. This was in the law.

Sir Anerood Jugnauth came up one day, in 1987, and decided by a stroke of a pen to eliminate it. What did we have in Plaine verte? Huge meetings, thousands and thousands of people gathering, and they said 'we will not accept this.' And who was in the crowd condemning Sir Anerood Jugnauth, the Prime Minister, for his act? Who was in the crowd? Mr Cassam Uteem! And he said, in *journal Star* in 1987, and I read -

« *Monsieur Anerood Jugnauth a seul décidé que la Muslim Personal Law ne va pas s'appliquer aux mariages musulmans, et sa majorité automatique à l'Assemblée législative.* »

Here he talked about it. Here, he goes on to say about Sir Anerood Jugnauth 'a little learning is a dangerous thing.' Very simple what he says. He says a little learning on the part of Sir Anerood Jugnauth is a dangerous thing, because what Sir Anerood Jugnauth did then created a serious problem. « *Quand cela vient d'un Premier ministre, avocat de surcroît, c'est à désespérer.* » What Mr Cassam Uteem was saying about Sir Anerood Jugnauth then was that he was someone who was undoubtedly a dire case that one should not even bother about.

« *Désespérer !* » This is how he described him.

And what did hon. Soodhun say in those days? Let us try to remember.

« *Je me suis sacrifié. J'ai fait un très grand sacrifice en votant cette loi. Je me suis sacrifié. J'assume mes responsabilités. Je regarde au-delà de l'horizon. Un jour, mes coreligionnaires comprendront le pourquoi de mon action. L'avenir leur dira si j'ai tort ou raison.* »

It goes on.

« *L'honorable Soodhun assure que le Premier ministre Jugnauth portera une oreille attentive aux problèmes des Musulmans. Il souhaite qu'on n'exacerbe pas les passions, et qu'on ne fasse pas preuve d'irréflexion.* »

That is history.

They talk about the moral ground! Mr Cassam Uteem says that he was someone who was "à désespérer"; a case that is not worth it. Today, this man, hon. Uteem, as I said just now - and I repeat it - put aside his duty to defend the honour of his family because his duty dictates 'I cannot sit next to a man, in an alliance, who has said what he has said against members of my family. Alliance or not, I leave politics. I am not interested. This is the type of man I am.' There is something else, which is important in this article that I have just quoted. This is Mr Cassam Uteem saying that, and the reason why he could speak like that is because they were eminent of the real *Comité d'Action Musulman*; member that he was. He was not an MMM member talking then. Let us not forget that he started his career at the CAM.

I still remember the days when Mr Reza Uteem, - he was not honourable then - in a mosque, was telling me that we all belong to the same family of the *Comité d'Action Musulman*, and that, in our veins, runs the DNA of the CAM. But then, again, let me say that I do not change my mind and my views as easily as he does. For me, dignity and family honour are more important. And yes, he is right! Not about him, but about me. In my veins, still run the blood of *Comité d'Action Musulman*. That's fact, and the CAM has always been an ally of the *Parti travailliste*, the Labour Party, and those are the two parties that have brought this country to independence; and I have not and will not be a traitor to my country like certain people of the MMM have been to this country! Never will I accept to be a traitor!

That is why, today, I say it openly. What problem did Sir Anerood Jugnauth cause? Do you know what problem he caused? Because of this amendment brought to the Civil Status Act in 1987, widows married under the Muslim Personal Law between 1987 and 1990 are not, until today, getting a widow's pension. So, what is important to realise is that everyone married under the Civil Status Act between 1987 and 1990, be it a Muslim, be it a Hindu, a religious marriage, are now widows, and are not entitled to a widow's pension. But, if you are religiously married after 1990 and before 1987, you are entitled to a widow's pension.

So, because of Sir Anerood Jugnauth's amendment that was pure folly, because of Sir Anerood Jugnauth's *acte irréfléchi qui a fait du tort au tissu social*, - that is a very fragile *tissu social* of this country that one has to know how to uphold and keep safe - because he has done that, you have two classes of citizens, where widows married - I say it again - religiously - not only Muslim but Hindus as well - between 1987 and 1990 are not entitled to the widows' pension.

The Prime Minister, hon. Dr. Navin Ramgoolam, has agreed to create a Ministerial Committee, and I would like to applaud him for that, whereby this is going to be sorted out once and for all under the Chairmanship of my good friend, hon. Mrs Bappoo, together with me and hon. Duval, and we will try to bring a conclusion to this really sad story and sad episode of our history.

In those days, because of the problem, the present Speaker, who was Attorney General in 1986, actually was asked to give an opinion about whether payment should be made or not. Now, we cannot continue in a country where we have two classes of citizens.

Now, I am going to come to hon. Bodha. Hon. Bodha talked about people we should follow and admire. He talked about Mrs Aung San Suu Kyi of Myanmar. He said that Mrs Aung San Suu Kyi is someone that we should take example from. Yes! By all means! Mrs Aung San Suu Kyi is a Nobel Prize winner for peace. Yes! But isn't it the same Mrs Aung San Suu Kyi that has chosen to keep quiet and silent about the devastation and genocide that is being inflicted upon minorities of Myanmar? Isn't it the same Mrs Aung San Suu Kyi that has decided to shut her eyes to the obvious; that there is a genocide going on? I have newspaper reports here that talk about Mrs Aung San Suu Kyi's silence to the genocide. Isn't it true that you have monks in Burma who are fundamentalists? You have monks in Burma who are God loving people that pray and are peaceful, but you also have nationalists, fundamentalists, and you have a history ever since colonial days in then Burma, now Myanmar. You have, since in history, an anti-Indian, anti-Muslim movement in Burma; ever since those days.

Today, as we are speaking, more than 20,000 Muslims have been killed in Myanmar, and this is a genocide that no one talks about. This is a genocide that the MSM will never be aware of. How can it be they would be aware of? How can they really care about genocide against a population like in Myanmar? Because they have shown in history that they are only concerned about abolishing an acquired right for that very same Muslim community! So, they talked about the high moral ground. Is it befitting the Secretary-General of the MSM? The Secretary-General of the MSM is raising Aung San Suu Kyi to heights, when that same Aung San Suu Kyi is being condemned by human rights organisations for her silence because of the massacre genocide of thousands and thousands of people, minorities, but mainly Muslims of Myanmar, and this is what my call is today.

I have heard the hon. Minister of Foreign Affairs talk with such passion about our rightful place on the international scene. I have heard the Prime Minister say recently that we do not have our foreign policy dictated by any other State; we are a sovereign, independent State. I have seen our hon. Prime Minister take a courageous decision with regard to Sri Lanka. I have seen the hon. Minister of Foreign Affairs hold high the flag Mauritius and the real moral standpoint in Sri Lanka when it comes to the respect of fundamental human rights.

The Palestinians saga; those minority people suffering in Myanmar, the Palestinians of Asia who have no State, who have no right to vote, who have no passport, who have no right to

exist, who are not allowed to even have more than two children, those are the Palestinians of Asia, and I call upon our Government to, once again, in the international fora, wherever we have the opportunity to take the high moral ground that we are entitled to take because we believe in it, and we are champions of that high moral ground. We should make our voice heard to give a voice to those people who are suffering. Do they understand? Does the MSM understand what exactly are human rights?

(Interruptions)

I am sad today that we don't have hon. Obeegadoo talking, because I would have liked him to explain one thing. He also likes to take the high moral ground; in his excellent French and excellent English, because I think he is a formidable orator. I think that he is someone who really makes good speeches, and I have respect for him. As far as form is concerned, I bow to him, but as far as content is concerned, I am totally discontent, and I must admit that. And why?

(Interruptions)

I am not concerned. Don't talk about that for now! Let me talk about only one thing, the high moral ground. Let us go back to hundred years from now? What will historians say? That, in 1996, he talked about Sir Anerood Jugnauth whom he wants to make Prime Minister, he talked about about *Empereur Soleil*, he talked about 'il y a des malaises sous la gestion de Sir Anerood Jugnauth', he talked about 'chaque communauté, chaque groupe à l'intérieur d'une communauté se découvrait quotidiennement un nouveau malaise'. Those are serious accusations against the then Prime Minister. Made by whom? Hon. Obeegadoo! Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, can anyone of the press ask hon. Obeegadoo – *in absentia*, he is shining by his absence. The silence that I hear right now; *cela fend, son absence*, in fact. Where is he? Has he gone home? I guess so! But then, again, a member of the press must ask him: 'tell us, Sir, tell us, hon. Member of Parliament, how is it that in 1996 you said, as an hon. Member of Parliament, that Sir Anerood Jugnauth was referred to as *Empereur Soleil*, that he was causing *des malaises* in all communities'?

And he goes on to say -

« *Je demeure convaincu(...)* »

Here he talks about hon. Prime Minister, Dr. Navin Ramgoolam, in 1996.

« (...) M. le président, qu'avec un Premier ministre farouchement anti-communaliste, et les faits l'ont prouvé (...) »

He does not talk at the top of his hat, but he says “*les faits l'ont prouvé*”.

« (...) et un vice-Premier ministre dont toute la carrière politique a été axée sur le combat contre le communalisme sous toutes les formes(...) »

So, he talks about the new team, the team that shows the future. Hon. Prime Minister, Dr. Ramgoolam, hon. Bérenger, and today, he talks about a new team, hon. Bérenger and hon. Jugnauth, once upon a time called *Empereur Soleil*. Which is which? I would like such questions to be put to him. I would like questions to be put to hon. Bodha; I would like him to answer and tell us.

Hon. Bodha, in 2010, when he was making his speech in this august Assembly - and I am here reading from Hansard, Debate No. 17 of 2010 - says -

“You will agree with me, Mr Speaker, Sir, when we see the history of the MMM, there is only one mandate which the MMM has been able to fulfil; that was between 2000-2005, and we all know why we stood five years (...)”

In other words, it seems to the MSM that the MMM has been in power for five years. *En d'autres mots, d'après l'honorable Bodha, sans le MSM, le MMM n'aurait jamais pu tenir cinq ans dans un gouvernement, parce que d'après le discours officiel de l'honorable Bodha en 2010, le MMM est un parti instable.*

C'est ce qu'il dit en 2010. Et il va plus loin. Il dit –

“Sir, it is on this side of the House ... »

Et là, M. le président, il se réfère à ce côté de la Chambre, qui est dirigé par l'honorable Premier ministre, le Dr. Navin Ramgoolam. Et il dit que de ce côté de la Chambre, vous avez un leadership de choix to take the right decisions. Today, he was saying: “I did not even get an appointment. Decisions are not taken”. Here he said, when he was together with us, a few months back, the Prime Minister is excellent, it is a leadership of choice, decisions could be taken, and it was the Prime Minister who could take the right decisions. Which is which? I would like hon. Members to reflect on this.

What examples are we giving the children and the youngsters out there in the public? One day, history lessons will be taught in schools, one day history teachers will come across such speeches. Children will come across such speeches, and they will say: “Mother, father, were we once upon a time populated by mad men?” And then, what difficulty will parents have! And that is not a laughing matter, because we heard the hon. Minister of Foreign Affairs talking about the opportunities in front of us. But, hon. friends, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, is this how we are going to embrace these opportunities? We have a Budget Speech, we are supposed to have a debate, we are supposed to confront ideas, but we are dealing with certain people who are full of folly, who have a serious problem of changing their stand, depending what data and what situation they are in, and what geographical location they are located in. Is this the way we are going to move forward in 2013? Is this the recipe for 2014 and 2015? I feel afraid for my country when I read another piece of Hansard from someone who - most probably, hon. Jhugroo - when he makes his speeches, he even reads the jokes.

We have all been here, and I am only saying facts. Not only does he read his speech, but even when he comes to the joke, I thought he would also add lip and talk about the joke! No! He has to read his joke! That is how we have to deal with now! Hon. Jhugroo, that very same person, criticised the Leader of the Opposition in 2010! What did he say - in French? And he did not say it, he read it; he could not say it without reading! He said -

« M. le président, on reconnaît que le Premier ministre Ramgoolam est non seulement un rassembleur mais aussi quelqu'un qui est à l'écoute de toutes les bonnes suggestions. »

Today, he says something altogether different. I would like members of the press and people outside who will have an opportunity to hear this part of my intervention, to ask him a simple question; not only hon. Obeegadoo, not only hon. Jugnauth, not only hon. Bodha, but hon. Jhugroo as well. Give him time to write down his answer, because otherwise he will not be able to give it. Let him read his answer, but the question is important: “Tell us, were you telling the truth in 2010, or are you telling the truth in 2013? Which is which?” There cannot be two truths. There is only one truth. You cannot hide behind all sorts of excuses.

But I can go on. Hon. Jugnauth, what did he say? He even insulted the memory of the Leader of the Opposition. Let us not forget! All of us here today and members of the press, all

of us will remember, where hon. Bachoo is sitting down, that was the seat of hon. Jugnauth. From that seat, he used to look at the hon. Leader of the Opposition, and he used to call him: “Oh, Johnnie...”

(Interruptions)

“Johnnie! Johnnie, keep walking!” What did he use to refer to? He used to, in unparliamentary words, talk about the fact that, supposedly - I say supposedly - the hon. Leader of the Opposition likes a drink called Johnnie Walker! A fan of Johnnie; keep walking! And today, no problem! Now, there is no problem about Johnnie! Johnnie goes home, or Johnnie keeps on walking is not a problem!

(Interruptions)

So, what about hon. Jhugroo? Let us talk about him again! Let us not forget how he used to say “Mr Speaker, Mr Speaker, help me! Help me, because hon. Barbier has called me *vendère sirop!*”

(Interruptions)

That is also in Hansard! Ask him! Ask hon. Barbier! Once upon a time the hon. Member called him *vendère sirop!* Today it is fine?

(Interruptions)

Today is it fine! What type of people are we dealing with? That is what I would like to know!

Finally, I even read an article, and I saw that on the Net only yesterday. It is called Sandrine Gasq Blog - members of the press most probably would know that - and it is dated 16 November 2013. It says here “*Quand les politiciens montrent leur vrai visage.*” It, once again, talks about how they insulted Reza Uteem. It talks about how Reza Uteem, and how the people in Constituency No. 2 talked about disconnecting the head of the Deputy Prime Minister with his body, having it split, and going for a sacrifice during the elections. We will not forget that!

Why I am sad today is because Members of the Opposition are not here; the young hon. Members who are not aware about the truth of things, history. Who can forget? We are talking about the moral ground. Can we forget about a Prime Minister, Anerood Jugnauth, who used

taxpayers' money to give a gift to Lady Jugnauth, by having a Rs20 note with the effigy of his wife on it?

Peut-être que les jeunes de l'île Maurice ne sont pas au courant. Il est nécessaire alors, M. le président, de faire mention de cela, parce que cela a été un des moments noirs de notre histoire où le Premier ministre, Anerood Jugnauth, à l'époque, a eu le toupet, l'idée vraiment scandaleuse de se servir de son pouvoir de Premier ministre et de l'argent des contribuables, après instructions clairement données à la Banque de Maurice, pour faire imprimer des billets de banque de R 20 avec l'effigie de sa tendre épouse, Madame Sarojini Jugnauth ! M. le président, malheureusement le *leader* de l'opposition n'est pas là, et c'est là où je suis triste pour lui, parce que même à cette époque quand le *leader* de l'opposition avait soulevé cette affaire à l'Assemblée nationale, le gouvernement d'alors a essayé, par maints moyens, de cacher la vérité.

Mais ils avaient oublié qu'on avait quelqu'un dans nos rangs à l'époque qui était un téméraire ; l'honorable Dr. Bunwaree. L'honorable Dr. Bunwaree a eu le toupet, le courage et le bon sens d'aller aussi loin que de demander à l'époque au gouvernement de répondre à une question fort importante. La question était quoi? C'était –

“Is not it true, therefore, that this Rs20 note will bear the effigy of the wife of the Prime Minister?”

Immédiatement après la question de l'honorable Dr. Bunwaree, le *leader* de l'opposition maintenant, mais à l'époque il était le ministre des Affaires étrangères, *jumped from his seat and said “Shame!”* L'honorable Bérenger alors disait « *Shame on you !* Comment tu peux avoir le toupet, l'insolence de débiter des mensonges pareils, honorable Bunwaree ? » Et tout le monde quand l'honorable Bérenger a dit « *Shame !* » a cru que l'honorable Bérenger disait la vérité. It was the Messiah talking, and whenever he says something it must be the truth!

But what I have realised, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as I said at the beginning of my intervention, is that hon. Bérenger is easily taken for a ride! Each and every time he is taken for a ride, he is taken for an interesting ride by one and the same person, Sir Anerood Jugnauth, because in Parliament the truth was hidden. Hon. Dr. Bunwaree was attacked, hon. Jugnauth kept quiet, and “*Week-End*” newspaper later on came up with the article to say that the hon. Leader of the Opposition, Dr. Ramgoolam, was totally true; and everyone was shocked and

surprised to see that this *billet de R 20* was, in fact, ordered under the Primeministership of Sir Anerood Jugnauth! And yes, he did come later on and apologised for his blunder!

But can we have confidence in someone who has such poor judgment? Can we have confidence en quelqu'un qui ne sait même pas se contrôler et se servir de l'argent des contribuables pour faire un cadeau d'anniversaire à son épouse ? How can we have confidence in that? Mais les jeunes dehors ne sont pas au courant de ces épisodes noirs qu'a connus l'île Maurice. Les jeunes dehors n'ont pas vécu ces moments-là, et il est important, parce qu'ici j'ai peur pour mon pays ! J'ai peur pour mon pays parce qu'il y a certains qui croient qu'ils peuvent devenir Premier ministre encore une fois. A l'époque, c'était R 20, mais cette fois-ci on va voir quoi avec Lady Jugnauth ? Un billet de quoi ? Allons inventer un autre billet ; R 5000 cette fois-ci ! Mais ce n'est pas possible !

Et puis on parle de football, soi-disant que Sir Anerood Jugnauth est un connaisseur ! I read an article that he did – the hon. Member referred to it, and now I am going to refer to it. They tried to *noyer le poisson* and hide the truth.

(Interruptions)

My point is very simple: in a book written by Jean-Claude Antoine '*Droit au but*', this is it!

(Interruptions)

I am going to go *droit au but*. The photograph here of Sir Anerood Jugnauth with his beret and his scarf, and a simple question was put to him, a very simple question, and there he says clearly. They asked him "what do you think of our football nowadays? C'est exactement le point de vue de Mamade Elahee. Si vous avez la possibilité de revenir en arrière et avec votre expérience d'aujourd'hui, est-ce que vous aurez traité le dossier de la décommunalisation de la même manière?"

Before that, they put a question to him -

« *Beaucoup disent que la décommunalisation du football décidée alors que vous étiez Premier ministre, a été en quelque sorte le début de son déclin.* »

Regionalisation did not start under a Government led by Sir Anerood Jugnauth. Regionalisation started under a Government led by hon. Dr. Ramgoolam, Prime Minister, and the Minister then was hon. Arouff-Parfait. Let's set records right. In those days, they believed

in it because they thought it was the right thing to do - regionalisation. It is only someone who is very dumb, it is someone who is not intelligent at all, who does not change after many years of seeing that something does not work. Here, he says -

« C'est malheureux, mais nous étions arrivés à une situation où il fallait faire quelque chose. 'Fan', il faut le rappeler, vient du terme fanatique. Ils faisaient parfois n'importe quoi dans les stades. La situation était devenue grave, malsaine. Certains matchs finissaient dans un climat de violence. Il y avait même des troubles parfois. Le gouvernement essayait de régler le problème en prenant la régionalisation, mais je dois reconnaître... »

He says it.

« (...) et je souligne que c'est mon point de vue personnel que la régionalisation semble avoir tué le football à Maurice. »

He said it. And, today, we find here that the hon. Leader of the Opposition says one thing and the then hon. Sir Anerood Jugnauth, Prime Minister, said something else. And when he gave that interview, I must say it was not very long ago. It was quite recent, because I myself was at the launch of this book before the demise of Mamade Elahee. You were there!

(Interruptions)

A few years ago! Let's talk about football. I have in my hand here a timeline. Le 29 mai 1974, UFA cup, Feyenoord versus Tottenham Hotspur; 50 people arrested, 200 injured. Le 24 août 74 - Blackpool fan killed; 11 Mars 78, Millwall versus Ipswich - riot breaks out, people are arrested, private property burnt down; Kenilworth Road riot, Luton Town versus Millwall, same problem; Birmingham City fan killed in riot 1985; 29 May 1985, Heysel Stadium disaster; Juventus versus Liverpool, 39 Juventus fans were killed, 600 injured. Fans of Liverpool killed; Arsenal versus Millwall 1988, fans clash with Arsenal hooligans and 41 people were arrested; Landsdowne Road football riot, 70 were people injured; steward dies, Aston Villa versus Queens Park Rangers 2004, Carling Cup, second round between Arsenal and QPR; 2009 Upton Park Riot 2009, 20 years later on, a rare hooligan incident. 01 December 2010, Birmingham versus Aston Villa, St Andrew's rivals clash, missiles thrown, flares burnt in nearby streets, fights breakout, people arrested.

In all this hooliganism that I described about the FA in the United Kingdom or the problems in Turkey between teams where people are killed, fans, in Egypt people are killed, in Scotland, in all those countries people are killed, does it mean that all of a sudden we are going to change the whole system? Celtic does not exist, Liverpool does not exist, Birmingham shall not exist, Aston Villa will not exist, Man United, Manchester City will not exist! Is that what we are saying? Or Chelsea can no longer exist, because nowadays it is not doing very well anyhow?

(Interruptions)

I start doing as well as Liverpool is anyhow. So, let's be serious. But that's the truth. So, my point is: let's be serious. Sir Anerood Jugnauth, in that book, said, and he is right in that book because he says -

« Les autorités auraient pu faire quelque chose pour empêcher le problème. Alors il ne faut pas blâmer cela sur soi-disant équipe communale, parce qu'à l'époque il n'y avait pas d'équipe communale. »

I remember I used to go to the stadiums; I used to watch Scouts Club play. My brother-in-law, Saoud Lalmohamed, was the coach of Scouts, and Fire at one point. I used to watch those teams. It had nothing to do with Muslims or Hindus or Christians. It had nothing to do with Tamils or Telegus or whatever. It was not even about colour. It was about the ability to score. It was about the ability to raise a crowd. It was the ability to put enjoyment in the hearts of supporters. It was passionate. It was a love affair with the people watching you play. And then, came a little man called Ravi Yerrigadoo, and he thought he had the solution. He had the solution to kill football.

If whatever happened in *Amicale* is what they are trying to connect to football, that is a blatant lie. This has nothing to do with football. That has to do with criminal minds. That has to do with people with intent to destroy property and cause havoc, and take life. That's nothing to do with sports. That's nothing to do with sports. I want to see Mauritius play in the African Cup. I want to see teams play in the finals of African Cups organisations. I want to see Mauritius play in the finals of the World Cup one day. I want to see that, and I believe in the ability of our country, and I believe in the ability of our players. In actual fact, maybe a lot of people don't know, I have seen hon. Fakeemeeah play football even at his age, and he dribbles very well. I must say he is very good with a ball.

(Interruptions)

He is. I am talking about football.

Now, let's listen to people who know about football, then we shall basically succeed. There is something I must talk about. I was going to talk about how hon. Li Kwong Wing talked about hon. Obeegadoo being in his ivory tower. Let's not talk about it. They are not here.

They are not here, but then again, there is a scandal I need to bring forward here. It is how they talk about the moral ground. The MMM talks about the moral ground. Hon. Paul Bérenger has forgotten one thing. He is being misled by people around him. He is not being told the truth. Do you realise, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that you have the Municipal Council of Port Louis, they have money that they can give to some associations? Do you realise that they have spent money on 30 people who are their political agents? To go to where? To Reunion Island. They can spend on *billets d'avions pou ale la Réunion*. Okay! They want to send their political agents; I will not get into this battle with them. Fair enough! But, explain to me; I have here the accounts of the Municipal Council of Port Louis 2013. Do you know that Caritas takes care of people that don't have homes - homeless? There was a budget that they had to vote; they voted to give Caritas, and they did not pay because they did not give a single cent to Caritas.

Do you know that there is a place called the Islamic Centre for Disabled Children in our Constituency No.3, Military Road? There are disabled children there gravely affected, but the smiles on the faces of the children show the peace and joy that they bring to everyone. Do you know that this Islamic Centre for Disabled Children used to get Rs100,000 yearly as grant from the Municipal Council of Port Louis when we were in charge? Do you know what the Municipal Council of Port Louis did this time? They did not give one cent to the Islamic Centre for Disabled Children. They have chosen to pull away taxpayers' money to help disabled children. They have decided not to give a penny to those children and the parents of those children who are suffering in Islamic Disabled Children Centre. They have decided not to give one penny. Zero! They have not given a cent to Caritas. They have decided to use all the money to give their people, their political agents. We have to understand that there is a limit, and we cannot go on with such people.

Let me say two things before I finish. Two things! I would like to thank the hon. Prime Minister for having listened to the plea. Our plea was what? Malaysia is becoming a *halal* food

hub, producing millions and billions of US dollars. The hon. Prime Minister has decided to put up a committee, which has worked, and I am happy to say it - my colleague, the hon. Minister of Health is not here. Finally we have finalised regulations with regard to *halal* food; because this shows we are going a step forward.

Once upon a time, Sir Abdool Razack Mohamed made it a point that we should have *halal* food in this country. Together with Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam, they made a formidable team. Today, this Government, under the leadership of Dr. the hon. Navin Ramgoolam, we are going a step forward into what a modern State should be into the respect of the fundamental rights of all communities. Now, we are going to have food regulations that will be for *halal* and vegetarian foods. That is what I commend our hon. Prime Minister for.

Secondly, I would like to say something else. I would like to thank our hon. Prime Minister for having seen to it that there is a prayer room - that is historical - in the new Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam airport. People of all religions can go there for moments of prayer. This is the first time ever that something like that has been done in this country, and that has been under the leadership of the hon. Prime Minister. I hope that Air Mauritius will be able to understand that it is important for people to have *halal* food on board Air Mauritius, as it used to be, and, therefore, they have to revert back and bring the national pride of what Air Mauritius was.

As regards my Ministry, let me say very clearly and fast. We have brought amendments to the law. We have brought amendments to the Employment Rights and Relations Act. Nowadays, people with limited years of contract have their contracts extended, *une durée illimitée, indéterminée*, after two years, if the nature of the work is such that it demands it. With the amendment to the laws, we have seen that there are less people now who are being made redundant for economic reasons, *parce qu'on a placé les garde-fous*.

More remunerations than ever have been forwarded to the National Remuneration Board. Eighteen Remuneration Orders referred to the NRB. Twenty-three ROs pending there and they will all be ready before May of next year. Eighteen Remunerations Orders have been sent there, as I have said, and 14 of them concern salaries of less than Rs6,500. I will not go over all the inspections that I will be able to carry out with the help of my officers more and more, since we have been given additional staff to carry out inspections in the Safety and Health Department and

the Labour Departments. That we will do as we are always doing, and the officers of my Ministry are doing a fantastic job.

But what is most important? It is technology. I am proud to say that, for the first time ever, and I am saying it, we are going to have two pieces of technology that will be *révolutionnaire* at the level of my Ministry. It will be the first real e-Government project ever. What is it? It is to apply for a permit online, to be able to have it delivered to you within less than five days, three days with payment made online, and you will be able to verify each stage at which it has reached online. That is a project that will be online at latest before May 2014.

Second project, for the first time ever we are going to have a website that is going to be launched at the beginning of the year, around January, at latest February of 2014. What is it? You want a job. You are a job seeker. The contract has already been given. The website is being finalised. It is a dynamic interactive website. You want to find a job, it is on the website. You want to put all your information on the website as a job seeker, you can. We will centralise, reduce the number of *bureaux d'emploi* that we have around the island to make it something more positive that can really bring help to people, to give people jobs, to find jobs for people not only in Mauritius, but abroad as well.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, to conclude, there is no need for me to talk more about issues about my Ministry. Why? Because as you will have noted, not a single Member of the Opposition - and when I say the Opposition, I say with the exception of hon. Fakeemeeah, because he has shown that he is responsible as opposed to others - has even commented on any labour issue, has even commented about any issues concerning my Ministry, and that means that whatever is going on is perfect, and I totally agree with them. Whatever is going on is perfect. They will have the opportunity of questioning me, as usual, during Committee of Supply, and, as usual, they will have the answers from me. The answers will ease because I know, for a fact, that with the team I have at the level of my Ministry, with the Permanent Secretary, the Assistant Permanent Secretaries, all the officers of my Ministry, be it at Employment or Labour, be it at the Department of Occupational Safety and Health, we do a formidable job, and we are indeed a formidable team. So, I am not scared of that. On the contrary, I am still waiting for the day when I will be getting a PNQ. I haven't had the opportunity and the chance like others. I still have to have one.

As far as my dream is concerned, I will tell you what my dream is before I conclude. My dream is to live in a country where I am proud to live with my children because I don't want to be scared about my country. I don't want to be scared about the future of my children and the children who will live and walk on this earth. I have spoken to the hon. Prime Minister many, many times. Why am I so proud to belong to this party, under his leadership, why am I so proud to be with friends on this side of the House? It is because all of us love our country, and we will do anything for our country to come out the best, and the people to come out the winners. Anything! We will lay our lives down for this country. This is how much patriot we are.

I want to live in a country one day - and we will reach that point because it takes political courage where all those youngsters who have gone abroad to study, where all their children, their parents have sacrificed and paid for their university studies, they come to Mauritius. When I send them out for circular migration, I want them to come down to Mauritius to help the country again, but I want to walk and live in a country where my children will one day see and all your children will one day see that the concept of political nomination no longer exists. In the Labour Party, we believe sincerely in it. We believe that people should be placed in places to make decisions, in jobs, in para-statal, because of the ability they have to deliver for this country. We have reached that stage of our development.

We have reached the stage of our development where we have the Minister of Tertiary Education, the Minister of Education investing so much into our youths that we have the ability to put people irrespective of their cast, colour and creed, irrespective of their political beliefs because we, at the Labour Party, believe in one thing which is the ability to do work and to deliver for the country, and that is the country I believe in, and that is the country where I want to live in. This is the air of the country I want to breathe in, and I hope with all our help one day, we will be able to cast aside the practice of the past, and take the political courage with both our hands, and break it and give hope to the youths of this country. The children of tomorrow, their parents deserve our trust. Their parents deserve our thanks, and they deserve to be put in places of decision-making without the intervention of any politicians. That is the country of tomorrow, and this is where we are going under the leadership of this Prime Minister, Dr. The hon. Navin Ramgoolam.

Thank you very much.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Members I suspend the sitting for ten minutes.

At 11.52 p.m the sitting was suspended.

On resuming at 00.26 a.m. with Mr Speaker in the Chair.

ANNOUNCEMENT

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY – ORATORS’ LIST – STANDING ORDERS

Mr Speaker: Hon. Members, Standing Orders are written rules under which Parliament conducts its business. Our Standing Orders and Rules of the National Assembly provide in its Standing Order 1 that -

“(1) In cases of doubt these Orders shall be interpreted in the light of the relevant practice of the Commons House of Parliament of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

(2) In any matter for which these Orders do not provide the said practice shall be followed, but no restrictions which the House of Commons has introduced by Standing Order shall be deemed to extend to the National Assembly, hereinafter referred to as the Assembly, or its Members, until the Assembly shall have provided by Standing Order for such restriction.”

This is how we refer to Erskine May’s Parliamentary Practice.

While the origin of our Parliament dates back to 1886, that of the House of Commons goes as far back as the 13th century, so that there are many rules about how it runs. Some of these are written down and are called “Standing Orders”. Other rules are set out in resolutions of the House. However, much of how Parliament does its business is not determined by rules, but has become established through continued use over the centuries. This is known as ‘custom and practice’. Others stem from the Speaker’s rulings in the Chamber, and other procedures are followed because that’s the way things have been done in the past, so, a custom has been set. Furthermore, there is a number of traditions which are involved in the workings of Parliament.

This is how we have adopted the parliamentary practice of having Whips in our Parliament to perform more or less the same duties performed by all other Whips in countries which follow the Westminster model.

I shall here refer the House to the opinion I had expressed earlier on the issue, reminding the Whips of their duties.

Now, considering the point raised by the hon. First Member for Savanne and Black River (Mr Ganoo) on Standing Order 77, while acknowledging fully the responsibility that this Standing Order confers upon me, as guardian of the parliamentary system which we have inherited since the existence of our Parliament, I fail to see how I can today depart from the established practice of having, in our parliamentary system, Whips who have been preparing lists of orators while business is being conducted in the Assembly, and submitting same to me in the Chamber, without my intervention, and which, by the way, are very often amended in the course of the debates. The House has always presumed that these amended versions of the list of orators are reached through consensus between the Whips.

In the light of the above, I am of opinion that recourse to Standing Order 77 does not apply in the circumstances, and therefore, I cannot prevail upon Government to rearrange the order of the orators on the Bill, as requested by the hon. First Member for Savanne and Black River (Mr Ganoo).

Now, we come to our last orator, the hon. Vice-Prime Minister.

(00.28 a.m.)

The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping (Mr A. Bachoo): Mr Speaker, Sir, let me first of all congratulate my colleague, the hon. Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development, for having presented such a Budget to the House. In fact, it is a sad day today. When debates are on this Budget, we find the Opposition staging a walk-out of the Assembly, with the exception of our friend, Hon. Cehl Fakeemeeah, who is present in the House.

Mr Speaker, Sir, when I look at the behaviour of hon. Pravind Jugnauth, that reminds me of Shakespeare's quotation.

“Some are born great, some achieve greatness, and some have greatness thrust upon them.”

When I look at him, it appears that greatness was thrust upon him by his father, and unfortunately, he did not live up to that expectation. He wanted to behave in this House in the

same way as he behaves outside. Unfortunately, he failed to realise that his political days are over, and today he is clinging to the MMM, and in so doing, he will try to drag even the MMM towards the slippery slope of degradation. That is a fact.

When I was young, I remember my father used to say: ‘when you will grow up and when you will start earning, then I’ll relax; that will be the time for me to relax.’ I feel this is the case in most of the Mauritian families, but in the case of Pravind Jugnauth, it is quite the contrary which is true. The older his father grew, the more burden he carries, he has to look after his son.

(Interruptions)

As if he was given a *biberon* and he has to stick to it. This is the story of a Member of Parliament, the way he behaved in the House. I don’t understand. What is the problem in addressing the House at any time? We never had this type of problem on this side of the House. I remember that when he was the Minister of Finance, during the Budget discussions, he, himself, made sarcastic remarks on hon. Paul Bérenger and on the Opposition. I would like to quote –

“*M. le président*, what a shame! The Opposition is absent for this debate, and they have signified their intention of not participating in the completion of the debates *pour le discours-programme*. They are not assuming their responsibility. In fact, they are paid from public funds. They are supposed to be defending the population at large and to be voicing their views with regard to the important *discours-programme*, and we do not see them.”

This is what hon. Pravind Jugnauth had to say about the Opposition. Today, he is also paid from public funds, and he is not in the House. What do we understand from his behaviour? That he is a man of contradiction; whatever he speaks, he does not put into practice, and whatever he does outside, it is quite the contrary of what he has the habit of saying in this very House.

Mr Speaker, Sir, let me quote again what he said about the debate. He said -

“It is shameful on this Opposition. The least that we could expect of the Opposition, if they were respectful of the institution, of the House, if they were responsible and if they had the courage to remain in the House to listen to what I have got to say, Mr Speaker, Sir, instead of showing respect to the institution - because they are paid by public funds,

they have been elected by the people, they are here to represent the people of Mauritius - they have chosen to walk away. Where are they now?"

And then, he said -

“They are an Opposition ‘bye looké’.

And he is worse than that, even today, Mr Speaker, Sir.

And then, on hon. Bérenger, he said -

« Lui, il appliquait une politique de matraquage. Il avait envoyé la Riot Unit lorsque les travailleurs manifestaient. »

Pauvres ouvrières ! A l'époque, dans la zone franche, elles manifestaient, et il avait envoyé la Riot Unit, parce que, pour lui, la Riot Unit 'pas donne biberon'. La Riot Unit - quand il est au pouvoir - est faite pour écraser les travailleurs.

Il disait -

« Au lieu de venir critiquer, l'honorable Bérenger aurait dû revoir son histoire, son passé. »

These are the words of hon. Pravind Jugnauth on the one with whom he is making love day and night, today, in order to come to power

(Interruptions)

Today, hon. Ganoo is defending him from the house top, and he believes that democracy is in peril, is in danger. And what did he say on hon. Ganoo? I quote -

“Plus grave, le MMM s'est attaqué à l'intelligence de l'électorat. L'honorable Ganoo, fidèle à l'habitude dans les camps mauves, a réagi, je dirais, en mauvais perdant. C'est vraiment dommage pour la démocratie de notre pays. Je ne voudrais pas aller dans les détails. Il a fait de graves allégations concernant supposément certaines choses qui ont été données en termes de bribes électoraux à l'électorat. Je le mets au défi (...) pas aller répéter dehors.”

So, these are the words of the hon. Member regarding his actuel friend, hon. Ganoo. And then, he continues –

“Je dis à l’honorable Ganoo qu’aujourd’hui le MMM s’est transformé en une véritable succursale de malhonnêtetés intellectuelles et de la démagogie. C’est cela d’ailleurs que l’électorat a sanctionné. Malgré cette puissante défaite, l’honorable Ganoo a fait un calcul pour faire croire que le MMM a recueilli plus de suffrage en termes de pourcentage.”

So, these are the words of hon. Pravind Jugnauth as far as his friends are concerned, and this means that we cannot trust such a man. He also said –

“That is why the MMM is in the Opposition today, and they will remain in the Opposition, I have no doubt. They will be, as we say, *opposition durable* - the biggest party in the Opposition remains the biggest party. Be in the Opposition, we are happy where we are also.”

These are the words of hon. Pravind Jugnauth. That is why we always say ‘with such a one, keep not company, he will finish you on the highway.’ This is what he is going to do with the MMM! Mr Speaker, Sir, that is the reason why we believe that such a person should not be trusted; his behaviour - and his language itself - deserves to be condemned. I can go on and on, but I will not try to continue on this.

Coming to hon. Baloomoody, I remember that during his speech he was very busy quoting from the Hansard. But what has he not said about Sir Anerood Jugnauth’s reign!

Mr Speaker, Sir, I am quoting -

“After 13 years of Jugnauth’s regime, the picture that emerges of this country is of a great nation in a state of moral decay and disintegration along communal line.”

And the same hon. Baloomoody, today, is defending hon. Pravind Jugnauth and company. I continue -

“The country suffers from a fatty degeneration of conscience and the malady seems to be not only persistent, but prone to aggravation. The lifestyle of too many politicians of the ouster regime, Sir, bears eloquent testimony to the truth of the dictum that single-minded pursuance for money impoverishes the mind, shears the imagination and desiccates the heart. The quality of our public life, Sir, had reached the lowest point. Politics under the ouster regime had become tattered and tainted with crime. The moral standards of some

of the politicians, policemen and criminals had become undistinguishable from one another under the old regime.”

And then, he adds -

“We have known the time when trade unionists were handcuffed, bedridden and sentenced for trial under Jugnauth’s regime, but I believe, Sir, that those who cannot remember history, those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it.”

(Interruptions)

He had forgotten the past! He himself says that those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat the mistakes again. The blunder that they are committing - they have themselves been reminding us of history, but unfortunately, they have forgotten, history, Mr Speaker, Sir. So, we cannot take any lessons from these people. They are a band of persons; they have got only one interest. They won’t have anything to propose to Government; they have to oppose everything, and they will do whatever is humanly possible for them to turn out the Government.

Hon. Bodha was talking about leadership qualities. I remember he was the one who was praising our Prime Minister - I will quote Hansard of 03 December 2010. He was buttering our Prime Minister when he was on this side of the House. He said -

“What I am saying, Mr Speaker, Sir, it is that on this side of the House, you have a leadership of choice to take the right decisions, and you have this ingredient of stability.”

He spoke of stability, vision and progress! He spoke of the leadership of our Prime Minister!

Mr Speaker, Sir, he added -

“Leadership is the ability and the wisdom to choose; it is the leadership of choice - then, you can move forward and you can charter the way to a better world (...).”

The same hon. Bodha, two years later, should have a look at his tongue, the way it shifts! Look at the way his tongue changes within two years!

Hon. Jugnauth - I don’t want to continue with it. I spoke about hon. Baloomoody. We can go on and on with those political stalwarts, on what they had to say, the way they have been

changing their languages. It won't be strange if tomorrow you will see them start buttering our Prime Minister over again.

Mr Speaker, Sir, Mauritius is, indeed, blessed to have in the person of the Prime Minister, not only a visionary leader, but a national saviour at all times. His remarkable achievements have been exclaimed worldwide. All of us are aware, and we know that his outstanding statesmanship has given international visibility to our small country, and thanks to his personal diplomatic efforts, we are no longer a dot on the map of the world. Mauritius, under his wise leadership, has become a shining reference in the world, but it is for our resilience to global financial crisis, or championship of good governance and adherence to fundamental instruments of human rights, or to good international citizenship. His decisions in condemning violations of human rights in Myanmar, in Egypt, in Sri Lanka, to name only a few, have uplifted our credentials on the human rights and entrenched diplomatic ideals. The Prime Minister stands out not only among his African peers, but among global leaders. His insightful analytical readings of world affairs, including those regarding national interest of Mauritius on Africa have marvelled more than one. He remains an acknowledged and persuasive thinker of the times and ahead of our times as well.

The historical treaty that our country concluded with Seychelles for the joint management of Extended Continental Shelf in the Mascarene Plateau, the first SADC Summit devoted specifically to poverty alleviation in our region, his farsightedness of what Commonwealth values mean, his refusing to attend the conference in Colombo are some of the most significant traits of a great leader who puts principles before short term gains, and his advocacy of a world driven by justice, fairness and respect for sovereign equality of all states.

He is revered as an enlightened leader in Africa. In Asia, he is considered as one of the new generations of leaders. In Europe, his personal intimations with European leaders are well-known and open doors for Mauritius. He is also one of the rare leaders to be constantly invited to attend the Clinton Global Initiative and the National Prayer Breakfast in USA. His presence undoubtedly, Mr Speaker, Sir, elevates any international and regional function. I can go on and on, but one thing is clear that he has the traits, the qualities, and he knows how to lead our country towards prosperity.

We always say that a party which does not have a leader, a good leader, a capable leader, is just like a ship without a rudder. It is just like a house where there is no light. It is just like a counterfeit coin which even beggars will refuse to accept. That is the position of MSM today! A party which does not have a strong and a dynamic leader is just like electric wire without power. It is just like a field where there is no water supply. It is just like a school where there is no teacher, or a temple where there is no deity. That is the reason why today they are suffering, because they do not have a leader who is dynamic, who is capable, and who can lead them from darkness to light.

Mr Speaker, Sir, we have a leader who started his political journey with great ideas and a deep sense of commitment. A true leader does not only think of today, but he thinks of tomorrow and the day after. He has to be a dreamer of dreams and a doer of deeds. If we have come to such a stage of progress today, it is basically because he dreams and then he puts that dream into practice. It is action which shapes the destiny of a country, and not the other way round. There is a difference, Mr Speaker, Sir, between a good leader and a great leader. They have a great leader. A great leader means one who thinks of himself. We have a good leader; he is one who thinks of the country and of the future of the country. That is the difference. A great leader is for himself; a good leader is for others. Being a leader is not about being liked, it is about doing what is right. A leader has to be a man of vision, and vision means the ability to see the invisible, the ability to see beyond the obvious. It is not about problem solving, but ability to prevent and to pre-empt problems. That is the quality which a leader needs.

Helen Keller was once asked: "What is worse than having no eyesight?" And the reply was: "Having eyesight with no vision, that is worst." It means what is important is not the eyesight but rather vision. Others have eyesight, but they do not have clear vision. That is the reason why they are cabined, crippled, confined, and bound in just like a frog in the well, taking leap from one side to the other, they believe that is their world. This is the position of MSM today, unfortunately, Mr Speaker, Sir.

The vision of our Prime Minister is to ensure that everyone lives with dignity and respect and no one should lack the basic necessities of life. We cannot live in a society where, on one side, you have got people who are lacking the basic necessities of life and, on the other hand, you have those who are indulging in luxuries of life. His philosophy of making politics is not to

create differences among people, but to make a difference in the way people live in a country. We speak of the term *roti, kapra, makaan*. *Roti* means bread, *kapra* means cloth, *makaan* means a roof. These are the basic needs, and we are trying to give our people these three basic needs.

No one has done so much in the past. This Budget has been properly debated on this side of the House. No one had done so much for the homeless in the past. So many Budgets have come and gone. But, in fact, when you look at this Budget, you find thousands of social housing units: 1,614 to be constructed in different parts of the country. This shows the social aspect of the Budget. 231 service plots to be made available to the needy. Casting of slabs which is freely available, concession of Rs300,000 for the construction of houses for those people who are earning within Rs50,000 monthly, rehabilitation of NHDC houses, plus 17,000 lease holders becoming owners. All these are examples to show that this is a caring Budget. It is a Budget where we are trying to do too much for those who are at the lowest strata of society.

Another item which I would like to take up is about the SMEs. No previous Budgets and no other government has done so much for the SMEs than this government is doing. Mr Speaker, Sir, tomorrow's harvest depends upon today's ploughing and sowing. But, if for fear of bad weather, a farmer does not plough and sow at the right time, he may not reap the benefits, he may not have a good crop. Therefore, it is our duty to plough and to sow. We have done it properly, and definitely our children are going to reap the harvest.

Goals and dreams for the future, Mr Speaker, Sir, are essential elements for every country. We cannot put off the things that are important for the making of the nation. We should not become prisoners of the past. Let us try to be architects of the future because when we look at MSM in particular, they represent the past tense, the void, and the unsubstantial nonentities of the future, fleshless and bloodless skeletons. There is nothing more than that, and that is the reason why they are trying to grip themselves with the MMM.

Mr Speaker, Sir, you cannot go ahead in life if you are stuck looking at the rear view window. Always we hear of hon. Soodhun and hon. Bodha speaking of the past; once upon a time, when they were rulers, and when they were just behaving like tyrants. But, the past is over; we cannot keep on thinking about the past. What we need is a strong leadership. We need a party which has a leader who can bring the party despite all overwhelming odds. We cannot and we do not lose our life in fights and factions, in stress and strain and in useless talks. We are

here to share our views; we are here to serve the nation. We are not here to grab power, and to grieve thereafter.

Mr Speaker, Sir, we, on this side of the House, we never survive on lies and false promises. We never play with emotions and sentiments. We never create personal fortunes on misfortunes of people. Our intention is good, our ideas are good, and our attitude has always been positive. We never spend our time criticising others. If attitude is negative, life is restricted, success is limited. That is why we have to think of the best for the country, work for the best, and we have to attain the best, Mr Speaker, Sir. We can never leave till tomorrow what we can do today. If we say we can do one of these days, it means, none of these days. We have to stop the habit of procrastination.

I have had the privilege of working and knowing late Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam. I have had the privilege of working with other Prime Ministers, all the Prime Ministers, but one thing that I have learnt from the philosophy of Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam is that the saddest part of life does not lie in the act of dying but it lies in failing to live while you are alive! What matters in life are the lives we have touched and the legacy we have left! We live for ourselves only when we live for others.

(Interruptions)

We do not judge people by the size of their wallet or by the contents of bank accounts, we do not judge people by the Sun Trust Building that they have or the Maradiva Hotel that they have.

(Interruptions)

We have to judge them by their strength of character and by the size of their heart. Mr Speaker, Sir, this is something very important. We must have the courage of conviction, we must have superb values, and we must have self respect.

We can't claim to be perfect. I don't say, on this side, that all of us are perfect. We can't claim to be perfect, but we learn to lead by trying. We learn to walk by falling, and each misstep that we take leads us towards the perfect step. Mr Speaker, Sir, we don't believe - I have said earlier also - in failures, we believe in results; we don't believe in tragedies, we believe in lessons; we don't believe in problems, we believe in possibilities. That is the cause of success. We have passed through turbulent times. I know the history of the Labour Party after 60-0 in

1982. Unfortunately, most of my friends are no longer here in this House, but after 60-0, I know the difficulties. Our people knew the pangs of hunger; we knew the humiliation of justice. I still remember that. We had passed through difficult and turbulent times, and turbulent times provide us with incredible opportunities to prove ourselves. My spiritual preceptor had taught me one thing -

“In all adversities, there is always in its depth a treasure of spiritual blessings secretly hidden.”

Many people hide in their shells when the goings get rough. They hide in their shells, they retreat in the comfort zones. But the wise are those who eat the fear before the fear can eat them. Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam never gave up after 60-0. He never gave up. That was the time when Sir Anerood Jugnauth declared - I was the Secretary-General of the Labour Party then; I still remember, in 1985, we were campaigning for the Municipal Elections, and in all the public meetings, Sir Anerood Jugnauth used to say -

«Le Parti travailliste est dans les poubelles de l’histoire.»

I remember there were photos appearing in newspapers, the so-called national newspapers, where when we are addressing public gatherings we had got one or two dogs sitting by the side of adjoining shops, and the journalist would take the photo of the dogs to show that the Labour Party has gone to the dogs. All these were difficult moments that we had passed. We had gone through that. That’s why we say all these moments in life have given us good lessons.

Mr Speaker, Sir, but luckily we have come out of it, we have done our duty. There is an English saying -

“A smooth sea never made a skilful mariner.”

The sea can be turbulent. We have to accept the rising tide and the lowering crest. We should know how to live. We have done that. We have accepted responsibilities, and accepting responsibilities means taking risks and being accountable. The more we accomplish, the more we take risks and are being criticised. But, Mr Speaker, Sir, we don’t boast. We don’t do great things. We have done small things in a great way. That reminds me of Mother Teresa. “There are no great acts”, she would say, “there are small acts done with great love.” This is, in fact, what we are doing, and this is what we are going to bestow to our children.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I will come to the Budget. The Budget of 2014 is not only preserving the Welfare State, it is enhancing the parity of esteem concept whereby national wealth is being fairly and equitably shared. It has a good dose of positive discrimination in favour of those who are economically vulnerable. It is a community-based Budget.

Mr Speaker, Sir, my Ministry has multi-faceted departments, and it will be very difficult for me to speak on all those departments, but many criticisms were levelled against many of my departments. It is my duty, as a Minister, to defend it in the name of the Government. The National Transport Authority is one of the branches of my Ministry, and 450,000 vehicles on our roads are under the National Transport Authority. That is no mean task, and we have made certain innovations at the NTA which would be for the benefit of the public and welfare of the public in general.

In the past, people had to move from one office to another for the transfer of ownership, licensing of vehicles and registrations. I am pleased to announce to the House that, as from next year, all will be brought under one stop shop. The work that used to take, for example, two to three weeks to accomplish will be done within 48 hours. The deed of sale which was under the Registrar General's Office has also been transferred to my Ministry, and it can be effected in NTA within two days. This means that the 80,000 transfers that take place yearly will be done as fast as possible in my Ministry.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the decentralisation of services - for example, the payment of road tax, almost 60% is now being effected in all the post offices. As from next year, 100% will be effected in the post offices. This gives an indication of the fastness in which we are moving. Mr Speaker, Sir, all innovations that we have made at the NTA have the blessing of our Prime Minister. It would not have been possible for me to go ahead without his support. He gave us instructions that the fitness centres had to be privatised, and we have taken into account the Prime Minister's vision that emphasis should be given to road safety and security of passengers. So, we have embarked on a process of privatisation of the two existing vehicle examination centres, and a third site has also been identified.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I remember hon. Dr. Sorefan has levelled a series of criticisms against the privatisation of vehicle examination centres. He has gone to such an extent of saying that

this had to be cancelled because the work was illegally done. I would challenge that gentleman to come forward...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: The hon. Minister should withdraw the word 'challenge'.

Mr Bachoo: I withdraw the word. But, he is mistaken, Mr Speaker, Sir, and he was misleading the House, I can tell you, because I can assure the House that whatever has been done has been done in a transparent and legal way. Cabinet had given its green light for expression of interest to be invited, and before launching expression of interests my Ministry requested for the views of the Central Procurement Board, the PPOs, as well as the State Law Office. All the three bodies had the same line of reasoning that since there was no disbursement of public funds, the solicitation of expression of interest from economic operators for the privatisation project was not a procurement process, and, therefore, does not fall under the purview of PPA Act.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I have to stress that the process has been totally transparent, accountable and fair. And I have to refute the unfounded, malicious and cheap allegations devoid of any logical reasoning. This project, at every stage, has been handled with utmost care and in strict compliance with good procurement principles. I am sure that this statement has cleared the doubts which could have been raised on the manner this project has been handled. So, privatisation of vehicle examination centres has already taken place, and we are going to start it early next year.

Mr Speaker, Sir, it is very important for us to improve the quality of buses. It is very easy for anybody to come and deliver long speeches that the buses are not in good running conditions and all. Many speeches were uttered by politicians on the other side. It was the talk of everybody, but, in fact, the game of a few.

Mr Speaker, Sir, we, as a responsible Government, we want to improve the quality of bus services, and that is the reason why, in the five years to come, 100 additional bus licences will be granted to the bus companies, bus cooperatives. Under Build Mauritius Fund, at page 719 of the PBB 2014, provision has been made under the Bus Replacement Mechanism to replace existing buses by 200 modern semi low-floor buses annually. For each bus, Government is giving a subsidy of Rs1 m. in addition to VAT. This means Rs1.5 m. to Rs1.6 m. for each bus. If this is

not a revolution, what do we call that? This is what we are going to implement, and we are going to start as from January next year. We will come with the policy framework to establish the parameters within which this subsidy will be granted.

Mr Speaker, Sir, our Prime Minister visited Japan, and in Japan he was able to plead for us with authorities for the procurement of 100 modern semi low-floor buses. Mr Speaker, Sir, as far as the National Transport Corporation is concerned, we know that the financial situation is very precarious, that is, not healthy, but, it has to fulfil social obligations towards the population. It provides services to regions where other operators would not like to go. We have taken all the steps that are required, that are important, to see to it that the buses are in good running conditions. Over 45% of the routes are uneconomical, but despite it, we are able to keep up a good fleet. We have got actually 504 buses, and we are going to add another 65 buses in the fleet.

Mr Speaker, Sir, again the same hon. Member, Dr. Sorefan, made certain remarks regarding the buses, and allow me, at least, to clarify certain positions. Some malicious allegations were made pertaining to the bids for the procurement of 65 buses for National Transport Corporation, and he had also uttered a few sentences on the CPB, stating that the CPB is not doing its work properly. Let me hasten to add that a bidding exercise was conducted. The same procurement was carried out in September 2013, and surprisingly, this time, the bid amount inclusive of maintenance cost had dropped to Rs218 m. from Rs262 m. It means there is a reduction of Rs44 m. equivalent to the price of 15 new conventional buses. So, the allegation that the hon. Member has made is unfounded. We have been able to have an economy of Rs44 m. I hope I have clarified these positions. He also alleged in the House that in 2007, when the Deputy Prime Minister was the Minister of Transport, new buses which were purchased from India were supposed to be semi-low floor buses. But this is nonsensical, this is not the truth. We never had any specification for semi-low floor buses from India in 2007. These were the allegations made by the hon. Member. He does not even deserve my *mépris*. Allegations were again levelled against Dr. Reesaul, unfortunately. He is an officer of my Ministry, a competent one, and all that he does is within the parameters of the law.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I can go on and on, but I would like to take up other points. In my Ministry, I have the Traffic Management and Road Safety Unit, and the number of vehicles on

our road has greatly increased, and the risk of accident has also increased. In our jargon, the loss of one life is too many; we cannot imagine the hardship and suffering of a bereaved family who loses a dear one in a road accident. That is why road safety and security is extremely high on the agenda of the Prime Minister and the Government of Mauritius. So much so that the hon. Prime Minister had himself set up a Special Road Safety Unit in his Ministry, and there is not a single day which passes that the Prime Minister does not inquire about the road safety aspect in our country. This shows the interest that he also shows to the question of security. The impression that is given at times in the papers about the number of accidents is that the number of accidents is increasing.

Mr Speaker, Sir, there has been a decrease in the number of fatal accidents. In the year 2000, we had 244,000 vehicles, and there were 163 deaths on our roads. This year, we have 440,000 vehicles, and the number of deaths is 123. But one death is too many. There has been a drastic fall, but our objective, our goal; our desire is to reduce it to zero. We are trying to endeavour in that direction, and what causes death basically is because of over speeding, and that is the reason why we have introduced the Penalty Points System. This is one of the most important decisions that this Government has taken.

I still remember in 2003, for the first time the matter was raised in Parliament, and it was mentioned in the Road Traffic Act, but nobody had the courage to go ahead with it. This time we have gone ahead, there have been some teething problems, there has been talk against the Penalty Points System, and the former Prime Minister, Sir Anerood Jugnauth, had given his pledge to the public. He had been stating that once in power, he would remove the Penalty Points System. But this is cheap politics, Mr Speaker, Sir. This is a dream that will never happen. He won't come to power, because once he comes to power it means that the security of our pedestrians, our people, will be at stake, because we cannot play with the life of human beings.

In the beginning, there was a problem, but luckily day by day, people are able to get accustomed to the Penalty Points System. There have been criticisms and apprehensions, but after six months of its operation, we find that even the commuters, the drivers also are getting accustomed with the system. Our roads Mr Speaker, Sir, are not runaways, they are motorways. It is extremely important to train our drivers. As a responsible Government, we have to impose

upon them certain restrictions or else it will be free killing on our roads. Freedom does not mean licence to do anything. The public has now seen the merits of the system, and realise that the expected benefits of the system outweigh the fears and apprehension. Now, at least, there is a sense of *retenue* on the part of the drivers, and the Penalty Points System induces individuals to drive slowly, carefully, and to reach their destination safely. We believe in the philosophy of start early, drive slowly, and reach safely.

Mr Speaker, Sir, apart from what I have just stated regarding the Penalty Points System, we have the speed cameras that we have introduced. It is *un grand pas en avant*, and again I would like to thank the Prime Minister for the concern and the interest he had shown, and for the successful implementation of this project. There were too many criticisms on the issue of speed cameras in the beginning. We had certain teething problems, but we had to adjust because our roads are not the same as the European ones or the ones in South Africa. But, now, we have been able to overcome those problems. Initially we had two speed cameras, one in Pailles and one at Camp Chapelon, and we had seen the good results that they gave, and that is the reason why we had embarked on an ambitious project of putting 50 cameras; 20 have already been fixed, and now 30 additional will be fixed in the months to come. Towards the end of the year, we will be putting another 15.

Mr Speaker, Sir, that is giving us very good results. TMRSU has also been responsible together with the Police of identifying black spots in our country, and once they are identified, we are placing cameras. Contrary to what many people believe, the speed cameras are not meant to fill the coffers of Government. The purpose is to improve compliance and speed enforcement across the whole road network through adoption of the best practice enforcement, using a combination on road policing and speed camera technologies. Before the installation of speed cameras, there were many deaths on our roads, but with the implementation, the number of deaths had decreased. We also have road safety audits that we conduct in our roads before opening and after opening.

Mr Speaker, Sir, road safety education through the Traffic Management Unit is being conducted among school children, secondary school children, and among the old groups as well.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I have to take up one issue, the Rapid Transit Project. This has been an extremely important project, and when I am speaking of the Land Transport Division of my

Ministry, I cannot forget this point. I will come directly to the Mauritius Light Rapid Transit System. This is a revolutionary decision taken by the Prime Minister.

Mr Speaker, Sir, much water has flown down the rivers, years and years have rolled on, governments have come and gone. The idea of Light Rail Transit System as an alternative mode of transport was untouched, but the one who had the courage to make decisions is none other than our Prime Minister. LRT is now becoming a reality in this country, and first and foremost, let me thank the hon. Prime Minister for his concern. This project falls under my Ministry, but the Prime Minister had himself been monitoring it from his office, and always giving us support to this project.

Mr Speaker, Sir, that is why I say that we talk about ideas, Opposition talk about themselves! We have got a caring attitude, they have a careless attitude. We are humble in our task, they are arrogant. I remember questions which were asked on this repeatedly in the past and the way questions were asked, as if they were trying to give us the impression that we are doing the wrong thing.

Mr Speaker, Sir, we are assertive, we are not aggressive. We are taking the modern way, and I do hope that we will be successful. When I go down the memory lane, I remember the issue of light rail was raised for the first time in the year 1989, and from that time onwards it was the talk of every politician, but in fact it became the game of only a few. In the year 1995, a Ministerial Committee was set up under my Chairmanship, comprising of other colleagues, Dr. Rama Sithanen, the then Minister of Finance, hon. Jadoo, the late hon. Gungah, the Deputy Prime Minister at that time, Dr. Nababsing, and hon. Amédée Darga among others. In 1995, we were on the point of going ahead with the project, but at that time I could not have read the mind of the then hon. Prime Minister, Sir Anerood Jugnauth. I am aware that later on he had made certain revelations to our hon. Prime Minister, Dr. Navinchandra Ramgoolam as to why he did not go ahead with the project. Apparently, I am informed that he had laid the blame on the actual Leader of the Opposition. From that time onwards, attempt were made repeatedly, but there had been times when Government was at a standstill: to do or not to do; to be or not to be.

In the year 2003, I was the Minister of Public Infrastructure, and we were on the verge of procuring consultancy services to move the project proposal forward. Unfortunately, the initiative was aborted. The reasons were many, but the one which came to the surface

persistently was to the effect that the project was too costly, and Government could not afford to embark on such an ambitious and expensive project. From that time onwards, we have been hastening too slowly.

Mr Speaker, Sir, this is a totally different mode of public transport. It is highly complex, technical and challenging. Notwithstanding these constraints, this Government did not give up. We have taken the bull by the horns, and we have taken bold decisions of forging ahead. Criticisms have been levelled against the project, whether rightly or wrongly. But we have a goal, we have a destination, we have vision, we have a dream for each Mauritian, and a realistic dream to see our people travelling comfortably by a modern mode of transport, the LRT.

We acknowledge the fact that all those who travel during peak hours every morning and evening both ways experience the pains, the sufferings, the stress, and the hardships of the chaotic situation of travelling along congested roads. Enough is enough! We are committed to put an end to this suffering and this chaotic situation in a permanent way. This is why we are relentlessly harnessing all our efforts to make this project a reality in the Mauritian landscape.

As part of our efforts, the trigger was pulled when our hon. Prime Minister visited Singapore and took the initiative of developing reliable cooperation between Mauritius and Singapore. In so doing, he had laid the foundation stone for implementing a project, with a vision for a modern transportation system.

In fact, he has created history. He will have his name written in golden letters for being the architect behind such a national and prestigious project. This is why we call him a man of vision, Mr Speaker, Sir. Whatever critics may say against him, everyone has to admit that he had the courage to dream, he had the courage to face reality, he had the courage to realise the dream, the courage to teach, the courage of conviction, the courage to confront, the courage to challenge false convictions, the courage to listen, the courage to speak out, and the courage to forgive, but not forget.

Mr Speaker, Sir, to close the chapter on this project, I would say that we have reached a point of no return, where to return will be more tedious as to go over. Therefore, we are committed to move ahead forcefully and convincingly. To demonstrate the irrevocable engagement of this Government, I am sure hon. Members would have noted that, under Built Mauritius Fund, on page 179 of PPB 2014, provision is being made for consultancy and

preparation works for MLRT project. In less than a year, the *coup de pioche* will be given, and the construction work will be visible, Mr Speaker, Sir.

I would like to draw the attention of the House that one hon. Member - again, the same one who had made many comments on many other projects of my Ministry - hon. Dr. Sorefan, had made certain allegations regarding the light rail system. Mr Speaker, Sir, he has made allegations, and I would not like to delve into all he has stated. Apparently, according to him, we are going ahead with the light rail because of certain reasons which are known to him. He has been casting aspersions on the project, and at the same time he stated that the best solution would have been the bus way. But I find it very, very strange, because the hon. Leader of the Opposition, during the PNQs, has all the time, from housetops, been shouting that Government should go ahead with the light rail. That is the statement which the Leader of the Opposition has made; the statement which even that politician called hon. Pravind Jugnauth has made, but all of a sudden, I find a u-turn of supposedly the Member who is the shadow Cabinet Minister for Transport of the Opposition. Hon. Dr. Sorefan stated that we have to go back to the bus system. I am not going to delve into all that he has stated, but I would simply like to draw the attention of the House that whatever allegations he has made are all false, are wrong, and they are not the truth.

Mr Speaker, Sir, as far as the Shipping Division of my Ministry is concerned, I don't want to go into the details. I have only to say that it is doing well; our duty is to serve the Outer Islands and Rodrigues. At the same time, one of the two vessels has grown very old. A Feasibility Report is already ready, and then Government will have to take a decision regarding that particular vessel.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I had mentioned that my Ministry has got multifaceted branches. I would like to speak a few words on the building sector.

Mr Speaker, Sir, in the building sector, the Building Control Act had just been passed, and it revamps drastically the existing legal framework governing construction of buildings, roles and responsibilities of different actors in construction industry, namely Quantity Surveyors, Architects, Engineers who have been minutely defined in appropriate pieces of legislation. All new buildings will have to comply with the new exigencies, and this is in line with the vision of the hon. Prime Minister to make Mauritius a sustainable island. In other words, we are

incorporating *Maurice Ile Durable* concept in all our projects, and for this we have received the support of Danish Energy Management Company, which is a consultancy firm.

Mr Speaker, Sir, insofar as the construction industry is concerned, in the Budget it is clearly spelt out that we have to give boost and encouragement to the SMEs, and through the Construction Industry Development Board we are trying all that is humanly possible to support the SMEs.

Mr Speaker, Sir, together with the support of Enterprise Mauritius, we are trying to prepare Mauritian contractors and consultants to explore possibilities to invest in Africa, and the Budget has provided us with special funds to encourage SMEs and other operators to turn towards Africa for business.

Mr Speaker, Sir, through the PPC, we have already recommended 225 projects worth Rs46 billion to the Government, and to respond to the new exigencies in the Public Sector projects, steps are being taken to streamline the processing of public sectors.

Mr Speaker, Sir, our Government buildings, whether they are schools, colleges, or whether they are health centres, cannot be left in dilapidated state. We want to put up a modern Mauritius, and when we are talking of buildings, we need to have clean, welcoming, and well-maintained public buildings. My Ministry is responsible for designing, implementing, and supervising of thousands of projects for various Ministries. I will not go into the details. For example, for the Ministry of Education, we have completed 29 capital projects worth Rs675 m; 26 projects worth Rs885 m. are under construction, and there are 50 new projects which are at design and tender stage.

As far as the district contractors are concerned, we have ten district contractors in the country, and 171 projects have already been completed worth Rs375 m., and there are 45 projects which are in the pipeline. These projects include toilet blocks, extension of schools, construction of new schools, and additional blocks.

Regarding the health sector, Mr Speaker, Sir, 17 capital projects worth Rs1.908 billion have been completed; five projects worth Rs264 m. are under construction; 55 new projects are at design and tender stage, and there are 68 projects which are being executed by the district contractors. There is not a single hospital - my friend, the hon. Minister of Health knows - in the

country where repair works have not been undertaken. I would not go into the details. For, example, Accident and Emergency Department at Sir Seewoosagar Ramgoolam Hospital; Cardiac Centre at Victoria; at Central Flacq, a new Block C; new wing at Long Mountain; all hospitals wherever repair works are required are being done, wherever construction works are required are being undertaken by my Ministry.

For the Ministry of Social Security, you will recall that, under the mandate of this Government, construction of three centres for elderly had been announced, and my Ministry has lived up to the promise made by the Government for bringing happiness in the lives of our senior citizens. The first Recreation Centre has been completed and is operational in Belle Mare. Second one is nearing completion in Pointe aux Piments, and a third one will be built in Riambel, as from next year.

Mr Speaker, sir, as regards the Police Department, many projects have been completed. The new prison at Melrose has also been completed. There are other Ministries and Departments where we have undertaken works worth millions of rupees. We have done all these to give you an indication and idea that we are trying to upgrade all the existing buildings. We are constructing new ones; we are trying to show that Government has invested, and we are going to continue to invest and do the upgrading and maintenance of public buildings. All these works are possible, because different departments whether architectural, engineering, quantity surveying, mechanical, Electrical Services Division, are collectively doing the job.

Mr Speaker, Sir, one responsibility which has been entrusted in my Ministry is the question of landslide, which is extremely important and dangerous at the same time. We are faced with worldwide phenomena caused by climate change and other natural disasters. We are witnessing more and more disturbances in our settlement planning. No country in the world is spared from extreme weather conditions and their aftermath. We have examples of hundreds of people having been killed in flash floods in India, in Philippines, in Italy. Landslides under the natural disasters have become a major concern today, and serious measures have to be applied. For example, we have the support of the Japanese International Cooperation Agency. In our country, Mr Speaker, Sir, we don't have geological engineers or geologists in Government. We have already earmarked a sum of Rs19.7 m. The Japanese experts have visited about 37 sites, and out of the 37 sites, three sites are extremely important.

We have Chitrakoot, Quatre Soeurs and Vallée Pitot. Monitoring devices have already been placed in these areas, and experts are conducting regular surveillance of these sites. The construction works will start shortly in Chitrakoot, and JICA Experts have also recommended the relocation. We have identified these sites; one at Camp Ithier to relocate the inhabitants of Quatre Soeurs; the site at Vallée Pitot is also very dangerous, and experts have recommended that eight houses be relocated. Detailed investigations are on with the assistance of Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and the engineers of my Ministry.

Mr Speaker, Sir, Mauritians returning to Mauritius after a few years of stay abroad will be really impressed to see the degree of development our country had known, and this transformation in our country's infrastructural landscape has become a reality, thanks to the drive and farsightedness of our Prime Minister.

Mr Speaker, Sir, we cannot speak of development if commuters are stuck in traffic congestion, as it destroys our initiative. People get physically shattered, intellectually stunned and mentally blasted; they become desperate, frantic, nervous and neurotic, and we get stressed up to breakable point. But now we have brought relief in the lives of our citizens with the realisation of numerous road projects.

I was puzzled to hear the reaction of hon. Lesjongard during his intervention. I don't understand how someone who had been a Minister himself - he had been a Minister of Local Government and National Development Unit for five years - can make such comments, as if we are spending too much money on our roads. He also stated that, the fact that we are having the Light Rail Transport, there is no need to construct roads. But, he has forgotten that the light rail is meant from Curepipe to Port Louis. What will happen to the other regions where every day our school children get stuck? He was hitting at Government that we are spending too much money in construction of roads. I find this very, very strange.

Mr Speaker, Sir, we know the number of roads that we have constructed. All these have been of great help to our people throughout the country. I still remember what the Prime Minister said when we started the construction of roads. He had given instructions to see to it that all these developments should be brought in the nook and corner of the country, because congestion is not only an issue that concerns a few towns. Congestion is an issue that concerns all the new conurbations. Congestion is not limited to towns only; it is in different parts of the

country. There were comments made, not only by hon. Lesjongard, but from other Members also, stating that this Government is spending too much money on roads. When no money was spent on roads, we were being criticised. Now that we have undertaken the modernisation of all road infrastructure, again we are being criticised. When you don't do anything, you are criticised, and when you start working, again you are criticised of going too fast.

Mr Speaker, Sir, for example, inhabitants of Goodlands know what a relief it is to have the roads that we have constructed, and the bypass. My two colleagues who are here know the relief the inhabitants of Goodlands get. In fact, we have spent Rs280 m.

With regard to Triolet, when there was no bypass, all vehicles had to pass through Triolet to move towards the extreme north. Today, we have Triolet bypass. At Rivière du Rempart, we have constructed a bypass in two phases. My colleagues of Constituency No. 7 know what a relief it is providing to those who want to start from Rivière du Rempart and move towards Port Louis or to move towards the north. We have spent Rs218 m for that project. At the dualling of the road from Pamplémousses to Grand' Baie, that in itself has changed the entire landscape of the region completely. Camp Thorel was already a land locked area. My colleague of Constituency No. 8 knows it. It was a land locked area. Once we have opened it up, we have spent hardly Rs39 m. Camp Thorel is now linked with l'Espérance, and also towards the north or towards Nouvelle Découverte. Argy bypass is a small bypass which was constructed, and that also has got its importance. With regard to St. Pierre bypass, Mr Speaker, Sir, let us say that last year, people had to queue up, buses had to queue up, cars had to queue up for 45 to 50 minutes at St. Pierre before moving towards Moka. With the coming into operation of the St. Pierre bypass, where we have spent Rs225 m., in five to six minutes you can easily cross from one end to the other.

If this is no mean achievement, what do we call it? I don't understand the reason why we are being criticised for implementing so many road projects. All of us know that according to one estimate, we spend almost Rs4 billion yearly in congestion, and the best solution is that we have to provide alternatives. At St. Julien d'Hotman, Higginson Road, where 12 innocent beings lost their lives a few years back, we have already constructed the road. Before the accident took place, acquisition procedures had already started, and now the road is already completed. We have spent Rs180 m.; the inhabitants of that region know the relief which this

has brought. Thanks to the grace of God, there has not been any accident for the last two to three years.

Hon. Mrs Hanoomanjee made certain comments about the flyovers that we have constructed at Port Louis - unfortunately, I don't have too much time to spend on whatever she has stated. Hon. Mrs Hanoomanjee stated that the flyover had been constructed, and that for the third lane that we have constructed from Port Louis to roundabout of Phoenix, no study was conducted. I had already explained to this House earlier that certain comments were made that, as far as the flyover is concerned, no feasibility study was undertaken, and for the third lane nothing was done. The engineers had just started the construction of the road, but I had earlier answered questions in Parliament that the French consultant BCOM was entrusted with the responsibility - the Deputy Prime Minister was then the Minister responsible for roads. That was the time when the French consultant, BCOM, was entrusted with the feasibility study and detailed design of a bus lane from Ebène to Caudan. So, we have not constructed the bus lane, but rather we have constructed a third lane; it means more or less the same thing.

Secondly, there was a study which was undertaken by the BCOM regarding the flyover, and then they had proposed that the work was to be done in two stages. First of all, we have to put up the traffic lights, and the second stage we have to construct the flyover. But, ultimately, we decided that we go directly for the flyover. So, it is nonsensical to come and say that no preliminary work was done. Mr Speaker, Sir, I have spoken on the flyover. We have spoken about the third lane from Port Louis to Phoenix. We have Phoenix to Beaux Songes road, and just imagine what would have been the situation of the people who live in that region! For example, La Source, Quatre Bornes, Palma and Bassin, what would have been the situation today, if that Phoenix and Beaux Songes road were not constructed? That cost our Government Rs330 m.

There is also the upgrading and enlargement of Wooton Road, from Wooton to Providence. Again, I turn back towards Constituency Nos. 8 and 10. What would have been the situation? The road has already been constructed, and again, here also, criticisms were levelled by the same hon. Member who has the habit of levelling allegations and accusations against me and my Ministry, as if SINOHYDRO is a company which was given too much favour.

It is nonsensical and it is worse than untruth. There has been delay, but when there is delay, Mr Speaker, Sir, it all depends on the engineers and the technicians. If the causes are, let us say, as a result of flood or heavy rainfall or because of land acquisitions, so extension of time is granted. But, wherever the contractor is to be held responsible, extension of time is given with cost. So, I have no doubt that the officers of my Ministry have done their duty, and the road is already completed.

Apart from that, we have Gros Bois/Mare d'Albert road. That is the link which serves Constituency No.12. There is the enlargement of Nouvelle France road; the inhabitants in the South know; so many deaths had taken place. I still remember, once, four or five members of one family got killed on the spot. That work has already been completed. That will bring a great relief to the inhabitants. We have not forgotten the Riche Terre road, which was already in a dilapidated situation and that falls in Constituency No. 5. Terre Rouge-Verdun, Verdun-Trianon, Mr Speaker, Sir, that is the marvellous work which has been done. I am pleased to announce that the hon. Prime Minister is going to inaugurate that on the 2nd of next month. He has just given me the date. I can tell you that this is a marvellous work that we have done. From Terre Rouge to move towards Curepipe, it will take you less than 20 to 23 minutes. Now, it is taking us almost one hour to one hour 15 minutes, particularly whenever there is too much jam in the morning. The Providence to Flacq bypass is already in the pipeline.

The Ring Road Phase I has already been completed. The work at Tulipes Avenue is nearing completion. The Réduit Triangle was already completed. So, Mr Speaker, Sir, I have just given a brief of the amount of works which have been done by the RDA, apart from the bridges. There are three bridges: two in Constituency No. 14 and one in the South have already been completed. Other bridges at Pailles, Macondé, Mr Speaker, Sir. When there used to be big floods in the South, that used to cut our country into two, but what a great relief for the people of that region. Ferney, which falls in Constituency No. 11, we have spent around Rs62 m.; in Quatre Soeurs Rs15 m. In fact, there was a report which was published about ten years ago, which had given an indication of the state of all our bridges. Nothing was done! In fact, the construction of bridges really started as from 2006/2007, and up till now we have repaired most of the bridges which were in dilapidated state. Other projects which are in the pipeline are the grade separated junction at -

- (i) Phoenix;
- (ii) Bridge at A1 and M1, and
- (iii) Ring Road with a tunnel, Phase II.

Regarding the Ring Road, I do not want to answer. The hon. Member who criticised this project does not even deserve my *mépris*, the way he has been criticising all the projects; but he has also cast aspersions on the tunnel. He has made allegations that if we are going to use the tunnel, it means five additional kilometres. I have never heard that in my life that we are going to construct a tunnel of five kilometres. I have never heard that! But, I do not know; that was a fiction of his imagination, and he had been prattling words of wisdom. So, I do not want to pass comments on whatever the hon. Member has said.

Mr Speaker, Sir, there are other projects which are in the pipeline. I do not want to take the time of the House because it is already very, very late. So, this is just to give you an indication of the amount of work which is being undertaken by the Government. All these things would not have been possible, if we did not have the support and collaboration of all my colleague Ministers, hon. Members of Parliament, and particularly the support of the hon. Prime Minister.

Mr Speaker, Sir, my work will not be fulfilled if I do not turn towards the National Development Unit. That is one of the most important arms of my Ministry. I would request the hon. Members to bear with me because this is extremely important. Even here there were many sarcastic remarks which were passed on National Development Unit. That is the unit which brings comfort to those people, in fact, those who are in need of it. That has brought relief in difficult moments and all that NDU has done, Mr Speaker, Sir - I am not exaggerating - neither pen nor my tongue can elaborate, the amount of work that has been done. Here, I would like to thank the Private Parliamentary Secretaries (PPSs), my friends, because they have been on the field all the time, and all the officers.

All the minor works have also been accomplished. I do not see my friend, the hon. Chief Whip, saying otherwise; the amount of work that we have done in each and every constituency. In fact, we have performed a herculean task. It has been unparalleled in the history of our country, the amount of work which has been done. No one can deny this except the sick minds who are sitting on the other side. We have changed the scenery; we have changed the landscape

of our country. Doing nothing has been their culture, and doing everything which is humanly possible has been our culture. We have been talking about ideas, Mr Speaker, Sir, they have been talking about themselves. We have got a caring attitude, and that has led us to do so much of work. They had always a careless attitude. We have been humble in all the works that we have been doing, and they have been arrogant all the time, and all the questions that they have been asking had certain dirty intentions in their mind. We respect authority. They have been rebelling against all that we have been doing. Mr Speaker, Sir, we have been optimistic, and they have been fatalistic. We are guided by principles, and that is the reason why we have achieved so much of success.

Mr Speaker, Sir, climate change has become a reality. I remember when Al Gore and Professor Pachauri made their forecast that the years to come would be really frightful, nobody believed them. Today, the whole world is witnessing the havoc that is being caused as a result of climate change. Nature has assumed its destructive form, and nobody is being spared.

Floods and cyclones like Katrina had hit the richest and the most powerful nation of the world, America, and even that country was powerless and helpless before destructive forces of nature. All human efforts become helpless. We have seen what occurred in America, in European countries, in India, in Philippines, in Vietnam, in China, in Mid West, and recently in Italy. A tornado just made Washington kneel down. Nature laid its icy hand on any country that came in its way. Nobody was spared. So, Mauritius, our country was not an exception. It was very sad to see how politicians on the other side politicising on dead bodies. How politicians playing petty politics as if all these things could have been avoided. Mr Speaker, Sir, it was a very sad moment in the history of our country when so many of our own countrymen died as a result of the floods that attacked our country. Unfortunately, in front of nature, we were powerless, and nobody can claim to be immune from the wrath of nature. It is, therefore, necessary for us to adopt. Humiliations were heaped upon me, I still remember, but I believe in one philosophy “where the mind is without fear and the head is held high, I do not have anything to fear.”

Mr Speaker, Sir, we do our duty. We do our work. I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the hon. Prime Minister who stood by my side in the most trying moments of my life. He knew the problem, and together with the hon. Deputy Prime Minister, my colleague

Ministers supported me in those difficult moments. The hon. Prime Minister provided me with full latitude to tackle the problem of flooding. I would say that we cannot overcome it, but we are going to tackle it, and we are going to make every effort. We are going to strive, struggle and sweat, and ultimately, we are going to succeed. But everything is in the hands of the Almighty. We cannot claim to be supreme. We do our best and we leave the rest to him.

Mr Speaker, Sir, since 2008, we have been putting plenty of efforts in the construction of drains and bridges throughout the country. After the unfortunate flood of 2008, we have taken the necessary precautionary measures. When the second flash flood came on 30 March 2013, places where we had completed drain infrastructures, everything went on well. It was only in places where drains had not yet been provided that we had problems. Flash floods will not give you any indication as to where they will fall, and that has become the biggest problem for us. There have been allegations and comments that my Ministry had not been impartial and had not spent money equitably in all constituencies.

But let me assure the House - I cannot take all examples; that will take me hours and hours. I will take only a few examples to show that wherever the need was felt, the NDU had done its work. In Constituency No. 1, work orders have been issued this year to the tune of Rs317 m. It is for the benefit of everybody, and we are working for our nation and for our people. I cannot give you the indications and examples of which are the places, but so much money is being spent.

In Constituency No. 2, Port Louis, that is under the responsibility of the PPS, my friend, hon. Abdullah Hossen and the Deputy Prime Minister, we had issued work orders to the tune of Rs156 m. Mr Speaker, Sir, at Roche Bois, we have given work orders for Rs35 m., and earlier we had spent Rs17 m. In Constituency No. 4, we have given work orders to the tune of Rs113 m., including the dredging of Lataniers River and the construction of two bridges in Congomah. I can go on and on just to give an indication of the amount of work which has been done.

Mr Speaker, Sir, people speak of Port Louis as a Capital. The only question I would like to ask hon. Members who have the habit of shouting from the other side and those elected Members of Constituency Nos. 1 to 4, is to go down memory lane and to come and tell us how much money MMM or MSM Government had spent in Port Louis, which was considered in those days to be the bedrock, the fountain and the spring of MMM. All the time these people

were misled. Never was there that much of work done as this Government has done. Starting from Constituency No. 1, 2, 3 and 4, today that has become a *chantier de travail* that was never the case. There is not a single road that we are not upgrading, not a single drain work that we are not doing. If you go towards the mountainous region of Valleé Pitot, the people there will tell you the amount of work that our Government is doing.

Now, exceptionally, we are interested in the problem of landslides that is taking place in that region. Mr Speaker, Sir, I remember that last year when the big flood struck the inhabitants of Pamplemousses - I was on the site together with the hon. Prime Minister along with my colleagues - we had seen that in one lane there were two houses where preparations were going on for marriage, and everything was destroyed. We had to spend money in that particular region, and a sum of Rs167 m. has been spent for drain works in Constituency No.5. In Constituency No.6, we have spent Rs26 m. in Poudre d'Or Village and Bois d'Oiseaux. Another Rs100 m. have been earmarked for Fond du Sac, which is a very dangerous place. Unfortunately, we have got a problem of land acquisition, and land acquisition procedures had already started. But the lion's share was in Constituency No.7, not because our friends, hon. Virahsawmy and the PPS are there, but because that region was badly affected as a result of the flood of 2013.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I would like to say a few words on this constituency. We have spent Rs435 m. in one year, not because it happens to be Constituency No. 7, but because that was the region where drain works were never undertaken in the past. That has been the constituency of the former Prime Minister. Since 1963 to 2003, he was a hon. Member of Parliament, the Prime Minister. Just imagine! But, unfortunately, it is past tense now. I do not want to speak too much on him. Not only that, that is the region, Constituency No.7, where we got Panchavati, one of the poorest villages of Mauritius, where nothing was done.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I do not want to loiter on this issue, but one thing I can say is that plenty of drain works were done, starting from Plaine des Roches, l'Amaury, Bois Jacot, Barlow, Antoinette Phooliar, coming down to l'Amitié, Gokhoola, Mapou, Plaine des Papayes and Jugnauth Road.

(Interruptions)

I am talking the naked truth. At Petite Julie and Ville Bague, we have spent about Rs60 m. So, these are the regions that we had to tackle. I had to speak on this because impression is given

that Rambo had done miracle in his own country. What about his own constituency? You can go and ask anybody there. A sum of Rs435 m. was invested in that constituency.

Constituency No. 8, Mr Speaker, Sir, is the constituency of our friend, hon. Dayal. He knows that we have spent Rs57 m. on drain works only. If hon. Nagalingum would have been here, I would have asked him what he had done for that constituency. At the Secondary School of Quartier Militaire, year in and year out that region was flooded, and we have already completed the work. We have done drain works at Dagotière and Camp Thorel, and still others are to follow. In one year, we have constructed six bridges, namely at La Laura/Malenga, and we don't have the time to go and inaugurate any of them. So, we have done plenty of works. At Montagne Ory, the wall costs us Rs30 m. For the first time in the history of our country, we have done the nailing work which costs us about Rs25 m. Mr Speaker, Sir, I can go on and on. There are plenty of drain works that we have undertaken throughout the country. Bridges have been constructed by the National Development Unit to the tune of Rs465 m.

I would like to say one thing regarding my own constituency. I always hear hon. Members on the other side - whenever the name of my constituency is uttered, the impression that I get is that the MMM/MSM does not want to smell Constituency No.9. But my colleague, the PPS, is here. If we had not spent money in Poste de Flacq, l'Allée Mangue, and if the flood had taken place at night, we would have had to remove hundreds of bodies from houses. There was about 10 to 15 feet of water in the houses which even the SMF would have difficulties in saving the lives of those people. Luckily, the flood took place during daytime. So, as a responsible Member of Parliament, as a responsible Minister, it was my duty to construct the drains and the bridges. As I have just mentioned, wherever the need was felt, we have spent money.

In Constituency No.10, for example, I was told there was Ajay Guness as PPS. What has he done? There is an SSS in Bel Air, and after heavy rainfalls the school has to close its door for two or three weeks. Now, it is of the past today; we have already constructed the drain. What about Clemencia? Nobody even dreamt of doing anything. A big bridge was constructed and drain works were completed. For Sebastopol, it is the same thing. I have to thank the hon. Minister of Health who was responsible for NDU, and he had done much work in Constituency No. 10. But I am naming the works we are doing actually. In Sebastopol, we have constructed a

big bridge; in Clemencia, we have constructed one big bridge; at Chemin Boulanger, we have constructed one; we have constructed Sarcelle Bridge - in each and every region wherever the need was felt. The Opposition does not know anything. I would invite them to refrain from putting candidates in Constituency Nos. 9 and 10. That is the best thing they would have to do, because they hate people there. I always hear them passing sarcastic remarks on Constituency No. 9.

Mr Speaker, Sir, in Constituency Nos. 11, 12, 13 and 14 - my friend is not here - we have spent a lot of money. In Constituency No. 15, the hon. Chief Whip is here to testify that everything had been done, and he is left with only one or two issues. He has been complaining, and I hope that by next year it will be completed. In Constituency No.18, we have problems because sewerage work is on. In Constituency Nos. 19 and 20, we have problems, and once the sewerage work is over we are going to look into it. I do not want to speak more on that. The Land Drainage Agency is already mentioned in the Budget. Through the Land Drainage Agency, all works would be conducted.

Apart from the drain works, Mr Speaker, Sir, NDU is also responsible for the upgrading, construction and enlargement of the non-classified roads, and we have spent Rs375 m. this year. I will not be able to give all the details of each constituency, but I can give an example of one road which we have recently upgraded and enlarged, that is, the Hollyrood Road that links Beau Songes and Bassin. Just imagine that was the road which was under the private sector for the last 50 years. Mr Speaker, Sir, you must be aware of that road. We were able to procure it from the sugar estates, and now we have upgraded it. By the side of that road, NDU has constructed the cemetery of Trois Mamelles. It is nearly in completion, and that is one of the best works which we have done in that region.

We have spent approximately Rs375 m. on road works, and apart from that, last but not the least, amenities projects have not been overlooked. We have catered for construction as well as upgrading of ten football playgroups, for example, Tranquebar, Maingard, Goodlands, Roche Noire and Plaine Magnien. And to encourage the practice of sport activities late in the evening, lighting of 13 football grounds have already been undertaken, for example, Fond du Sac, Richelieu, Highlands, Mare Tabac, Isidore Rose, Plaine des Papayes, Baie du Tombeau and Crève Coeur. Mini-soccer pitches have been constructed at Champ de Mars, Camp

Fouquereaux, Military Road and Harris Street, Port Louis, to provide sport activities despite limited space in build-up areas. We have constructed upgraded volleyball, basketball pitches at Roche Bois, Hermitage, Triolet, Mare La Chaux and other places.

The welfare of children has also been taken care of. We have got construction and upgrading of eight children's playgrounds at Albion, Henrietta, Bambous, Pointe aux Sables, Anse Jonchée. Market fair at Lallmatie is completed, and at Roche Bois it is nearly in completion. Next year, we have got a few, for example, at Goodlands. Landscaping works have been undertaken at ten sites, namely Tranquebar, d'Epinau, La Vanille, Beau Climat, Military Road, Le Morne and Dubreuil. Construction of cemetery, I have mentioned, at Trois Mamelles. There is also upgrading of cemetery at Pailles, Deux Frères, Trianon, Tyack, Henrietta and Trou d'Eau Douce. 300 streets lighting have been distributed in different regions throughout the country.

Mr Speaker, Sir, there is one issue that I will like to raise before concluding, that is, the incinerators. Whenever somebody passes away, and if he happens to be from a poor family, then he has to find ways and means to cremate the body, and cremation is becoming an expensive affair today. Thanks to the hon. Prime Minister, his personal intervention, at least we are constructing 12 incinerators throughout the country, namely at l'Aventure, Piton, Bois Marchand, Bambous, Chebel, Circonstance St Pierre, Plaine Magnien, Trois Mamelles, Rose Belle ...

(Interruptions)

I'm coming!

... Triolet, Beau Champ and Petit Raffray. There has been a delay because there was a challenge at the IRP that delayed the project. Secondly, the hon. Member should understand one thing. Once we earmark a project, the most difficult thing is the acquisition of land. There are clearances to be obtained. Even at Triolet, we had difficulties. Now, if you read the Government Gazette, you will see that for the land acquisition, we are reaching the final stage. So, that took too much of time, and secondly, we had the problem of challenge.

(Interruptions)

That is under construction, I know. Probably next year we are going to construct in other places.

Mr Speaker, Sir, development is an ongoing process, but I have given in a nutshell - I would have taken hours and hours to name all that we have done - a brief of all the works. I will call that a trailer, a *réclame* of all that has been done. I have been a Minister for so many years, but never in the history of our country so much work has been undertaken by any government. Wherever you go, wherever you move, the whole country is a *chantier de travail*, and that can never to be questioned by anybody.

I would like to pay homage to all the workers and officers of the Ministries. At times, when we are in the House, the way questions are asked from officers, they are not here to defend themselves and that, maybe, is one of the causes that might discourage or even deter officers from doing their jobs, because they are repeatedly brought under attack. It is my duty, as a responsible Minister, to pay homage to those officers and technicians of different branches of my Ministry that they are doing a laudable work. And together with my colleagues, hon. Ministers, particularly the PPSs, I do hope that we will continue, and whatever provisions had been made in the Budget, as far as infrastructure is concerned, all of us know it is about Rs18 billion. We hope that the most important work, particularly the light rail will start seeing the day as from next year, from the month of October.

With these words, Mr Speaker, Sir, I thank everyone again.

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

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

Question put and agreed to.

Debate adjourned accordingly.

ADJOURNMENT

The Deputy Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that this Assembly do now adjourn to Tuesday 26 November 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.

Mr Speaker: The House stands adjourned.

At 1.53 a.m. the Assembly was, on its rising, adjourned to Tuesday 26 November 2013, at 11.30 a.m.