



FIFTH NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

PARLIAMENTARY

DEBATES

(HANSARD)

SECOND SESSION

TUESDAY 26 NOVEMBER 2013

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Hon. Charles Gaëtan Xavier-Luc Duval, GCSK	Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development
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PRINCIPAL OFFICERS AND OFFICIALS

<i>Mr Speaker</i>	Peeroo, Mr Razack, SC, GOSK
<i>Deputy Speaker</i>	Peetumber, Hon. Maneswar
<i>Deputy Chairperson of Committees</i>	Deerpalsing, 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. 32 of 2013

Sitting of 26 November 2013

The Assembly met in the Assembly House, Port Louis

at 11.30 a.m.

The National Anthem was played

(Mr Speaker in the Chair)

PAPERS LAID

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

A. Prime Minister's Office –

Certificate of Urgency in respect of the following Bills –

- (a) The Sports Bill (No. XXV of 2013), and
- (b) The Additional Remuneration (2014) Bill (No. XXVI of 2013).

B. Ministry of Finance and Economic Development –

The Annual Digest of Statistics 2012.

C. Ministry of Social Security, National Solidarity and Reforms Institutions –

The Annual Report of the National Solidarity Fund for the year ended 31 December, 2012.

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.

PUBLIC BILLS*First Reading*

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

- (a) The Sports Bill (No. XXV of 2013)
- (b) The Additional Remuneration (2014) Bill (No. XXVI of 2013)

(11.38 a.m.)

*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.

The Deputy Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I salute and welcome the presence of hon. Guimbeau and hon. François, faithful to their tradition of being always present here and their non-partisan politics and I gather that, later on, will be joined by hon. Fakeemeeah, who incidentally was here till very late in the last session.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I will now talk to the Opposition, empty opposition benches and this excludes my two friends there, certainly and definitely. Speaking to an empty bench, in front of me, does it make any difference?

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Address the Chair, please!

The Deputy Prime Minister: I won't look at the empty bench I promise you. Well, does it make any difference whether the hon. Members are here or not? It is well-known and we have analysed their behaviour, Mr Speaker, Sir. They have eyes, like everyone else, eyes to see, but no vision. They have no vision whatsoever. They see, they cannot interpret and they do not have any vision. Ears: they have ears to hear but not to listen and the art of listening is totally absent from the Members of the Opposition. Speech: they often speak to show their ignorance and they often speak to spit out, I'm sorry to say, their venom on certain hon. Members on this side.

We go back, Mr Speaker, Sir, *la grande trahison du peuple!* History will tell us, history will not forget and history is there and the facts are there. It needs reminding what has happened to this country since 1982 with the MMM, MMM/MSM, MSM/MMM and God knows what other make and remake there are!

Let us go back! *La grande trahison du peuple* started in 1982-1983 with the two leaders fighting. The basis of the fight, Mr Speaker, Sir, was: who is the leader, the Secretary General of the MMM or the designated Prime Minister? This was as a basis and I suppose, at that time, it was a communist or extreme left wing or whatever you call it, rule that the Secretary of the Party dictates to the Prime Minister. This started then. *Qui ne se souvient pas de cette première conférence de presse du MMM en 1982! Première conférence ! La question avait été posée par un journaliste sur la compensation salariale.* The designated Prime Minister, *le Premier ministre allait répondre avec le micro en main et cette image dans l'histoire est figée dans mon imagination parce que c'était le début des manifestations de ce qui allait se passer et allait se passer de nouveau et de nouveau*, recurrent, year after year.

And what happened, Mr Speaker, Sir? To this question, the Prime Minister was answering and, in front of the camera, in front of the Mauritian public, in front of a live televised broadcast, the Secretary General snatched - I am not saying gently took - the microphone from the Prime Minister so that he could speak himself! This, Mr Speaker, Sir, was the first public demonstration of what this MSM/MMM or now MMM/MSM or Remake stands for: personal power, nothing to do with people and nothing to do with the welfare of the people! They had a golden opportunity in 1982, with a massive vote of confidence, to serve the people. But each one served his own interest and the public must not be made to forget that, and I hope that the MBC

will show it because they accused the MBC of being partisan, but it is good that they are reminded of what it is all about.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the same scenario from 1991 to 1995! Nothing has changed! In 1991-1995, it was a question again of who is the Chief, who is in power and power sharing and the mode of power sharing. It all came to that. Then, personal ambitions! They fight among themselves. I say it because it is revealing of what they stand for. Mr Speaker, Sir, at a public meeting held by the MMM or the MMM/MSM, it is quite legitimate that they argue among themselves as to who should speak last. But would you go along with them at private gatherings? I remember in 1992, at the end of year party in Roches Noires, the fight broke out openly as to who was going to speak last! At a gathering to celebrate the end of the New Year; recurrence in fighting! And it reveals a state of mind which is still present. I am saying it because the public must not forget that these things happened and these things are happening now and these things will continue to happen.

(Interruptions)

This manifestation of who will speak after who, the Leader of the Opposition was given the opportunity to speak after me, before the Prime Minister today and he did not use this offer. So, where do matters lie? The other Members, hon. Ganoo, who was also the Leader of the Opposition for one time during the absence of hon. Bérenger, was offered this opportunity to talk after me. He did not take it up. And, on Friday last, it was a question of who was going to speak before or after the Vice-Prime Minister, hon. Bachoo. Childish! Childish! They could have made their point. They had the opportunity to make their point and they made their point in the traditional MMM/MSM manner, walkout, walkout and walkout!

We are no stranger to talking to empty benches. We are no stranger! We have had it before. I remember last year and the year before, we had the same episode, walkout!

(Interruptions)

This is unacceptable! And they have to go and explain to the public in honest terms why they were not here on the last day of the debate to attend to the interventions.

So, Mr Speaker, Sir, it is the same scenario, as I said. In 2000-2005, we have gone over it but it is worth repeating in a few sentences. What was the problem? What did they do between 2000 and 2005? What was their *bilan*? Their *bilan*, Mr Speaker, Sir, was *fermeture d'entreprises, pertes d'emplois*, and I quote, it has been quoted several times but it is worth repeating because we have to remind people, sometimes memories are short, but they must be reminded what 2000 and 2005 were all about, "*fermeture d'entreprises, pertes d'emplois à une vitesse vertigineuse*". It has all been said, but it is coercing, "*chômage grandissant, état d'urgence économique*". We have said it; we repeat it and we remind the public what it was all about. This was the performance of the Government between 2000 and 2005. And they come and tell they want to give us lessons!

2005 a été le redressement de la barre, employment, investment and FDI had come back. Mr Speaker, Sir, there is one subject *où je suis vraiment mal à l'aise. Moi, je me considère comme un Mauricien ; un Mauricien à part entière, sans exception. La question m'a été posée quand j'étais nommé pour être le Deputy Prime Minister : est-ce que je représenterai la communauté Musulmane. Ma réponse a été et est toujours : je représente toutes les communautés, inclus la communauté Musulmane et aucune communauté exclue.* This is what it is all about!

(Interruptions)

But we only know the true minds of people, how they behave, what they do. It is not about what they talk. Talk is something else, but what they do and Churchill famously said you know your candidate during the electoral campaign when you are with the people, what the candidate says when he is there. I have been subject to it, Mr Speaker Sir. I have been subject to it – this is why I say it with great emotion – and I condemn it! The representative of Constituency No. 2 on the other side has no right to speak about communalism and communalism in football.

(Interruptions)

He is the last person to talk about communalism and communalism in sports. Last!

(Interruptions)

Let someone else speak about it! But at least have the decency...

(Interruptions)

No, no, no! We all know who the representative of Constituency No. 2 is. At least, have the decency to keep quiet and not to speak about it! I am not going to elaborate on what they did but it is good that...

(Interruptions)

First of all, what was the campaign of the MSM/MMM Government in 2005 in Constituency No. 2? Do you know, Mr Speaker, Sir? *Qurbani*! They were going to do *Qurbani* to the Deputy Prime Minister! Do you think that this is a language that would be accepted by the MMM? Would you believe what the MMM stood for in the eighties and what it is standing for now?

(Interruptions)

You know the style of their campaigning. Firstly, we have the courage to put up a Non-Muslim, a Chinese as Candidate in Constituency No. 2. So, their first message was: do not vote Non-Muslims. Vote Muslims and do not vote Chinese. This was their first message, Mr Speaker, Sir. And these are the people who would come and tell us about communalism! They indulged in illegal tracks, distributed at places of worship – defamation! I admire the person who has one language, whether I approve of it or I believe it, I do not mind, but, at least, he has one language. The MMM had four languages depending where they are. With the Muslims in Vallée Pitot, they had one language; in Tranquebar, among the Christians, they had one language; in Ward IV, they had one language with the Hindu Community and another language with the Chinese Community. *La langue fourchue à quatre*. And this is what it is all about. *Pas la langue à deux, la langue à quatre*. And they come and tell us about communalism! This is what really gets me, Mr Speaker, Sir. These people should not be allowed to get away scot-free. The public must be reminded about this.

They talked about ‘*transfuges*’. Do I call myself a ‘*transfuge*’? Why this definition? Why this definition of ‘*transfuges*’ which has been well documented elsewhere? There are different reasons and different types. Did I leave the MMM? I remind the House, once again, I did not leave the MMM, the MMM left me. It is good that we repeat it in front of our friends who are new. The MMM left me because I stayed in Government. They opted to move out of

Government in spite of the promises they made to the electorate that they would serve this country for five years, that is, from 1995 to 2000. This is what it is all about, Mr Speaker, Sir. I hear hon. Members on the other side talking about hon. Mrs Bholah, hon. Mrs Martin and hon. Seetaram *en termes de dénigrement* that they are '*transfuges*'. It is the electorate who will decide, Mr Speaker, Sir. The electorate will decide, like they have decided for me. They have consulted the electorate. I know hon. Mrs Bholah, hon. Mrs Martin and hon. Jim Seetaram. I know all three of them. They have not just taken their decision overnight. They went and consulted their constituents who told them that they have voted for them to work on a programme, in Government, with hon. Dr. Navin Ramgoolam for five years. They have to do that and afterwards the electorate will decide. In my case, I am happy and proud to say that they have decided and I am still here in this House. I thank my electorate for it.

Concerning leadership, Mr Speaker, Sir, they have made a serious mistake in assessing the personality of hon. Dr. Navin Ramgoolam, the Prime Minister. Serious! They could not have been more off-target than what they were. Hon. Dr. Navin Ramgoolam has a clear vision. We all know that. He knows where he is going and he knows what he wants. He has a clear vision. He is being described by all parties as a *rassembleur* and none will dispute that. He sticks to his principles and this is the core of all his values. The core value for him is to stick to what he believes through thick and thin. He has believed in human rights for the Palestinian people, he has believed in the human rights of the Chagossians and a long history of defence of human rights ending up with his bold decision not to attend the Sri Lanka Conference. This was in line with his character all along. It is nothing new. I was not surprised, at least, for those who know the hon. Prime Minister. Hon. Reza Issack will tell you about it. When he was asked to come on the radio and give his views, we had a friendly chat and I told him to think what the hon. Prime Minister is going to do. Don't assume that he is going or not going. Knowing the hon. Prime Minister, think about it. And, of course, he did not go. He was right. The hon. Prime Minister did not go - here there were people trying to defend the stand that the hon. Prime Minister should go. We left it to him. He decided and true to his character, true to his beliefs, he did not go. This was a bold decision that has been acclaimed all over the island and elsewhere.

The other characteristic of our hon. Prime Minister, Mr Speaker, Sir, is not to yield to *chantage*. This is the essence of it all. Let the independent institutions function. This is where

the MSM, in 2012, made a serious mistake of underestimating him. I remember I was abroad when things were developing. I had a very short phone call from the hon. Prime Minister, he told me about the problem and I told him: ‘I know what you are going to do, stand by your principles.’ He stood by his principle and his principle was not to yield to pressure and not to interfere with independent institutions like the ICAC. This boils down to the essence of it, sticking to your beliefs and your principles. I have every reason to believe that this will be constant throughout.

Concerning the Labour Party/MMM Government, Mr Speaker, Sir, you know what the problem was in 1995 to 2000? It’s simple. We have a Cabinet and Cabinet decides. In Cabinet, you can say what you want. You may not agree. You may dissent. You have your say, and if what you say prevails, the decision is changed. If the decision is maintained, you have to stick to it. But what was the MMM doing? It is good that we remind 1995/2000 for those who do not know.

In Cabinet, they were adopting certain measures and the next day - Friday to Saturday – in the Municipality of Port Louis, *Comité Central/Comité Exécutif*, they were challenging and criticising the measures that they themselves had taken the day before. It is *inacceptable*. This is why they are not in Government.

(Interruptions)

This is how it all happened. In the name of Cabinet solidarity, when the present Leader of the MMM was brought to task, he resigned and others followed him. This is the essence of it. The hon. Prime Minister did not ask the MMM to leave. The hon. Prime Minister asked the Leader of the Party to toe the line with Government’s decisions taken on Fridays. That was the essence of it.

Now, the 2011 episode has been widely commented upon. I will just briefly go through it. I was abroad and when I came back the hon. Prime Minister was not here. They chose the absence of the hon. Prime Minister to go to Réduit, to tender their resignations and then come and inform me as Acting Prime Minister, and then reassured me that *lève paké reste en place*. I could not understand. I asked the Leader of the MSM at that time: “What do you hope to achieve by what you have done?” He had no answer, Mr Speaker, Sir. This is what it is all

about. Their personal problems, but nothing about the country; nothing about the people; nothing about the welfare of this country, and so, it goes on, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Having made those preliminary remarks, I will now make some comments about the Budget and then about my own Ministry for which I am responsible, namely power, water, water resources and sanitation.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I'll start by saying and - I am saying it not because I have a great friendship and admiration for the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development, but because I believe in what I see, in what I hear and it is 18 days today since his Budget was read in this House. As we left, the mood outside, the first reaction, was good, a feel good factor. A Budget for the future, a Budget that is encouragement for this country, 18 days later nothing has changed, the Budget has still got its feel good factor among the public in spite of all the efforts and speeches made from the other side. *La désinformation qui a été répandue.*

So, Mr Speaker, Sir, I proceed, my first comment on the Budget, it is a Budget with a purpose and direction, it is a versatile and innovative Budget, it is a Budget combining stability and prudence. So, I will address these under three headings, Budget with a purpose and direction and this Budget, Mr Speaker, Sir, aims at achieving a better Mauritius and how does it do that? It achieves a better Mauritius through fostering and revitalising an inclusive growth and builds a modern and caring society. This is the first part; inclusive growth, modern and caring society. The strategy for achieving higher quality of growth and an inclusive society are inextricably bound together and I would like to underline here, Mr Speaker, Sir, growth by itself is without meaning if it is not inclusive and inclusiveness is the future of this Budget. The main underpinning, *le fil conducteur* is to aim at greater prosperity through empowerment of our people. The mix and dosage of socio-economic measures constitutes the foundations of growth. However, there is no magical solution, especially at a time when even the IMF forecast, the growth rate for the world economy to a disappointingly low figure of 2.9 in 2014 and this was confirmed as recently as yesterday.

Here, in our economy, thanks to our rational policies, GDP growth rate is forecasted between 3.8% to 4% in 2014. We should be proud of this achievement, Mr Speaker, Sir, and this is the outcome of a studied policy since the Government with the hon. Prime Minister at the

head. Most macroeconomic fundamentals are promising, be it inflation rate, estimated to be 3.1% instead of 5.1% in 2012. The budget deficit as a percentage of GDP has gone down to 3.7% in 2013 as compared to 3.8% in 2012. The public sector debt is forecast to decline to 54% of GDP in 2013 as compared to 54.8% in 2012 and a balance of payment surplus of Rs16.8 billion whereas it stood at Rs3 billion in 2012. In a nutshell, from an economic outlook, we acknowledge the economic stability fundamentals which combine sustainability and fiscal prudence.

Mr Speaker, Sir, in spite of the challenges, this Budget stands out on two fronts: it supports and consolidates the traditional sectors and it develops new pillars.

I now come to the second part – ‘Versatile and Innovative Budget’. As I have said, my comments are in three parts and the second part is ‘Versatility and Innovative Budget’.

This Budget lays emphasis on the acute need to create new economic frontiers and, two, to widen further the circle of opportunities. It recognises that investing into our human resources is a key to our endeavours to render Mauritius globally competitive. The creation of new spaces for future regional investment and growth via the Africa strategy represent the wave to the future, this is the wave; that will drive us; this is that will guide us towards the future.

Mauritius is building its African strategy on the strength of being a regionally preferred investment and financial hub. The creation of the Mauritius Africa Fund, the export to Africa subsidy showcases our economy as the main gateway to the African Continent, it was understood the Africa Fund and the export subsidy. This will set direction for a new pillar of the economy.

In parallel, the creation of novel hubs, such as an aviation hub, marine services and petroleum storage hubs will diversify the offering of our economy as a regional gateway. The more so that the emphasis on the ocean economy and the green economy will yield future benefits to the Mauritian economy. After ‘versatile and innovative’, I now turn to the third characteristic which is ‘combining stability and prudence’.

This Budget, Mr Speaker, Sir, offers a rational benefit of stability and prudence required in a slowly recovering global economy with a host of bold measures to create a new and improve economic space. Indeed, the Budget has also reinforced a responsible Government footprint by

displaying the Government's commitment to ensure economic transformation programmes namely –

1. competitive legislation;
2. business facilitation, and
3. new pillars of growth are complemented by upgrading and widening our human resources to render our economy more competitive and resilient.

This Budget is very forward-looking to meet future challenges whilst targeting at increasing Mauritius output growth potential, sustainable public finances, strengthening our financial stability. Here, I take this opportunity to commend the use of technology to make public administration more efficient through online system through a wide range of permits which ultimately will facilitate business and reduce bottlenecks and the SME's incentives to boost productivity and growth. This Budget, Mr Speaker, Sir, is a landmark on our journey. It clearly supports growth, builds resilience, consolidates not just the State's balance sheet, but facilitates the facilities and infrastructures we all need and rely on every day.

Public utilities, roads, schools and hospitals empower people to invest and grow with confidence. Now is not the time to waver or change course, this Budget continues a journey of assuring Mauritius as a country with great opportunity. This Budget also signals that we all have the responsibility to do better. Each of us has the responsibility in his own personal ways to contribute to a better Mauritius and it is only with a quick change of mindset that we will steer our journey of success in the next phase of socio-economic development. So, we believe that we need everyone to contribute. We believe that our success will essentially depend on a change of mindset geared towards greater responsibility and this will determine the extent to which we shall transform Mauritius.

In line with the cherished dream of the Father of the Nation to make every citizen live happily, our Prime Minister and his Government against all odds is constantly upholding the legacy of the dream he left. Remarkable progress and visible development have been made. Our future beckons us with all its possibilities and I am confident that hand in hand we shall grasp these opportunities and this Budget provides and builds a brighter future for us and our children.

I end this part of my intervention, Mr Speaker, Sir, by quoting President John F. Kennedy

–

“Things do not happen, things are made to happen. Efforts and courage are not enough without purpose and direction”.

This is what this Budget is all about.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I now turn to the sectors that are under my responsibility and start with the water sector first.

Mr Speaker, Sir, water supply management depends heavily on rainfall pattern which is becoming more and more unpredictable.

In 1999, we had a severe unprecedented drought all over the island, due to a continuous period of deficient rainfall over many months. In 2011, it was different. Rainfall was deficient on the central plateau, and the regions supplied from Mare-aux-Vacoas Reservoir were adversely affected, and the reservoir registered a record low storage level of 23% in 2012. So, 1999 was different from 2011.

In 2012, rainfall was deficient in the East, and the CWA had to mobilise additional resources by abstraction from rivers and the use of mobile treatment plants to provide an adequate supply.

In 2013, winter rainfall has been deficient and was only around 75% of normal, which affected both surface and groundwater resources. Accordingly, water supply to lower Plaines Wilhems, which is supplied 80% from boreholes, is presently the most affected.

What I want to inform the House, Mr Speaker, Sir, is the variability of the problem and the unpredictability of the problem. No two events are the same; 1999, 2011, 2012, 2013 have been different, and each has produced its own different problems.

Mr Speaker, Sir, so as to respond to complaints islandwide, an Emergency Cell was set up in 2010 by the CWA. The main function of the Emergency Cell is to attend to complaints and major disruption in water supply. The Cell receives complaints from the CWA hotline, and prioritises its intervention on the basis of the nature and pattern of the complaints, and the number of consumers affected.

In view of the heavy workload and experience gained with the Emergency Cell, and with the support of the hon. Prime Minister, this Cell has now been strengthened and extended to all the six water supply zones, with central coordination being ensured by the Emergency Cell Coordinator.

I am glad to note that the response time to attend to pipe bursts has been reduced with the six emergency teams deployed after normal working hours.

The most common complaint is burst pipe, and presently the highest number is being registered in the regions of Beau Bassin and Rose Hill. This, combined with a low water level in the aquifers, has compounded the problems. In line with what I have said, close communication between the MPs from all sides, Municipal and Village Councillors, and “*Forces Vives*” at national and regional levels have been instrumental in ensuring proper coordination in the affected areas to mitigate public discontent. I would like, here, to thank - though he is not here - hon. Deven Nagalingum who, with the assistance of the “*Forces Vives*” of Rose Hill, coordinated the hours of supply in the affected regions, and this, Mr Speaker, Sir, should be an example to others who refuse to follow.

On the other hand, it is most regrettable that strategic water supply infrastructure is frequently subject to vandalism, thus compounding the water supply problems. Vandalism is between interfering with valves, breaking of valves, and worst, sectioning pipes. I don't understand this. This is vandalism at its worst; sectioning of pipes.

Interference with valves has two effects. The programme to release water in a certain region is affected, because someone has shut off the valve and directed it otherwise. So, it is unacceptable; breaking valves or interfering with valve operation. But who has done that? We have had episodes where the pipelines have been actually sectioned, or in other places pierced, so as to get a jet of water for local irrigation. Absolutely unacceptable, and everybody should denounce this. This is unacceptable.

Mr Speaker, Sir, after consumer complaints on water supply, I now move to the water sector reform. Over the years, various recipes have been tried to reform the water sector. We have reached a point where the level of confidence in the management of water supply is declining, with the hours of supply becoming more and more erratic, and, at times, unpredictable, despite the massive investments made over the last few years.

The other aspect to be addressed is the fragmentation of the water sector agencies, with legal responsibilities which either overlap, or are in conflict, thereby limiting their effectiveness.

It must also be underlined that the work culture in the water sector is one of the contributing factors affecting operational efficiency. The current model offers little or no incentives to enhance performance, and is unable to attract or retain talented individuals, thus increasing reliance on foreign expertise.

For these reasons, it is now imperative to re-engineer the water sector, to pave the way for the long term. The transformed water sector will be guided by an enhanced vision that will merge the key operating functions of the sector, namely drinking water, wastewater, irrigation, and water resources.

In this context, there will be a merger of the three agencies, as announced in the Budget Speech. My Ministry is presently having consultations with the main stakeholders on the draft Bill, which will be ready for introduction into the National Assembly at the next session, to give effect to the merger of CWA, WMA and Irrigation Authority into a single Water Authority. I take this opportunity to reassure the House that, while undertaking this challenge to establish a water agency, which is resilient and responsive to the needs of the country, we shall ensure that the interests of the employees are duly safeguarded.

I now turn to this very problematic, *problème épineux de non-revenue water*.

In the past, a number of attempts have been made to address the problem of non-revenue water. These attempts have not been successful, as they have been undertaken in a piecemeal and uncertain manner.

For example, Mr Speaker, Sir, if you have a pipeline that is burst and you repair it on a length and it starts working very well, and the next section burst, so you don't get any improvement on non-revenue water. So, the whole network has to be attended to. There is no point changing one segment, and having the segment beyond it not functioning.

Government is addressing the problem of NRW, starting in upper Mare-aux-Vacoas, in a professional and scientific way, under the scope of the Project Management Services contract entrusted to the Singaporeans.

Why upper Mare-aux-Vacoas, Mr Speaker, Sir? The Mare-aux-Vacoas upper zone has been chosen, as it was greatly affected by the deficient rainfall in 2011, being supplied from Mare-aux-Vacoas reservoir, with a small catchment area, coupled most importantly with the

increasing water demand in the zone - the Mare-aux-Vacoas upper zone - because of rapid social and economic development.

Under this project, the Singaporean Consultant is carrying out a complete survey of the water supply system, from production to consumer premises, to establish a baseline data on NRW. The scope of services of the Consultant, *inter alia*, includes the following - I pause here to say, Mr Speaker, Sir, this question of having a baseline is at the heart, at the root of it all. If you do not have a reliable baseline, you will never be able to assess progress, or to measure progress.

The scope of services includes *inter alia* -

- establish baseline targets and leakage reduction strategy;
- identify network with high failure rates, and develop a justified and optimised asset renewal programme;
- manage implementation of pipe replacement programme;
- mobilise and manage field investigation, and carry out leak detection;
- implement pressure management schemes, and
- implement a telemetry system for the monitoring and operation of the water supply system. This telemetry is, to me, a key to it all. It will get the CWA to enter into modernity.

The Consultant is also identifying priority pipe replacement, improvement and modification of the distribution network, including review of metering system and implementation of a telemetry system for the monitoring and operation of the system.

The Project Management Services contract which started in July this year, has, *inter alia*, revealed major weaknesses in the metering system (underreading, overreading), poor quality of pipe materials and fittings and wrong configuration of the water supply system, and sub-standard workmanship resulting in unreliable NRW (Non Revenue Water) figures.

The Singaporean team is preparing the bid documents for the pipe and meter replacement as well as the telemetry system and will supervise the works to be carried out over the next two years. The reliable baseline data will enable us to measure accurately progress achieved through mutually agreed performance indicators.

Mr Speaker, Sir, some Rs1 billion have been earmarked over the next three years for this project. In the budget, an amount of Rs500 m. has been earmarked and this will be supplemented by a loan of Rs500 m. from the EIB.

The project will span over two years and will serve as a benchmark to be replicated in the other water supply zones. Government will ensure that value for money is obtained through the investment being proposed.

In parallel, the CWA has undertaken major programme of replacement of trunk mains which were prone to frequent bursts. Some 100 kms of trunk mains have been replaced over the last three years.

I will just go through the list very quickly to remind the House that we have had the projects implemented at Mont Ida-l'Unité to serve a population of 70,000; at Quartier Militaire-Salazie-Mont Ida, population served: 50,000; Plaines des Papayes-Triolet, population served: 40,000 and Camp Fouquereaux-Alma, population served: 40,000. So, there have been efforts to renew pipelines; 8 kms, 20 kms, 3 kms, 17 kms, all adding up, but, in the end, it has had little impact on NRW unless the whole system is attended to. And on the South East coast, Bemanique-Balisson and others - I won't go through the list. There is a long list of what has been done.

In 2014, there are other major pipe replacement projects works and replacement of distribution main from Belvédère to Camp La Boue, Long Mountain; renewal of pipeline in Flacq; construction of water treatment plant and pipelines downstream of Bagatelle Dam.

Interconnection:- Mr Speaker, Sir, the hon. Leader of the Opposition mentioned some years ago about what are we doing about interconnection of the different six zones. The first that was done was Midlands to Port Louis via La Nicolière reservoir. The North in Port Louis is supplied by water from La Nicolière. This was the first of the - sort of - interconnection. The next has been Mare Longue which we did a year ago; Mare Longue reservoir to La Marie to supply the Mare-aux-Vacoas system as another example of interconnection of water supply. The third is starting next year, 2014. A project for the transfer of water from Midlands Dam to Piton du Milieu reservoir to supply the East. So, whilst concentrating at the moment on NRW in upper Mare-aux-Vacoas region, we are also attending to other regions as well.

A word about water quality! Water quality in Port Louis, Mr Speaker, Sir, is affected after heavy rainfall due to the clogging of the slow sand filters. To address this problem, the CWA has embarked on the construction of a new rapid gravity water treatment plant at Pailles with a capacity of 80,000 m³, which will be able to treat muddy water during the period of heavy rainfall. Part of the old filters will be rehabilitated to have an added filtration capacity of 30,000 m³ daily. This new treatment plant will ensure a sustained water supply to the City centre and the suburbs of Port Louis, namely Roche Bois, Vallée Pitôt, Plaine Lauzun, Tranquebar, Bell Village, Ste Croix, Plaine Verte, Cité La Cure, Pointe-aux-Sables and Grand River North West and on an all year round basis - I am sure hon. Fakeemeeah will be happy to hear this. At present, in the dry season, there is no water. Wet season, water is muddy so we can't distribute it. When this project is finished, it will be the end of the saga of variable water supply.

Also, Mr Speaker, Sir, following complaints on foul odour - and this was raised here - at La Marie during the rainy season and pollution of the nearby river, the CWA has made arrangements to cart away sludge and carry out improvement on the sedimentation tanks. At Mont Blanc, we are doing the same. So, we are a listening Government, Mr Speaker, Sir. We are a Government that listens and reacts. We have had interventions about the quality, the odour at La Marie and we are taking action. We had complaints about Port Louis and we are taking action. It takes the time it takes, unfortunately, but the action is there and ongoing, and if the Opposition was here, I hope they would have acknowledged that things are moving.

As a matter of quality of water, the CWA, the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Environment closely monitor raw and potable water quality. It is very important that we do monitor water quality, drinking water or other water as well. My Ministry has set up a Water Quality Surveillance Committee to monitor raw water quality in the different catchment areas of the main storage reservoirs.

Furthermore, in view of the concerns raised by the presence of algae in La Nicolière reservoir, a biological lab has been set up at the CWA to monitor the level of algae in the main reservoirs and to determine the algae proliferation and take remedial actions.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I now move to water resources. The immediate priority is the increase of water resource storage capacity with the construction of new dams at Bagatelle, Arnaud, Rivière des Anguilles and, subsequently, the increase in the storage capacity at La Ferme.

I have already informed the House of the history of the Bagatelle Dam Project. The consultancy contract was awarded in August 2001 for the feasibility study and the report was submitted in August 2003. The study recommended the construction of a dam across Rivière Terre Rouge and Rivière Cascade over an extent of 230 hectares. However, in April 2004, the then Government changed the siting of the dam on the ground that prime land over an extent of 90 hectares belonging to Mon Désert Alma should not be submerged. Out of 230, 90 hectares should not be submerged.

A fresh feasibility study had to be carried out and the final report was submitted in May 2006 recommending that the dam be constructed on Rivière Terre Rouge only. Following a competitive bidding exercise, the Consultant Coyne & Bellier was appointed in November 2008 by the Central Procurement Board to carry out the detailed design and construction supervision.

The project has encountered unforeseen delays due to major design changes. I, therefore, take this opportunity to inform the House of the difficulties encountered and actions taken by Government.

The heterogeneous nature of the soil at the site was known prior to detailed design. Further, soil tests were carried out by the Consultant to complete the detailed design. Works started in December 2011 and during construction of the “Ogee Spillway” - which was the original design - further soil investigations were carried out which revealed the poor quality of the soil consisting of weak layers, residual soil and weathered basalt.

By July 2012, the spillway works were suspended by the Consultant and they recommended a change from the massive concrete “Ogee Spillway” to a “Morning Glory” type of spillway as the soil cannot sustain the load of the “Ogee Spillway”. However, works continued on other components of the dam, namely the construction of the diversion canal, quarry development and borrow areas. The Consultant lifted the suspension on 03 September 2012 after issuing the construction drawings of the new spillway which is now in progress. So,

for a period of about five weeks between July 2012 and 03 September 2012, works were suspended on the spillway, but not elsewhere. Works continued elsewhere.

In January 2013, this year, with the extensive and deeper grouting and at closer intervals with permeability still in question - we are now talking of the base of the dam, *la fondation* for the dam and the permeability which is still in question - a high-level meeting with the Consultants was held in the presence of an Independent Expert appointed by my Ministry, it was agreed by both the Consultant and the Independent Expert to have a cut-off wall for the water tightness of the dam instead of extended grouting.

In 2013, following a joint meeting with the Consultant, with our Independent Expert with the views expressed and investigations that have been carried out, it was decided par '*principe de précaution*' to have a safer dam, to be sure that it does not permeate and cause diffusion loss and collapse of the dam in years to come. It was decided par '*principe de précaution*' to go for a cut-off wall and this will entail extension of time and, of course, additional costs. A cut-off wall is quite different from the grouting. Mr Speaker, Sir, to end with, legal advice has been sought regarding the responsibility of the Consultant.

Following the changes brought to the spillway and foundation treatment method and the partial suspension of works, the Contractor has given notice of 12 claims for extension of time and additional costs amounting to a total sum of Rs1,320,000,000 which are being determined by the Consultant. This is a claim, but the claim has to be determined. Preliminary assessment by the Consultant has determined that so far Rs300 m. are payable.

With the design changes, the final cost of the project is estimated at Rs5.4 billion exclusive of VAT and the completion of the project revised from December 2014 to December 2016.

Mr Speaker, Sir, further to the problems encountered on the Bagatelle Dam Project, the contract of the Consultant appointed by CPB after a competitive bidding exercise has been terminated. In view of the problems that cropped up at Bagatelle, the same Consultant, who was appointed by the CPB has had his contract terminated.

A new procurement exercise will be undertaken to appoint another Consultant and the project is now scheduled to start by 2015.

When it comes to La Ferme Reservoir, I am glad to say that being 100 years old, it is time that the rehabilitation starts. At first, we thought of having a new dam, but the proposal is that it can be rehabilitated and it will be rehabilitated and the height of the dam will be raised by 1 metre to increase its storage capacity. A new spillway will be built and, of course, we will have a treatment plant attached to it for potable water in the West. So, this is going to make quite a lot of difference to the West.

Mr Speaker, Sir, to make an intelligent use of our water, 50% of our potable water comes from aquifers and the central aquifer is the main one. It is good that we know how these aquifers fill, what is their outlet, what is their rate of outflow and a modeling of the main aquifer on Central Plateau has been completed and this will make us able to better understand, control and monitor our waterflows from the aquifer.

We have also recently, Mr Speaker, Sir, introduced, Data Loggers at 13 sites of the ground water levels at strategic boreholes. Now, the practice is, somebody goes there, takes a reading and goes back and records the reading. Now, it will be done automatically. So, at any time, we can know of the behaviour and the level of water in the boreholes and this practice will spread very fast.

To end here, and this is the key to. With a view to ensuring the operational efficiency of the new Water Authority - I have talked at length on the new Water Authority, the Bill is coming to the House at the next sitting - Government will shortly invite proposals from a shortlist of international water operators for a management contract. For sure, CWA needs resources, human resource, knowhow, it needs to be accompanied and we are going to have international water operators for a management contract. And I'll look forward; the progress will be slow because it is a very difficult task. It has taken Singapore 20 years to go to where they are today from the time they started. 20 years! We are on the way. It will not take us 20 years, but it will take us some time, but the improvement will be noticeable in the years to come.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I'll now move to the next part of my intervention. I am not going to go through the whole list, but I am going to talk about the Wastewater Sector and the criticisms that have been raised, especially from hon. Lesjongard, who is not present at the moment. Hon. Lesjongard made a remark, he said: the Wastewater Authority is doing works and after that I see the CWA at the same sites. Can't they coordinate? He has raised an interesting observation without knowing what it was all about. The CWA and the Wastewater Authority work together

and wherever there is Wastewater Authority works going on, in Quatre Bornes, for example, there is always a CWA team because during works you get burst pipes, but, more importantly, we use this opportunity to replace old pipes with the wastewater works going on. So, they are present there together. It is planned that the CWA at the same time as the Wastewater Authority works together, not differently and this is the whole issue, but, unfortunately, the hon. Member did not seem to understand.

And he talked about lack of supervision, but I will say very briefly, Mr Speaker, Sir, that wastewater works are difficult. We should not underestimate the difficulties with wastewater works. In the Plaine Wilhems Sewerage Project, already 110km of CWA pipes have been replaced.

The works are carried out under the supervision of the Consultant of the WMA and the CWA. And, as I said, during execution of the sewerage works, existing CWA pipes do get damaged inevitably, but the necessary repairs are carried out.

Mr Speaker, Sir, hon. Lesjongard also talked about lack of supervision. I can assure the House that the Contractor executing the works has its supervisory staff and the work is carried out under the supervision of the Consultant. We took note at that time, we have had to draw the attention of the Consultant that supervision should be reinforced and this is being done. There were complaints about whether there were compaction tests on backfilling, tests on bitumen, air test, flow test and so on and I can reassure the Member that all these tests are done, records are available and make sure that works are done properly. So, there they are!

But there is one very important concept and I am going to dwell on this. Last year, in my Address, I explained at length the works methodology and the reasons for the additional costs associated with the wastewater works in Quatre Bornes. And yes, there have been additional costs, but all can be explained and it stems, Mr Speaker, Sir, that these projects were initiated between 2000 and 2005 when the previous Government was on. And the weakness in that project is that they were on the basis of conceptual designs without any detailed topographical survey. This is the essence of the problem that there was no detailed design. It was no prior detailed topographical survey. It was only a conceptual design. Do you know how the Consultant proceeded? He estimated the length of street sewers on the basis of aerial photography, can you imagine that, and maps available. It then established the drainage pattern for the catchment area on the basis of contour map and limited topographical survey in the field.

Thus, the Consultant assumed the minimum recommended depth of 1.5m for 80% of the sewer length and deeper depth for the remaining 20%. So, his estimation was: if you dig to 1.5 metre on 80% of the sewer length, it would be adequate, but it turned out to be quite the contrary.

Mr Speaker, Sir, in the end, it ended that 80% of the sewer length was deeper than 1.5m and only 20% less 1.5 metre - it was a reverse of what they had made provision. Also, when you are building, if you have not made a detailed design, if you have not made a prior detailed topographical survey, you will find there are houses not included from the aerial photography, lanes are not included and then there are new houses coming up during the time it takes to do the works. So, all these add up to the costs and you cannot have a wastewater system with new houses being ignored; you have to go along and provide wastewater facilities. This is why the length of sewers has increased, the number of houses has increased and additional costs. And it is easier to do it at the time the works are ongoing rather than wait for another project which will take years to come. I am not going to go through the same mistakes in other regions.

Mr Speaker, Sir, hon. Lesjongard who is an Engineer and who should know better talked about test '*à vides*' prior to commissioning of the wastewater sector. What is he saying? That, tests are not carried out properly, that the joints are not properly made and there is leakage of wastewater to the soil and to water table. It's wrong! He should know that these tests are carried out and if he is interested I'll give him a detail of how it is done. I am not going to address the House on this issue. It is a technical issue. But I can assure the House that they need not fear that from the standard of the works carried out, there are leakages and that the *nappes phréatiques*, as mentioned by hon. Lesjongard, is at stake.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I am not going to go through the whole list of works otherwise it will take a whole night. But suffice to say that we are also looking at the regions which are underprivileged. I am sure hon. Hossen would have loved to hear that we are covering Guibies, Morcellement Bangladesh, Morcellement Raffray, Camp Chapelon, Cité La Butte, Pailles, Cité Mauvillac, Canal Dayot, not to forget Tranquebar and Vallée des Prêtres. We are going to address these issues as well. A last word on the Pailles/Guibies Sewerage Project - we attach a lot of importance to that Pailles/Guibies Sewerage Project. It was due to start this year, but with the flash floods in the region of Canal Dayot, emergency works had to be undertaken in that region. These emergency works have impacted on the design of the trunk sewers along Canal

Dayot. So, the consultancy services have been suspended and will resume as soon as the emergency works are completed. Mr Speaker, Sir, we are not going into further details about the wastewater.

I will now proceed to the last part of my intervention which is on the energy sector and it will take me 15 to 20 minutes. Mr Speaker, Sir, as I informed the House in my reply to the PNQ last Friday, there is a Specialised Unit within the Central Electricity Board, the Corporate Planning and Research Department which is responsible for the forecasting of electricity demand, generation capacity expansion plan, and network planning. This Unit uses the models developed by the International Atomic Energy Agency which are specific for this exercise and are being used by the IAEA Member States. So, the CEB, with its specialised Unit, is well equipped to do planning.

Mr Speaker, Sir, there is a Long-Term Energy Strategy 2009-2025 with an Action Plan which, like all Action Plans – this stretches from 2009 to 2025 – over span of years, is being regularly reviewed. It is no point saying we decided in 2009 and in 2012 we cannot change. We have to change and we will take on board any views and all stakeholders are welcome to give whatever views they have and submit it to the Board.

I wish to point out that in reply to remarks made in the House, the responsibility for the policy in the energy sector rests squarely with my Ministry. There is no other Ministry. My Ministry and I accept full responsibility for whatever is decided at the level of my Ministry. The National Energy Commission has been set up as an Advisory Body. Any valid proposal made either by the NEC or any other stakeholders would be given due consideration while updating the Long-Term Energy Strategy Action Plan, subject, of course, to the economic viability of these projects. And I repeat, everyone is welcome to make suggestions as long as the suggestions are viable, efficient, but economically viable as well. It is very important. Many people don't realise this.

Hon. Lesjongard, again, made some deprecating remarks about the CEB and about my Ministry and I think it is totally unwarranted and uncalled for.

Mr Speaker, Sir, since August 2001, the K&M Consultant of USA had identified the site at Pointe Aux Caves as the best site to accommodate a 100MW coal plant. Government at the

time appointed K&M Consultant of USA to identify sites where a coal plant could be installed and Pointe Aux Caves was the best site chosen.

It is true that the CT Power Project has taken seven years. When I look at it, there is a lot of disinformation, a lot of manipulation of public opinion on this project. The protests have resulted in the revamping of the plant design and layout at extra costs and additional time. I will give an example. The design is already there and one institution objected. They do not want to see the stack; they want to see the chimney. So, the Appeal Tribunal accepted their request and the whole thing had to be turned round and this has a cost. It costs a lot, and the only reason was they do not want to see it. That's all. It was not a question of pollution, but they do not want the visual effect. We could have decorated it, we could have done something about it, but they did not want to see it. And this costs a lot of money.

The project will now be supplied with coal by sea route through a dedicated jetty as compared to the thousands of tonnes of coal being conveyed daily by road to the existing coal IPPs resulting in considerable damages to the road network - hon. Bachoo will confirm - traffic congestion as well as risks of accident.

I will say a few words about this plant, Mr Speaker, Sir. The plant will be designed -

- with a Circular Fluidised Bed Combustion boiler (CFBC). The CFBC boiler circulates the coal in suspension in a fluidised medium for combustion achieving higher efficiency, that is more KWh per tonne of coal, and much less CO₂, NO_x, and SO_x. Moreover, interestingly, this boiler can burn other biomass apart from coal including arundo donax which is presently being contemplated.

I am not saying that arundo donax will go there. All I am saying is it can accommodate.

- With improved electro static precipitator, bag filters and limestone injection, emission of particulate matter will be almost eliminated.

So, there will be elimination of particulate matter and a severe reduction in the quality of emissions. All these new EIA conditions will satisfy the most stringent European Standards for emissions - I am talking of European Standards for emissions – which are stricter than the World Bank Standards and not yet applied in many European countries. So, there we are - a plant that is

to my mind, well in advance of European standards, of European practice and well in advance of World Bank standards.

The disposal of ash will be contained in a geo-textile lined pond and treated, unlike the prevailing practice of ash disposal in the sugar cane fields with risks, amongst others, of ground water pollution.

It is as a consequence of all these inordinate delays – as a result of pressure groups and so on and so forth that the CEB had to take the following measures -

- commissioning of 2 X 15MW engines in October 2010 at the Fort Victoria;
- commissioning of 4 X 15MW engines in July 2012 at the Fort Victoria, and
- the redevelopment of the St Louis Power Station which is scheduled for December 2016.

The EIA licences have been secured after prolonged consultation. This is the difference between us and the previous Government. Consultation with the inhabitants and stakeholders, and in the case of St Louis project, it took a year. But we took the time it took to satisfy the environmentalists, to satisfy the people living in the region and the project is now ongoing.

In parallel, the CEB is giving due consideration to the use of LNG which is a cleaner fuel for electricity generation. I am not going to go into the detail of the LNG, but suffice to say that there are already engines running which can use LNG instead of the heavy fuel oil at the moment. But to set up the LNG plant, it is an expensive technology to start with. There are heavy expenses to start it and we have to see. Let us wait for the Consultant. We have a Consultant working on it. I have my own views that LNG is coming. I have my own views that with LNG being discovered off the East coast of Africa, there is promise for Mauritius. Let us wait and see! But even those from East Africa who came to meet me told me to prepare now for 2020. So, we are preparing now for 2020, but in the meantime, we need electricity.

At the same time, Mr Speaker, Sir, I wish to remind the House that we are all for renewable energy products. All for! But we must understand over time what has been happening. Over time, it was costly with the cost going down. So, you could not in 2008 or 2009 expect that the price in 2012 would be what it is today. Today, we are getting solar PV at around Rs6 per KWh. Previously, three or four years ago, it was Rs12 per KW hour. It was unaffordable, Mr Speaker, Sir! But time has changed with improvement in technology. But, there is also one point

which many people are not talking about: how much land do you need and who has got the land to install the (PV) photovoltaic cells. It needs a lot of space.

I was approached by the agriculture people about three years ago and I am still waiting for them. They came up with the idea that they will grow vegetable on the ground and they will put the solar photovoltaic on top, on raised platform. Agreed! But they must come forward. It is no good talking about it without coming with a firm proposal! This is what has been lacking. I will not mention names, but good friends of mine came in and they were formerly Ministers in the agricultural sector. They came and spoke to me about it and I said: “come forward with a proposal.” When somebody comes, my first question is: “How much does it cost? How much will it cost the public or the CEB to purchase your electricity?” If he says Rs7, Rs8, Rs9, Rs10, Rs11 or Rs12, I say: “Forget it, when you are Rs6 and below, then you come back to me.” And many never come back!

The second point: you will hear about storage of renewable energy. Mr Speaker, Sir, there is no point talking about Japan having storage facility and they are having a pilot project in Reunion. We want stable and reliable electricity storage. We do not have to ring Japan every time we have a problem with the storage. Let us wait for the technology to mature! We cannot involve public funds in projects about which we know very little. Who funds for this project? It is eventually the consumer and the public at large. So, in the absence of reliable, commercially viable storage capacity, with unpredictability - because when there is no sun, there is no electricity, when there is no wind, there is no electricity, you have to make sure that they are backed up by reliable 24-hr service, unfortunately, arising from fossil fuel today.

But the future is beckoning us. I am all for renewable energy as it matures. I repeat, as it matures, that the price comes down, that the technology is well-known and reliable. We do not want people to come here, set it up and then disappear. This is the last thing we want to do! We want secure supply of electricity at affordable price to the public.

The Small Scale Distributed Generator has been a success. All of it has been taken up, unfortunately, some are still in the process of installing their electricity generator, but most of them are taking up. I take this opportunity to say that when we talk about Public Educational Religious and Charitable (PERC) scheme, it is remunerated at marginal cost. It is not tariff incentive projects. First, there was Hindu Girls College and now we have the *Bureau de l'Éducation Catholique* and I compliment them and I salute them for their laudable initiative in this project.

Soon, to democratise further, we will have the Medium Scale, not the Small Scale, but the Medium Scale Distributed Generation. This is being reviewed to allow customers to sell electricity to their tenants. There is the Bagatelle Project or whatever other large surface malls, if they want to produce electricity, they will be able to but there has to be in accord with the CEB. Also, we have the Deep

Ocean Water Air-conditioning (DOWA). There are two projects, one in Port Louis and one in the South. Then there is the Arundo Donax Biomass Project.

I end on a negative note to say that in spite of what has been said about Mauritius being of volcanic origin and we should have geothermal energy here in Mauritius, no sign so far. We have already done some investigation at the moment which has not revealed anything much. But there are problems with the geotechnicality of it and with the nature of the soil where that is being done. But we will pursue the matter to look at the possibility of using geothermal energy.

So, we are looking for geothermal energy potential, we have hydro which is at its peak. We have wind, we have photovoltaic and we have a mix of coal bagasse and heavy fuel oil at the moment. This is where it stands. But our long term strategy, Mr Speaker, Sir, is to improve our energy efficiency picture. The battle for energy efficiency is by no means easy as we need a paradigm shift in our habits and changing habits, Mr Speaker, Sir, is probably the most difficult thing. We should change our behaviour, we should adopt new lifestyle, new culture and, of course, education comes in. It concerns everyone and not just Government. To that effect, we have successfully put in place a legal framework since December 2011. A levy has been applied since September 2013 on inefficient refrigerators, dish washers and electric ovens. This will be extended to air conditioners, tumble dryers and electric lamps hence discouraging the use of inefficient appliances.

I would also like to inform the House that Government, in collaboration with the JEC and with the technical support of the AFD, is implementing an energy audit in the industrial sector. Audits have already been carried out in eight industries. These findings will be used as demonstration case studies to create awareness on potential savings in the industrial sector. I am given to understand that the savings could be quite significant. And, as we mentioned previously, the Energy Efficiency Act would be amended to make it mandatory for CEB industrial customers to carry out energy audits to continue to qualify for preferential tariff.

So, Mr Speaker, Sir, I have a last word, probably the most important is that we beef up our energy efficiency campaign and this is going to be done at the beginning of the year. We will start as always, with the public, but school children, with the schools, with the help of my colleague, hon. Dr. Bunwaree with whom we have worked before on the low energy bulbs. We will go to schools and campaign the children and the children will tell their parents what not to

do and what to do. Switch off that light, switch off that stand by electricity and we will save energy.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I had much to say, but I will end here by thanking the hon. Prime Minister for his unfailing support towards me as an individual, as a person, for his unfailing support to those of us in the Cabinet who are there every Friday to discuss; we discuss openly - and this is the hallmark - make comments and so on. But it is the hallmark of democracy that you are allowed to say what you want, and every Minister here will agree with me that we say what we want. Hon. Hervé Aimée is probably the best witness of it all. We have this liberty of expression; there's no question of anyone being dictated what to say.

So, long live this Government, and may the hon. Prime Minister continue, and for sure, he will be there in 2015 and beyond.

Thank you.

Mr Speaker: I suspend for one and a half hours.

At 1.02 p.m. the sitting was suspended.

On resuming at 2.46 p.m. with Mr Speaker in the Chair.

Mr Speaker: Yes, Dr. the hon. Prime Minister.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, let me start by thanking you and your Deputy for having presided for long hours over these debates, with your proverbial patience, wisdom, and impartiality.

Mr Speaker, Sir, as the Leader of the House, I cannot remain silent on the unruly behaviour that we witnessed last Friday. Even you, Mr Speaker, Sir, and your office have been criticised. Such behaviour is nothing short of parliamentary hooliganism.

The behaviour of some on the other side, when they tried to physically intimidate a cameraman who was just doing his job, smacks of fascist tendencies, Mr Speaker, Sir.

(Interruptions)

These are the very people who will hide behind the cloak of parliamentary immunity, and regularly indulge themselves in their favourite hobby of mudslinging, character assassination, and making all sorts of baseless and malicious allegations. This, Mr Speaker, Sir, hiding behind parliamentary immunity, for me, is tantamount to cowardice, and they constantly indulge in cheap politics.

I must say I am referring to the Med Point alliance, not to the hon. gentleman and neither to the hon. Member from Hezbollah, because they have behaved differently. They constantly indulge in cheap politics, and attempt to erode the confidence, essential confidence, that we need to have in our institutions. You will recall, Mr Speaker, Sir, not so long ago, they put into question the integrity of the Electoral Commissioner and the Electoral Commission itself. Then, they started by attacking the Director of Public Prosecutions; unprecedented in this country. They then went on to attack even the State Law Office, the Solicitor General, the Assistant Solicitor General, and all the lawyers from the State Law Office. Again, unprecedented, except for them! They also attacked the Judiciary. In fact, they have attacked all the institutions of the State, and now the institution of the Speakership itself, Mr Speaker, Sir. And these are the very people who will brag on freedom of expression.

One important point to stress, Mr Speaker, Sir, is that all this - I need to clarify this, because I know members of the press have heard only one side of the story, and they have gulped it down. But there are two sides to every story. I think I need to say, Mr Speaker, Sir, all this has happened why? It is because the hon. Leader of the Opposition has decided that he will not intervene on the Budget. Believe me or not, if I had done this, you would have seen the comments that there would have been.

(Interruptions)

Nothing this time! Never mind! But I need to say, Mr Speaker, Sir, what they did not say in the press conference, is that we had come to an agreement on the list, the Chief Whip talked to them. They had the list. Don't say they didn't have the list, they had the list! Then, they asked that the list of orators be altered. They asked, because they did not want - he hurts them so much - hon. Shakeel Mohamed to speak after hon. Obeegadoo. No match, but that's what they think. They did not want. So, they asked, can we change it - at short notice! And to show what kind of

person he is - I asked the Minister of Foreign Affairs, hon. Dr. A. Boolell, would he be able to go and speak in the place of hon. Mohamed so that we don't annoy them. Short notice! I am not sure I would have accepted, but he did, and I thank him for it. He is well able to speak on his feet, anyway. We changed that! Then, they came with the other demand that they wanted to impose - and I say it between inverted commas - an 'ordinary hon. Member'. Ordinary, in the sense that he is not in the hierarchy of the Opposition, just like we have a hierarchy here. They wanted to impose him. I guess they want to see how they can boost his irretrievably damaged image as a weak leader, as evidenced by the fact that '*papi*' now has to become the leader outside - he is the leader inside, God knows what - called back from retirement to rescue his party and he is the *de facto* leader. So, they wanted to boost it up and they were trying to impose this on us.

We did agree, I must say, Mr Speaker, Sir, that if you want somebody to speak before me, fine, I have no objection. In the past, the hon. Leader of the Opposition has spoken before me. He is no match. Hon. Jugnauth is no match for the hon. Leader of the Opposition whatever we might say about the hon. Leader of the Opposition. But he has spoken before me and I have answered him, but I said, if this is what you want, okay, let the former Leader of the Opposition, the number two in the hierarchy, let him speak before. No! They want to build up this image, Mr Speaker, Sir. It is proof, once again, that leaders cannot be manufactured artificially...

(Interruptions)

... and imposed upon a people. Either you are a leader of men and women or you are not a leader! It is as simple as that!

(Interruptions)

I had to clarify this, because I know members of the press have got only one version. They don't know the other version.

Let me also, Mr Speaker, Sir, thank the hon. Vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Finance and Economic Development for the presentation of this Budget which, while taking into account the difficult international economic situation, he has managed to respond to the

priorities, aspirations and ambitions of our people in our quest to build a better Mauritius for all our citizens.

The Opposition, Mr Speaker, Sir, has always - as usual, they are so desperate - tried to create the impression: “*Ah, c’est le budget de Ramgoolam. Cela a été imposé sur Xavier Duval ; ou bien, Xavier Duval a fait des choses que Ramgoolam n’est pas d’accord*”. They have tried to give the impression that there is a chasm between me and my Minister of Finance. It just shows how desperate they are!

Let me, Mr Speaker, Sir, for their education, and perhaps enlighten those who do not know how Government actually works, let me tell them, the Budget, to start with, is quite unlike any other Government decision. It is different. Consultations are held between the Ministry of Finance, the hon. Minister himself with his colleagues, the different Ministers, the Financial Secretary and the members of his administration, of his Ministry, they meet different members of the administration of different Ministries over a long time - it is not just today before the Budget. They discuss about what are the priorities, what we think we can spend, what is the expenditure possible, and then they look at every aspect of each Ministry.

We have to define our priorities just like in any household. These people forget, Mr Speaker, Sir. I don’t know in what world they live these people, I ask myself, do they go out of Mauritius or do they stay in their holes? Do they know what is the world, what is happening in the world? Even in a country like the United States of America, there is poverty. Even in a country which is the richest country in the world! You can’t do everything at one go! They think we are in an Eldorado here, everything we want to do, we can do! Never! It does not exist anywhere in the world. Look what is happening now in France! They are taxing the pensioners because of lack of money. Look at the revolt that is happening there! I don’t know, Mr Speaker, Sir. They don’t like the MBC, but, at least, look at *Canal plus*!

(Interruptions)

Why, they can’t even afford that? Look, at what is happening! Become real! Look at the real world and the real economy, look at what is happening!

After the hon. Vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Finance has consulted all his colleagues, the different Ministries, looks at the state of the world economy as well. But I must say then, the Budget - for their education, you know this very well - is not determined collectively until there is a special Cabinet meeting on the day of the presentation of the Budget itself. The only person the hon. Minister of Finance consults and has to consult - the only person - on a regular basis, is the Prime Minister, because I am the Head of the Government. And we consult, not two days before the Budget - hon. Dr. Bunwaree has been Minister of Finance, we have got others, even hon. Bheenick, hon. Sithanen - we consult practically daily, for hours, and we speak and we decide. That is how the Budget is prepared, Mr Speaker, Sir. Once, we have had the special Cabinet meeting then it is the Cabinet collectively which approves the Budget.

I heard the Deputy Prime Minister, hon. Dr. Beebeejaun explaining a bit how we have different views, because we are not a dictatorship like they are. We do not have diktats in the Labour Party or the PMSD. You are free to express yourself and this is what Cabinet is about. That is how you get best Government, not by a dictator deciding this will be red and this will be white. It is by having proper discussions and then come to a conclusion, looking at all the facets and this is how we operate on this side of the House.

So, Mr Speaker, Sir, to try to say that the hon. Prime Minister and the hon. Vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Finance do not agree on the measures of the Budget, is utter nonsense, and shows their depth of ignorance and how unfit they are to govern in a parliamentary democracy like ours, because they do not know.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I do not propose to go into the details of how we turn the economy around because so many orators, I think, have been through it; the economy, which was in dire straits when we were returned to power in 2005. I also do not propose to go into all the details like we have a tendency to do at the different areas and Ministries, because it is all in the Budget Speech, anyway. But, I think, I need to give an overview again of where we were - just an overview - in 2005, and what we have achieved, so that people in this country can understand, can see hopefully, that there is an overall strategic vision, and that there is a golden thread that links all our budgets since 2005.

Mr Speaker, Sir, in 2005, the economy was nose-diving. All the macroeconomic indicators, all of them, were in the red. And I must say, when we were in Opposition, hon. Members who were with me, will remember, we were having press conferences. We were showing how the indicators are turning red, one after the other and that has been the trend from 2001 and it continued to deteriorate year in, year out until 2005. Mr Speaker, Sir, do you know what they said? The proof of the pudding is in the eating. Not in the looking, but in the eating. But so much so that we were landed with the now notorious admission by the then Prime Minister, who was former Minister of Finance from 2002 to 2003, and I'll quote because it is an unbelievable admission which says it all to me - and this is what they had to say, just prior to the 2005 Elections, he said -

“La situation est dramatique et sans précédent. Nous sommes en état d’urgence économique. »

Une claque à eux-mêmes, M. le président! Une vraie claque!

(Interruptions)

It is saying that after five years, we have wrecked the economy.

(Interruptions)

And they do not know what to do. And, rightly so, they were booted out by the very people who thought maybe they would be different and they knew better, and there will know in the next General Election in 2015. I can tell you, they will know. I am confident of what I am saying.

Mr Speaker, Sir, let us not forget one thing, people forget! This is why I have to say it over and over again. In 2000, something that I never had, they had a majority of more than three quarters which means they could have done anything, changed the Constitution like they have done in the past. They had a huge majority to do what they wanted and they inherited, I must say again, a booming economy, growth rate of 10.2%. 10.2%, Mr Speaker, Sir! That's what it was when we left. I remember - he has passed away now - Sir Alan Walters, who was my Economic Adviser, who was also Economic Adviser to Lady Thatcher and others, at the time of the election, he said to me - an eminent person like Sir Alan Walters said to me - that one thing the people won't be able to say is that the economy has been mismanaged. They managed to pull a

blind in front of people with the false news, their propaganda and all the things that they do. And some people thought maybe let's have a change and they have seen what the change brought.

Mr Speaker, Sir, not only they had a majority. Not only that, the sugar protocol was there intact, still in place. The Multi Fibre Agreement was there again, still in place, which meant that the two pillars of our economy, sugar and textile, had the safety nets to continue as they were in a competitive world, where we have to compete. We didn't have. We had these safety nets; they were there.

Furthermore, Mr Speaker, Sir, in 2000, there was no economic recession worldwide; there was none. I always give this example; it is as if the Captain was at the helm of his ship, the ship of State at sea with his team. The sea was calm. The sky was blue. The sun was shining, and there was no gathering storm anywhere. They could not see any gathering storm. Yet, they managed the unbelievable task of steering the ship of State on the rocks. That is what these people did. They managed to mess it all up, to wreck the economy. As they say sometimes, Mr Speaker, Sir, they snatched defeat out of the jaws of victory; instead of snatching victory out of the jaws of defeat, they did the other way round, and they crashed the economy, not on the precipice, in the precipice, already crashed! And they have *le culot* of asking the electorate: get them back at the helm *pour redresser l'économie*.

(Interruptions)

Redresser leurs poches peut-être!

Let us look at some of the macroeconomic figures, Mr Speaker, Sir, so that we can gauge the enormity of the mismanagement of the economy. As I said, growth rate was 10.2% in 2000 when they came in and 2.7% in 2005, and I say no recession, no euro crisis, the safety nets, sugar protocols, the Multi Fibre Agreement is still there. They managed a growth of 2.7% in 2005. Try to imagine! What would have happened suppose they were in Government when the economic crisis actually hit us? What would have happened?

(Interruptions)

Yes, in 2008.

(Interruptions)

Also, I must say something that I find - I don't know whether people don't read or they know or they just believe everything that they say - people forget one thing. Mr Speaker, Sir, I also did something else in my first term. I accepted the invitation of President Bill Clinton to go to the United States of America, especially Washington, to try to persuade the lawmakers, the Members of the House of Representatives, to agree to pass the Africa Growth and Opportunity Act. It was unlikely that it was going to pass. I am going to this side, because these things are not known. When President Bill Clinton wrote letters to the African Heads of States or Government - some of them who were concerned with AGOA, he sent them all letters - do you know, Mr Speaker, Sir, that all of them turned his offer down except me? I was told by - you were not Foreign Minister there, who was there? *Pagla!*

(Interruptions)

I was advised: please, please, please Prime Minister, don't think of going. Why? Because it is unlikely that AGOA will go through, and, therefore, what will happen? The Opposition will carry a campaign: 'you see, Prime Minister went to Washington. He spent one week there. Look at the expenses and no result.' That's what I was advised by the Foreign Ministry then, just like the other Heads of States were advised the same thing. But maybe I am a - I like to take risks, Mr Speaker, Sir, I am not averse to taking risk. I decided, I will not act on this advice, and I remember President Nelson Mandela - and I hope he gets better - he was here on an official visit around that time. His Minister of Finance was with him and I said to him: 'why do you want to go?' He said: 'no, it is not going to be good for us; in any case, it is not going to go through.' There were so convinced. And President Clinton himself was convinced that there was a great chance it was not going to go through and what he wanted, in fact, was to leave a legacy to show that he has actually helped the Continent of Africa to stand on their own feet. That's why he wanted to do it.

When I went, in spite of all these advices, I was thanked by both Susan Rice, who was then his National Assistant Security Adviser and President Clinton. I had talks with them in Washington. There was one man who was being very, very difficult, in fact, very right wing, Mr Jesse Helms. I was asked before I leave Mauritius, could I also meet him because he was being

very difficult, he is from North Carolina. Very difficult! He is saying no question of moving and he is controlling a lot of votes. Susan Rice wrote a letter to me on behalf of President Clinton to see if I could meet him. I said: 'Yes, I will meet him.' I knew about him. I used to subscribe to Newsweek, Mr Speaker, Sir, with Lucien Finette. Because we were staying in Port Louis, he was paying half and I was paying half the subscription since we were at the Royal College - he was at Port Louis and I was at Curepipe. So, I knew about Jesse Helms, what he was like - lots of articles - extreme right wing. He does not believe in equality, he believes some people are superior to others - very right wing. I said: 'Okay. I know a bit about him. I remember what he is like. I will try to meet him to see whether I can persuade him.' Do you know what his answer was? He said: 'No. If the Prime Minister wants to meet me, well, he comes along to North Carolina and meets me. I am not going to Washington to meet him'. That was his response.

Susan Rice wrote me a letter to say: 'I apologise. This man is like this and I apologise and, therefore, we are taking him out of the list.' I rang Susan Rice, I said: 'Don't take him out. I will go to North Carolina.' Because I have no chips on my shoulders, that I am Prime Minister, I cannot move. No, Sir! For the interest of my country, I will do what has to be done!

When I went there - it is going to be a long story, Mr Speaker, Sir - he started by welcoming me, he started by saying there is no way we will change our vote, because he wants to protect jobs in the textile industry, jobs in North Carolina as there are factories there. I started by saying to him: 'We have something in common'. He was amazed. "What the Prime Minister from a small country like Mauritius would have in common with me, me, powerful, congressman?" And I told him, it is good I say this now, because I saw the article by some armchair critics, especially in *'L'Express'* Editorial -

“(...) que Ramgoolam n'est pas sincère sur Sri Lanka.”

Because he has not read, he does not know; he does not want to find out. Since it is an armchair article and gets paid probably more - I wonder whether it is not more than the President. But I said to him: "I have something in common with you, Mr Jesse Helms". He was amazed. He said: "What would you have in common with me?" You know what I had done before leaving Mauritius? And everybody knows how busy, if you want to take the job seriously. If you want to do like the former Prime Minister, go home at 3 o'clock, that's okay. Mr Bacha was doing all the works for him, he was going home. Everybody knows who was the real Prime Minister then.

Everybody knows this. He was going home at 3.30 p.m. I asked myself: what the hell was he going home that early? I am staying here until 10.00 p.m. to 11.00 p.m.

(Interruptions)

Football, I never thought! *Foulard avec casquette!*

(Interruptions)

I am sorry, I did not realise that. I forgot about this. For me, the State is more important than football. But anyway!

So, I had asked my Ambassador in Washington to send me all the latest speeches that Mr Jesse Helms has made. Even though I knew about him a bit, I said I want to see the latest speeches and he sent me stacks of envelopes. Did I have time to read it here? No, Sir! I took it with me on the plane. I tried to read a bit on the plane, I stopped in London overnight, because I don't want to go in there - I want to look fresh and I read all night. I saw something in there that I said: "Okay, I know how I am going to go ahead. In his speech, in the United Nations, Jesse Helms criticised all the Africans. He said: "We, America who gives money to the United Nations, we give the majority of money, we finance the United Nations and these people get together, make a lobby and defeat us on certain votes." He said: "We should not accept it. We should give America more votes in proportion to the money they give in." Do you realise this? So, it's no more one man one vote now. The richer has more votes. But he criticised African leaders. You know what I said to him? He said: "What do you have in common?" I said I also criticised certain African leaders and this again, against the advice of the Foreign Office. Because the Convention is: an African leader does not criticise an African leader. That is the Convention. What I said, I can tell you, I criticised Myanmar, at the time Burma, for what they were doing with this lady. I criticised Fiji for its discrimination in the Constitution and I criticised Nigeria, because they were about to hang Obasanjo in jail.

You know what I had said in the United Nations? I had said: "I cannot understand why is it when there was apartheid in South Africa, when a white minority was dominating the majority of Africans, we all jumped up and down, but why is it when he said a black man against a black man, then we don't say anything or a yellow man against a yellow man or a brown man against a brown man, we keep quiet". Justice has no colour, Mr Speaker, Sir. Discrimination has no

colour. Whoever does it, we should be able to stand up and say what we have to say. That is why I spoke the way I spoke. Do you know when I spoke, it was my first speech at the United Nations and the Foreign Office wanted me not to say it, but I said it, anyway!

When I spoke these three countries, Burma, Nigeria and Fiji walked out. Then, they asked for a right of reply. The Secretary-General was Boutros Boutros-Ghali. When I went to see him, he said: "It is unprecedented, for the first time, a new leader has come to speak, three countries have asked a right of reply against him." I said: "Are you going to give it?" He said: "Of course, not!" In fact, I can say it, I suppose now. He said: "You know you are perfectly right, I cannot say it, but you said it and I am glad you said it." So, his way of defending these rights does not come here. This young - I was going to say boy, but I would say hon. Member - he has to learn. He asked me the most stupid question. He always does this. He walks into it, the English says - put your foot in it - both feet. He asked me: "Why were you not present at the gathering of the Tamil Federation? Why were you not present?" What a stupid question! I told him: "Precisely, because I want to show I am independent, I don't believe in people putting pressure on me." In fact, I wonder if I had gone whether I would have been obliged to go to Sri Lanka then. Just to show that I am not going to be subject to any kind of pressure from nobody in this country. I can go on and on, Mr Speaker, Sir, but I will be too much away from the Budget, but I can go on and on about my credentials, about what I did.

So, as I was saying, they had all these advantages plus AGOA. There is a report by the World Bank. I did not have time to go and look for it. After AGOA was adopted, giving roughly the amount of money that Mauritius has made through AGOA. In fact, we are the only country who made more out of AGOA, because we are more efficient. It definitely covered my cost for hundred years, perhaps. Hopefully, I won't be here for hundred years, but we will see. Mr Speaker, Sir, they had all these advantages.

Now, concerning the unemployment rate, again, you know, nothing is constant in an economy. You cannot say everything is constant, if it was constant we will be all economists by now. But what is important to look at in economics is the trend that is going on and the trend for unemployment with them was on the rise, culminating a 9.6% unemployment rate in 2005, 16.4% women in this country unemployed when they left office and we all remember. I heard - I

think, it was the hon. Deputy Prime Minister who quoted the words of the then Minister for Industry and International Trade. We are living in a competitive world. You know what he said?

“On perd les emplois à une vitesse vertigineuse. Je le constate, mais, malheureusement, je ne peux rien faire dans un monde globalisé.”

That is his quote.

(Interruptions)

I won't go as far as this, but let us say. This is what he said. And these people are giving the hon. Minister of Industry and Commerce lessons on what to do or what not to do. This is the important thing they showed when they were at the helm. He went further, Mr Speaker, Sir, he said -

“Le chômage dans ce secteur - c'est-à-dire textile – ne pourra être endigué et des pertes d'emplois sont inévitables.”

His very words, in quote, I am saying. These are the people who will ‘*redresse l'économie*’? I ask myself. But we need to say this to the people because here we have short memories. We need to make them realise what these people represent.

(Interruptions)

It is a bit far away! *Billet R 20 un peu loin ça!*

(Interruptions)

But there was a Budget deficit, Mr Speaker, Sir, which jumped, when we left - hon. Dr. Bunwaree was Minister. We left with a budget deficit of 2%. They more than doubled it when they left with 5.1%! And this, in spite of the constraints that we faced, that the hon. Vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Finance faces because of *la situation économique internationale*, in spite of that, we have managed to bring down the budget deficit at manageable levels again!

Let us look at Total Public Debt. Mr Speaker, Sir, you do not have to be an economist. If anybody here were to go and ask a student who is doing Senior Cambridge Level V or Form VI, Lower VI, if he/she is studying economics, ask them what are the implications if your Total Public Debt has reached nearly 70%. They will tell you immediately that you will go into a

vicious cycle, you will not be able to get out of this and you will pay so much on interest rates that you are going to wreck your economy. This is what they achieved. A public debt of nearly 70%! It is in the IMF report and all this. They then tried to change the way they calculated the debt, but still it was 70%! We have brought it down to manageable level at 54.8% and we are well on target to bring it - as the hon. Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development said - to 50% by 2018. Again, seeing what the situation is going to be like, but we are on target.

In the same way, Mr Speaker, Sir, Foreign Direct Investment, we left in 2000 with a Foreign Direct Investment we were getting in the country of Rs7.3 billion. They managed, within one year of being in Office, to actually not even get Rs1 billion of Foreign Direct Investment! From Rs7.3 billion that we left, they got less than Rs1 billion, in fact, they got Rs900,000 or something. By 2004, all they could show was Rs1.8 billion! In other words, the economic policy was an unmitigated disaster, Mr Speaker, Sir! Because we know one simple fact again, it is a simple economic fact: the investment of today is the jobs that we are going to create for tomorrow. It is a simple equation! I am saying it simply perhaps.

After the elections of 2005, we took the measures to be able to attract Foreign Direct Investment to make it easier for businesses to thrive and FDI surged dramatically. Despite the fact that the country is still bearing the full brunt of the financial and economic crises since 2008, we have had a remarkable success as far as the FDI is concerned, Mr Speaker, Sir. Believe it or not, in 2010 we attracted Rs13.9 billion of Foreign Direct Investment, Rs17.7 billion last year. In fact, when you look at the figures, in the first year we were in Office, by 2006, we had attracted more Foreign Direct Investment than they had attracted over the whole period that they were in Office.

(Interruptions)

Confidence in the economy! We were saying it. They were mismanaging. They were putting the brakes on it, increasing VAT twice! They were stalling the economy. The way they were doing things, do you think that people do not know? Now, Mr Jean-Mée Desvaux is talking about it. It was just Illovo? Not just Illovo, Sir. Lots of little deals were being done. They were interested not in the country, in themselves!

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker, Sir, people should ask themselves: how is it, when they were in Office, that is the result and when we are in Office, this is the result? It did not happen by itself. And we were criticised! It is due to the reorientation of the economic policies that we adopted, the bold reforms we undertook, the Business Facilitation Act which I think was in 2006, to make it easier for people to be attracted to do business. I tell people: ‘What do you think we are the only beautiful women in the world?’ So, to speak! Otherwise I would have stayed here!

(Interruptions)

But people can go to many countries now! Dubai is doing artificial sand beaches, better than us. People have choices today. So, we had to know how to attract these people. I got experts. The former Prime Minister from Ireland was here. We had discussions, a small panel to see what we can do to move out of this situation we are in. Ireland had done one thing - hon. Dr. Boolell also studied in Ireland - Ireland was also criticised. The then *Taoiseach*, the Prime Minister - we call them *Taoiseach* there - decided the way to get out of the problem was to bring the taxes down.

(Interruptions)

And he got into the Euro. And we decided that we would bring taxes down to 15% so that it becomes attractive for people to come here, across the board, 15%. And we have had the results. The proof of the pudding is in the eating, as I say.

We have also given impetus to the Small and Medium Enterprises giving them access to finance which they could not get before, unless you were a protected *je ne peux pas dire petit copain, grand copain!* A phone call and you get a loan! It has happened before. We have seen what has happened in the Cooperative Bank before. We have seen what has happened to the Delphis! We have seen all these things. I know a lot of things, but I am not going to say it now. I will wait. It is too early.

(Interruptions)

It is too early. I will remind people of what these people are able to do.

(Interruptions)

We attracted foreign talent where we needed it. It is no wonder and no coincidence, Mr Speaker, Sir, that we are topping the table, be it the World Bank, the IMF, the Mo Ibrahim Index in which for the last seven years we are the number one! It is difficult, there is a saying: “Once you reach the top, the only way is down”. But we are staying there for seven years! It is no mean feat, Mr Speaker, Sir, and given the international economic climate! It is no coincidence that Moody’s, the Credit Agency, has upgraded Mauritius, but downgraded France, United States and Italy. All these countries are being downgraded and Mauritius has been upgraded! It is important because do you know what that means? That means when we borrow we are in a different league, therefore we borrow at less interest rate. That is what it means, apart from our reputation. It also has practical consequences today. If we want a loan today, we will get it, but we do not want. We can manage. What we can manage, we are managing.

Mr Speaker, Sir, that is the economic legacy of Med Point 1 alliance! And they are promising, I can’t believe it! Sometimes I ask myself, do they have half a brain or one brain or what? Because they are saying that if they come back, and God forbids, they will again do the same policies to *redresse le pays. Voilà ! Tout le monde au chômage cette fois-ci. Tout le monde au chômage!*

(Interruptions)

L’abattoir! While we, in the Labour Party and the PMSD alliance, Mr Speaker, Sir, have shown that we can manage the economy efficiently and prudently while also maintaining social justice high on our social agenda. That is what we have done! We have shown that we can marry economic efficiency with social justice, Mr Speaker, Sir. And, we have shown, if you look – sometimes it is not clear, I tend to agree- sometimes people find it difficult to know what exactly we are trying to do. But, if you look back now, you will see that there is a long term strategic vision. That is why I spoke of a golden thread which links what we are doing. We have acted and we will continue to act responsibly because we are the doers while they practise *l’effet d’annonce*. If the hon. Member would remember, when they were in Government *annonce sur annonce, comité sur comité, comité de corbeaux, comité de ceci, comité de cela, on va faire tout bouger.*

(Interruptions)

Comité de chiens errants, de rats ; tout ! Comité sur comité. What is the practical end result of your committees on committees? Zero! We have acted responsibly. They have practised *effets d'annonce!* Now, they are borrowing this from us, and they are saying '*effets d'annonce*'. Look at our programme and look how much we have achieved, Mr Speaker, Sir!

They, in fact, '*effets d'annonce*'. They wrecked the economy, because they have no innovative ideas and no long term strategic vision. That is the difference between us and them, Mr Speaker, Sir. That is the huge difference. You know, some people think everything is possible. You sleep with one partner one day, you sleep with the other partner the next day.

(Interruptions)

Multiple partners!

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker, Sir, I will tell you something else. They are out of touch, and I am glad these three hon. Members are here, because, none of them is there - I know them, they are in the Opposition; I hope not for long, but they are in the Opposition - but, Mr Speaker, Sir, they have something, and that is why they are there. They are more in touch with the people than these people who are not here. That is why!

(Interruptions)

Especially our youth! They play the same old tune; *disque rayé*. Day in, day out, year in, year out, 'Ramgoolam *ceci*, Ramgoolam *cela*.' Good man! My father used to say: nobody throws stones on a mango tree which has no mangoes, and ripe mangoes are down. They are the adept of Goebbels, Mr Speaker, Sir, as far as rumour-mongering is concerned, mud-slinging, which is given credence, I am afraid, by some of the '*suiveurs*' in some quarters of the media. I ask myself why. They have no brain? Why do they gulp everything down?

You know, yesterday, I will just give you an example. My former Director of Communication is around - I am not referring to him, but he is there - and he will remember - he does not know what I am going to say. Yesterday, some people came from abroad - people I know - they gave me a small present for Christmas, a Blue label, and they said: 'I hope you like it.' What can you do? I said: 'Well, I will take it, but I don't drink Blue label, in fact.' They

said: 'What?' I said: 'No, I don't drink Blue label.' They said: 'But we were told that's your favourite!' They said: 'But how is it possible that people told us this?' I said: 'Because someone in the press - Jean Claude Antoine, in fact, if I am not mistaken - in *l'Express*.'

We were travelling during my first term to Paris. My former Director of Communication, Mr Alain Gordon-Gentil was with me. My wife, the Secretary to Cabinet and I were travelling First Class, but they were travelling in Business Class. But when the plane gets off, if there are seats, I ask them to come and join me in First Class; the seats are there; if there are seats available. He came to see me in my hotel, and said: 'Look at this!' He showed me the 'Weekend'. 'Look what this idiot has said.' I tend to take it, because you know I have got a very, very thick skin, believe me, Mr Speaker, Sir, and you know that in politics you have to have very thick skin. You cannot be normal and be Prime Minister. I am saying the same thing as President Sarkozy said. You cannot! If you are normal, then stay normal. Don't join; don't try to come to take my place. I said: 'Alain, what you are worried about this? It's a small thing.' He said: 'No!' He is the Director of Communication; he knows communication, he knows what has been planted. I grant him this. It is his field. He said: 'This small information is going to make waves. They will use this against you.' He wanted to put a *démenti*. I said 'no, I don't want to.' If I put a *démenti*, I will have to put *démenti* everyday! He said: 'well, in that case, let me go and see the honourable gentleman, and tell him it is false.' He did go, and he came back to tell me. He said no. 'Alain, *tu me dis ça ? Moi j'ai mes renseignements.*' *Li ti ena so NIU li.* 'Sur l'avion, on me l'a dit.' Mr Gentil told him: 'if you don't know, let me tell you. Neither the Prime Minister nor his wife, when they are travelling on the plane - and my staff knows - he never drinks neither wine nor champagne nor white wine nor red wine nor whisky nor brandy or whatever, or port after...

(Interruptions)

No. I don't drink alcohol. I don't say I never drink alcohol, mind you. But, on the plane, I don't. I drink water. And my Director of Communication told him: 'I was in the plane, I know, I have travelled with him so many times.' He said: 'No! I won't correct. I have my information.' That is how this false information was planted, and today, 2013, - that was, I don't know, in 1996 perhaps - some people come and give me this, because the rumour is still going on. That is how - *le roi menteur ! Le Roi Soleil, le roi menteur tout ladans là!*' That is how they

try to destroy people. That is the way of doing politics. That is the way. That is the level they will go to; in the gutter to be in power. That is what they can do. That is what I will never do, but I will hit back; that I will do!

(Interruptions)

I will not let people walk on my toes and stay quiet. That I will not do, Mr Speaker, Sir; it's not in my nature, and I will never do it. I will never bend to that kind of attacks. I will hit back also. But, in my way; not in that way, on the false news they do everyday.

And, as I said, Mr Speaker, Sir, I will give you a few examples. If you feel you want to stop me, I don't mind, Mr Speaker, Sir; whenever, because I am going a bit longer than I expected.

Mr Speaker: Take your time, hon. Prime Minister.

(Interruptions)

The Prime Minister: Thank you. Same old tactics, Mr Speaker, Sir: calumny and abuse, propagation of false news. They will say not enough is being done; all they have said in this Budget. I remember the hon. Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development was saying quietly to me: 'If you don't do something, they say you are not doing, you have no vision.' In fact, we have already done it. 'And if we do it, they say you should not have done it. You could have done it better.' Criticism all the way: not positive criticism, criticism all the way. They want to create an atmosphere of fear, of doom, of despondency; that is what they want to do, Mr Speaker, Sir, and they will use the same slogans, *effets d'annonce*, empty slogans. I will give you, Mr Speaker, Sir, just a few examples, just to remind people what is this *alliance Med Point*, what are they, in fact. What do they actually do when they are in Government; the double face, *double face*.

Let us look at the Government Programme of 2000. You know how the Government Programme of 2000 was called? '*Anou redresse nou pays*.' Just like one day, hon. Bodha said '*Anou ale la mer*', with his photograph on it. *Sane coup la 'Anou redresse nou pays.'*

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker, Sir, I will just give you a few examples. Unfortunately, they are not here. I know they are not here, but I will drag them in the middle, let the light shine on them so that people can see what kind of demagogues we are having affair with. They need to be shown the light on them. They, Mr Speaker, Sir, announced in their programme, the privatisation - gentlemen of the press and ladies – of Channel 3 of the MBC, at page 48, if you want to know the page. The then Prime Minister went even further. He said: ‘I will turn the MBC into a BBC.’

(Interruptions)

He is known for his extreme language. He will turn the MBC into BBC. But between 2000 and 2005 - I answered a question the other day in Parliament, but that did not go; question of time, Mr Speaker, Sir, and they don't ask the right questions. Neither do they have the right solutions, but they don't even ask the right questions. As I said, they had a three-quarter majority, let us not forget. So, they could do everything they wanted to do. But the third Channel of the MBC was never privatised. Instead, they attacked Mr Calikhan day in day out. To his credit - nobody is perfect - he has reduced the massive debts that the MBC had when they left office. They did not privatise the third channel, but they left massive debts. Worst, Mr Speaker Sir! I am going to say so that these members of the press as well know. They went further. I didn't say this the other day. I was hoping that they would walk in, but they didn't. They actually - in fact, the then Prime Minister - directed the IBA, the Government not to go ahead with the privatisation of Channel 3. I don't know how many of you know this.

(Interruptions)

Derniers hypocrites ça! Pena couma zot! Deuxième pena ça!

(Interruptions)

I will tell you, Mr Speaker, Sir, that was hardly one year after they came to power, that is, the Med Point I alliance came to power! They sent a letter to the Secretary to the Cabinet, to the IBA, informing the latter - because some people were applying because they thought they were speaking the truth, they were applying; *libéralisation des ondes, images sur la télévision*, news and everything. People thought, they started applying. They sent a letter to the IBA informing

them not to go ahead with the privatisation of Channel 3. This is what the letter said, Mr Speaker, Sir. I can read the letter because it is an official letter. It says –

“I wish to inform you that the Government has decided that it is not proposed for the time being – time being for five years, that is their time being – to proceed with the privatisation of the third TV channel of the MBC in the context of the liberalisation of the air waves.”

Not proposed! They go further - because they know - and say in the letter –

“I understand that the IBA is presently processing applications – which they were – received from private operators for the grant of radio and television broadcasting licences.”

So, they know. Then they add on –

“But you are, therefore, kindly requested to take into account the above Government decision because we have decided there will be no privatisation of television in Mauritius.”

My friend, hon. Xavier Duval, was right. I was not so sure, but now I know that he was right. This is the hypocrisy that they have done. This is a glaring example of their hypocrisy and the double language and they abuse to mislead the electorate of this country. That is why I say to the people, don't vote like you were voting 50 years ago; use your brain and see who is helping you and who is misleading you. Use your brain when you use the power of the vote, Mr Speaker, Sir, that is what I tell people. I could go on and on, Mr Speaker, Sir. Again, I'll give you another example, Competition Tribunal, page 14 – *Anou redresse nou pays*. Again, competition, zero! Why do you think, Mr Speaker, Sir? Because, once in power, they are interested to help their *bailleurs de fonds*; *competition* means small people will get competition, the big one won't be dissatisfied. *Bailleurs de fonds sont plus importants que le peuple! Pas de commission pour la compétition!* None! It is my Government which has established a Competition Commission in 2009. Now headed by the former Supreme Court Justice, Mr Pillay! Why? It is in order to promote the interest of consumers. It is the consumers that we have to protect.

Mr Speaker, Sir, again, it is a glaring example, what they said about pensioners. At page 14, *Anou redresse nou pays*. This is what they said; they promised a decent revenue for pensioners so that they can live a dignified life. You would recall, once in power what did they do? They actually deprived thousands of pensioners of their monthly pension; even, I think, one person passed away. He got a shock when he went to collect his pension. No, Sir, no pension for you! Out! Poor people, have no consideration for them! They would make a campaign as if they are the great defenders. I will show you other examples here, what they do and what we do. And it is us, Mr Speaker, Sir, my Government which restored universal pension.

Another example which is striking, I think he has a tendency to do this. The former Prime Minister, now the hon. Leader of the Opposition, said -

“Once I become Prime Minister, I will eliminate the scourge of drugs from Plaine Verte in 24 hours”.

24 hours! In fact, *il faut attendre de plus belle !* They criticise now, and that is what he said. Now, thanks – I must say it to the people – to the means that are provided to ADSU and the good Officers of ADSU, we are catching more and more drug dealers. If you see, you will see the results.

We have amended the Assets Recovery Act precisely to ensure that the *barons de la drogue* pay for their dastardly acts. Just now, we have included the new synthetic cannabinoids and their derivatives in the Dangerous Drugs Act, because people are using different methods. We have to stay ahead of the curve, Mr Speaker, Sir. And they say the big thing - it’s easy - law and order! They can put law and order!

But when I came into Office in 1995, after the former Prime Minister has been in power for, I don’t know, 12 or 13 years or whatever, the Police did not even have a central computer to look at fingerprints. The Police were looking like this: this print matches, this print does not match. Amateurs! There was no forensic lab as such. Call these things, emergency, nothing! No degrees for Policemen! We must train them. You can’t ask them to uphold the law if they don’t know the law. I created the BSc courses for the Police. You know, when I was in Opposition, hon. Bérenger became Prime Minister. In fact, during Budget time, in his speech, I think it was a question at the Committee Stage, he said: “You see what we are like. We have

made Policemen become degree holders at the University of Mauritius.” He said! Lie! I stood up and said: “Hon. Prime Minister, since when did that start?” He gave the year. I said: “But, who was Prime Minister then?” He said: “It was you, but I never say everything you do was wrong”. That’s what his answer was. Go and see Hansard! I started it and I am continuing it. On the contrary, under them the crime rate actually went up. Now, it is going down year after year. I always say ‘one crime is one crime too many’, but it is actually going down over the last five years. What we are seeing is what we call ‘white-collar crimes’ going up. That I agree, and that also we will react.

Recently, Mr Speaker, Sir, we have seen the problems of hawkers. Our hon. friends here know. Hawkers! Mr Speaker, Sir, people forget, they have been controlling the Municipality of Port Louis and Rose Hill for more than a quarter of a century. Quarter of a century! Have they addressed the problem of hawkers for a quarter of a century? None! Sweet nothing!

In their programme for the Municipal elections of 2012, they promised, and I quote –

“Créer des infrastructures pour reloger les marchands de rue durablement - big words – et dans le respect de leur dignité.”

Instead they are ignoring a ruling of the Supreme Court. They refused to recognise the genuine hawkers who have a permit in due form, who have been hawkers for years; they refused to recognise them. They created a new list of hawkers who have got nothing to do with hawking business. *Petits copains!* And they want the Central Government to pay for them.

(Interruptions)

Marque couyon lor nou front aster!

(Interruptions)

This is what they want us to do, Mr Speaker, Sir, and they want to put the problem on us. You deal with your problem! You created it! Recognise genuine people! *Il faut arrêter cette politique de petits copains à tout prix*, because this means it is the means of their living that we are talking about, Mr Speaker, Sir. These are poor people, not all of them are poor, I must say; some are rich too, but, at least, the means of their living. That is why they are angry.

It is the same thing with the electoral reform, Mr Speaker, Sir. I think it is important that I mention it. They had, in their mandate, very earlier on, the Presidential Commission presided by Judge Albie Sachs, a very well-known person. What happened then? They could not agree among themselves. *Parce que c'est l'alliance de la carpe et du lapin. C'est toujours pareil. Arriver au pouvoir est important. Et puis on va voir qui va tuer l'autre. C'est ça qu'ils vont faire.*

Even for the other day, I can say it, when there was the problem of who will speak, some Members have the same tone, we don't care about this, 'little *crétin*', but what can we do? *Dans couloir, arr moi pé dire!* With him, they have said. They couldn't agree among themselves. What did they do then? They created a Select Committee. You ask Judge Albie Sachs to give his opinion. Okay, I don't say everything that he says in his report, you have to do. You never do that. Okay, you create a Select Committee now; debate on the Select Committee. And, Mr Speaker, Sir, when the debate was on, I was the Leader of the Opposition, after I had spoken, when hon. Bérenger stood up to speak, he said something that even myself I thought what is he going to say now. He said in front of everybody that there is something historic that has happened today that nobody has noted. I think he was meaning the members of the press, and here also *parce ki ena enn paké gros feuilles ici ousi.*

(Interruptions)

We know what we are talking about. He said nobody has noticed; something historic! I, myself said what is he going to say; what is the historic? He said –

“Pour la première fois, le leader du Parti travailliste s'est prononcé pour la réforme électorale.”

Because Labour Party was always against electoral reform. It is a fact, for different reasons. He said it and I said to him: “You had a three-quarter majority, now the main Opposition party is saying it is agreeing with you, so, why the hell did not you do the electoral reform? What was preventing you from doing it? Even the Opposition was with you.” They can't agree, therefore, now what they do? A second Committee, this time, presided by the then Attorney General. Discussing, discussing, discussing, as I said, *comité sur comité, sur comité*, result zero! They were in power with a three-quarter majority, which I don't have between 2000 and 2005 and no

electoral reform. Now, when I say that after so many years, after independence that Mauritians should think in terms of Mauritians instead of thinking in terms of communities and castes, we need to be united as a nation. That is the way forward, Mr Speaker, Sir.

(Interruptions)

Because every human being has the right to live on this earth and be treated as a human being. That is what I said. So many years after independence, when Mauritians are abroad, so many of you have relatives who have been settled abroad. When Mauritians are abroad, there is no difference. Whether they are Chinese, Vaish or God knows what else!

(Interruptions)

Exact! That is the common denominator, in fact, and we have different ways. We are different. So, now we can't say that we are Mauritians. Now, when the election time comes, I have to say I am a Hindu. He has to say that he is a Muslim. He has to say, he is a *population générale*. This is a misnomer. What is *population générale*? You know what the Constitution says, Mr Speaker, Sir; if you are not a Hindu, if you do not belong to the Hindu community, to the Chinese community and to the Muslim community, then, we throw you in the other basket, which is *population générale*. *Nous sommes tous population générale!*

(Interruptions)

There is an example, Mr Speaker, Sir. He is a real Mauritian because we don't know what he is? Hon. Yeung Sik Yuen! It is a disrespect to the Creole community that you should actually say - call them Creole, if you want to say.

So, when I say now that I want to bring this electoral reform, it is going to be difficult; it is not easy because I must ensure that every minority feels represented. It is important, otherwise we cannot go ahead. Look what has happened in Sri Lanka! Because they did not care about minorities in Sri Lanka! This is the result. This is something that I will never embark upon. We must ensure that everybody gets represented, but I think it can be done with goodwill, and I will bring it. I don't want to bring it in the middle of the Budget or whatever, but we will see.

But now that I say that I want to bring up the reform, they are more in a hurry than me now. Now, they want to see: where is it? Where is it?

(Interruptions)

I tell them: 'find out what length is the piece of string, you will know when I will bring it.' I can't carry on. Do you know what the problem is, Mr Speaker, Sir? I will tell you. I have been Prime Minister for so many years, but I am not arrogant. If I don't understand anything - you can ask my colleagues. I can't know everything. I read a lot. I know a lot of things, in fact, but I can't say I know everything. I ask! Even to a simple person, I will ask. But they are arrogant, they think they know. That is the difficulty with them. They really think that you can amend the Constitution; you can make amendments to the Constitution on the back of an envelope in five minutes. He knows what I am saying. They said: "Come and talk, five minutes *nu fini ça*." Five minutes ! *L'arrogance! L'arrogance de croire qu'on connaît quand on est au fait un ignorant.* That is the difficulty. These people are more dangerous. You better have somebody who understands and says: "No, I am sorry", than somebody who thinks: "I am never wrong. I am always right." That is what we have, that is the arrogance. You can't amend the Constitution like this.

There are unforeseen consequences to what we do. We must look very carefully. There are no constitutional experts in Mauritius. Let's get rid of this misnomer! Do you know what constitutional expert means? That's why I contact people abroad, Prof. Carcassonne, who has passed away unfortunately. He is a constitutional expert. Other people have been contacted with my new reforms. I need to contact, because I need to make sure that we don't go into a situation where we don't know how to get out of it.

There used to be an advertisement; I am sure you know it, Mr Speaker, Sir, in the old road when you go from Port Louis to Beau Bassin, near Grand River North West, there used to be a publicity for a brake called Ferodo, and it used to say -

"Don't start something you can't stop."

(Interruptions)

That is what I am saying. Mr Speaker, Sir, I don't want to carry on and on. In their programme, they say: *halte à la corruption*, and now we know, who are the corrupts? I am not mentioning names.

In 2000, when I created the Economic Crime Office, I was together with the leader of the MMM. He said to me: 'You know, if you really want to show it's going to be an independent office, the Director should have a constitutional guarantee that he or she cannot be removed because the Prime Minister doesn't like him or somebody else doesn't like him or her.' I said: 'I totally agree with you.' I agreed to amend the Constitution, to give that person, a constitutional guarantee. Therefore, he or she cannot be removed, unless we have a three-quarter majority and we created the Economic Crime Office. I must say, Mr Speaker, Sir, look at the difference; two of my own Ministers were brought before the Economic Crime Office. Ask the person who was the Director, if one day, I rang to say: 'You know, these are my Ministers, please!' Never! I will never do this! I never intervened. I asked my two Ministers to come, hon. Deerpalsing and hon. Bundhun. There was a third one, but it was a very minor thing, hon. Bojeenauth, he had used the fax machine in his office for his personal use. I asked the two: "You will have to resign if you are going to be called in front of the ECO?" I must say one of them said: 'But why, I am innocent.' I said: 'The reason is simple. The perception! If you are accused of corruption and you are a Minister, then you go in front of ECO, and then you go back to your office, you sit in your office, you can take files out. You can destroy files.' That is what we don't want.

(Interruptions)

Yes, tampered with. So, I said: 'You will have to resign. If you are proven not guilty, you come back. I will keep the seat hot.' They both agreed and they both resigned. Now, we know after so many years, hon. Bundhun has been vindicated completely. It was forged, the campaign that he tried to take commission on *molleton*. What campaign they did not make on *molleton!* Today, we know everything was false.

That is what we have to put up in this country when we want to make this country advance. So, we did the change. I see in the press they said –

"Un pas dans la bonne direction."

In 2002, Mr Speaker, Sir, we know what happened to l'ECO because now the lady was questioning one of their own Ministers. She was threatened; she was ridiculed, blamed and denigrated in this House. Within 24 hours, Mr Speaker, Sir, they brought the Bill to abolish the Economic Crime Office altogether, because one of theirs was being questioned. That is the difference between us and them. I think what they do, Mr Speaker, Sir, they judge us by their standard, their low standard. That is what they are doing. I remember hon. Dr. Boolell was there and the Deputy Prime Minister also was there. When I asked question, the then Prime Minister, Sir Anerood Jugnauth - we know the saying we used to say "*la langue péna les os*", he does not think, he speaks and then he thinks. Normally, human beings should think and then they speak. This is different here, upside down, everything is upside down. The son is being removed and the father is coming out. Upside down, again, the same thing, it is a pattern. Look at the pattern! He said the thing that I could not believe my eyes. He said: 'I have no choice, but to remove the lady and cancel this, because otherwise all my Ministers will be at risk'. Can you believe that? 'That means all your Ministers are corrupt? That's what you are saying? Why are they at risk if they have done nothing? But this is what he said. Now he will do the same thing, like he would say he never said this, like he quoted from a book, an interview, when he said: "*la régionalisation a détruit le sport*", *le football – maintenant* he says he never said that.

Mr Speaker, Sir, and then they abolished it, with all the denigration and all this. But look at what the press said then, 5-Plus - must be a member here - le 9 février 2003 -

"L'épisode ECO a démontré que les puissants du jour - in other words Alliance Med Point 1- sont prêts à tout pour se protéger en cas d'éventuels dangers."

That is the difference between us and them, Mr Speaker, Sir. He played by the rules. He must not be afraid to play by the rules. I never intervened. Just like I said, Mr Speaker, Sir, I have said it, I can say it here. When the problem arose - I think he was quoting what I said when the MSM resigned. They are the *transfuges*, in fact. The press will say these people are the *transfuges*. But they are the *transfuges*, because they were elected on a Government platform, have the courage, this is the platform, resign, let us have a by-election, we will see one by one. We can do this, why not? What are they afraid of? They have stayed because they were elected on a Government platform and I know what they have tried. They tried to have a *coup d'état*. They tried to buy people, but these people are loyal to me all of them here and none of them are...

(Interruptions)

This is what they tried and when they had resigned, you know people don't know me. I was invited in London, there were a few things I was doing with my wife, I was sleeping in a hotel - I must say this so that people can know - the hotel knows I am Prime Minister. They cannot put a phone call through. It was early morning and the phone rang. I am saying early morning, it was around eight. We were tired, we were still about to get breakfast and the phone rang and I thought I have a cousin in London who kept ringing me, inviting me. But he stays so far away, I cannot go and I thought he was ringing. And I said: 'It must be a new girl at the reception who does not know, I am the Prime Minister of Mauritius; she is putting the call through.' And my wife said to me: 'You know, answer it, otherwise she would keep ringing.' I took the phone. Do you know who was on the phone? My High Commissioner, Mahen Kundasamy. When I rang, the receptionist said: 'I am sorry, Sir, Prime Minister, I would not have rung you, but your High Commissioner is downstairs and he said it's urgent, he talks to you.' I said: 'I don't know what has happened, but put him through.' I talked to him, he was breathless and he was saying. I said: 'What's the problem, Mahen?' He said: 'There is a big crisis.' I said: 'What crisis?' He said six Ministers have resigned. My wife and God is my witness. Do you know what I said? I remember word for word. I said: 'Six Ministers have resigned? I hope not from the Labour Party or the PMSD.' He said: 'No, Sir, the MSM.' I said: 'Six of the MSM, so, why have you come downstairs so quickly?'

(Interruptions)

He said: 'But, Sir, should I come upstairs?'

(Interruptions)

I said: 'No, go back to sleep.' My staff was with me. He also told them: 'Go and book the plane, the Prime Minister has to go back.' Go back for what? Six idiots have resigned and I have to go back?

It reminds me of what President Reagan said once, Mr Speaker, Sir. He was President of the United States. He was sleeping in the White House. The Libyans were having problem with Libya and two American jets went and threw a rocket against a Libyan airplane and the Libyan airplane was brought down, the pilot died. And then, the press was saying: 'The President of the

United States was sleeping and nobody told him.’ And there was a press conference. President Reagan was answering questions and one of the members of the press said to him: ‘But, Mr President, were you awakened? Were you told they were about to press the button and bring down this jet?’ He did not lie, he said: ‘No. For why the hell should they tell me? Is it not a Libyan plane which has crashed? Not an American plane, so why the hell do they have to tell me?’ It is the same thing. The MSM wanted to resign, resign, my friends! And anyway! I continued with my Programme and then when I arrived to Mauritius, Mr Speaker, Sir - I need to say it for these people to hear what I am saying - the Secretary to the Cabinet came to meet me at the airport and said: ‘Prime Minister, the President is saying: could you come and see him immediately.’ Who’s Prime Minister? I work for the President? I am the one who is elected by the people, not him.

(Interruptions)

Don’t play this rule with me! I said to him: ‘No, Sir, I will go and see him when I want to go and see him.’ But by respect I said in the afternoon, cut out the siesta, let us meet for him – because I know there is a siesta period, *entre 3 heures et 4 heures mo croire siesta*. I said: “Okay, at 3 o’clock I would meet him, but not now. I am not your slave. I am elected by the whole of this country, I have a majority. Anyway, I went to see him. You know, Mr Speaker, Sir, tell him to deny. First of all, he was very critical of his own son: “Useless leader, does not know, never resign when the Prime Minister is not there! Never done!”

(Interruptions)

He was right, yes, you never do this! You resign when the Prime Minister comes back. What’s the hurry? I know what’s the hurry! And then he said: “He did this”, and then he said, but there is a solution. I said there is a solution, what is the solution? He said: “You must stop the enquiry by ICAC. You stop the enquiry by ICAC, everything goes into order, five of them can come back in Government. Hon. Mrs Hanoomanjee will not be able to; she will have to stay outside. I think she does not believe me, but that’s her problem. I am speaking the truth. Five of them will come back and even carry on.” I said to him: “Mr President, in my whole life, I have never intervened even in a Police enquiry, let alone ICAC. Two of my Ministers had to resign because of corruption charges – not proven – charges and now you tell me to go and stop the enquiry by

ICAC.” He said to me: “If you refuse, you will be in trouble.” I said to him: “Sir, men like me are not afraid to face trouble.

(Interruptions)

I will face the trouble I have to face, but I will never, on principle, intervene.” And I left, I refused and I brought out a communiqué from my Office to say that I will not ever intervene in the enquiry of ICAC; they must be able to work *dans la sérénité*. There is the result! That is the truth. Now, these people that want to come back here for interfering in corruption enquiries!

(Interruptions)

These are the people who will *redresse le pays*? For God’s sake!

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker, Sir, I can understand because it is the Goebbels way. There are two things that they do: say an untruth, repeat it, repeat it and repeat it so that people will believe it and even you will start believing it. I have seen this happening.

(Interruptions)

Mensonge sur mensonge et puis tout le monde croit que c’est la vérité. Le mensonge est devenu la vérité. That is one of the way they do. Otherwise, if you attack them or they know they are vulnerable, they will come up and say this is the best thing that they have done *parce que la défense d’après eux est la meilleure, c’est le système communiste! Quand on est en défense, en fait on attaque. Football pareil ! Nou camarade là, foulard ! Ça mem ki li pe ale gueter kitfois!*

Now, Bérenger is saying Illovo deal is the best democratisation deal that we ever had. Mr Speaker, Sir, he now pretends that Illovo – he is proud – *démocratisation!*

At the time of Illovo, I was saying it and I must say I always give credit to the person who I need to give credit. I do not take the credit for myself. If somebody has helped me, I will say: “yes, this guy has helped me.” It was Mr Rama Sithanen who came to see me in my home, showed me the details of the Illovo deal and what a scandal it was going to be in this country. He said to me - I must say, even though maybe we did not realise - what is happening is a scandal!

When he explained I said it was a bloody scandal. We did not know the full extent of it, I must say.

I had my good friend, Mr Etienne Sinatambou, who was helping me. Day in day out we were trying to find out because all was a cloak of secrecy. We did not know. Now we know the full extent, but we did not know at that time. Mr Rama Sithanen said to me: “You know, as Leader of the Opposition, you must go and ask for an appointment with the Prime Minister - who was Sir Anerood Jugnauth - explain to him that Bérenger is blinding him, that is, fooling him. He does not know what he is doing. It is the biggest scandal of this century. You cannot give away money and land like this to people who already have land and money.” This is what, Mr Sithanen, who is an intelligent person, as we all know, said. He said: “Go and open his eyes!” I said: “You are right, he is a fool. We know.” I said: “Okay, I will take an appointment,” Mr Speaker, Sir.

I rang, as Leader of the Opposition. I rang La Caverne, *caverne Alibaba là*.

(Interruptions)

I rang. The Policeman says to me: “The Prime Minister is not here!” I said: “Okay. I understand, I have been Prime Minister, he is busy and he is out somewhere.” So I said: “Okay, when will he come back?” The reply was: “I don’t know, Sir.” I said: “Okay, I leave a message that the Leader of the Opposition has asked to talk to him, I will call later.” I waited for one hour. I called again saying: “Can I talk to the Prime Minister?” The reply was: “He is having his lunch, Sir.” I said “For how long?” He said: “I do not know.” Now, I understand, he is the Prime Minister, he is busy and I know what the weight of this Office is. So, I said - I am not going to disturb him, he is having his lunch. I said: “Okay - I left a message - I will leave a message again. I will talk to him later. Maybe he will ring me back”. I waited for about three quarter of an hour. I rang again for the third time. I said: “Can I speak to the Prime Minister?” The reply was: “He is having a siesta, Sir.”

(Interruptions)

That is why I said it was 3 o’clock! I said now, this man, his age, he is probably tired. I know what the pressure of this Office is. I said: “Okay, don’t disturb him, I will ring again.” I asked:

“How long will it be?” He said: “I do not know, Sir.” I said: “Okay, let him have his siesta, I will ring again.” I waited for - I can’t remember - maybe one hour. I rang again for the fourth time. I asked: “Can I speak to the Prime Minister?” “He is gone out, Sir.” You must be a bloody fool - I do not know whether it is parliamentary - you must be a fool to think, one, two, three, four, I am the Constitutional Leader of the Opposition and he is not taking my calls! He refuses! I then said to the policeman: “Look here, I am a former Prime Minister...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Generally, the hon. Prime Minister must be addressing the Chair.

The Prime Minister: Yes, Sir. So, Mr Speaker, Sir, I then said to the Policeman: “Look here, be very careful. I am a former Prime Minister; I know how the system works. I can easily find out who is answering the phone! I am going to make a press conference the next day and I will mention your name because you have refused to put me through to the Prime Minister.” Do you know what happened then, Sir? He said: “Wait Sir! I think there is a car coming!”

(Interruptions)

Suddenly the car is appearing! Then he said: “Yes, it is the Prime Minister coming in.” All false because I have checked afterwards, he was there all the time. Then he said: “Okay I will ask him to ring you.” And he did ring me then and I said: “I want to come and see you to explain to you the Illovo deal. It is going to be a scandal.” You know, Mr Speaker, Sir, I was the official Leader of the Opposition and do you know what he said? “No, I don’t want to meet you! I am happy with things as they are! You are trying to put disorder in my alliance. I refuse to meet you!” I said: “Look, well what you are saying. You refuse to meet the Leader of the Opposition on a crucial issue?” He said: “Yes!” I said: “Okay, thank you.” Then we started our campaign and we started making our press conferences and we were saying that it was a scandal and this and that.

Now he has the *culot* to say that the Illovo deal was the best deal because now, Mr Speaker, Sir, what has happened? We were saying that there was *anguille sous roche*. I should have said there is Black Mamba *sous roche*.

(Interruptions)

That is what I should have said instead of *anguille*!

(Interruptions)

We thought that the Prime Minister was being fooled by the Deputy Prime Minister. Now, we are being told by Mr Jean-Mée Desvaux whom I have criticised in the past about the Illovo deal, he was the one who knows from inside. I cannot know, nobody else can know and he is saying, in fact, it is the other way round; it is this one who has taken the other one for a ride!

(Interruptions)

It means both of them are guilty because if I know you are stealing and I keep quiet that means I am also guilty.

(Interruptions)

Complice, soutirère on appelle ça! Soutirère!

(Interruptions)

So, now we know! Now what is happening? Mr Desvaux has said it. He has shed light and not all the light, I believe, whether it was *démocratisation* or enrichment for a handful of people à *outrance*. What did he say? I think hon. Pillay Chedumbrum said it very well. Now, we know it is not 6, we were saying *R 6 milliards pour cinq familles*, now it appears it is *R 9 milliards pour cinq familles*! Now, we are knowing more. Now, we know it is not like the way because these *cinq familles* wanted two-third and one-third for the Government. Mr Desvaux was saying: “No, you are being greedy. It is one-third for you and two-third for the Government.” One-third of *R 9 milliards* is *R 3 milliards*! We are not speaking about millions; we are speaking about *milliards*, billions of rupees! But now we know that is not the way it is. Not two-third and one-third. Now we are learning that it is one-third for the public sector, one-third for the private sector and guess where the other one-third is!

(Interruptions)

If they were there I would have looked a bit!

(Interruptions)

R 3 milliards! And Illovo deal is a very good deal, Mr Speaker, Sir?

(Interruptions)

That is what I said in my debate. Remember I had a face to face with hon. Bérenger who was then, I think, still the Deputy Prime Minister.

(Interruptions)

We had the debate and I ended by telling: “Mr Bérenger, it is the same story, *trésor pour eux, le gros capital, et désert pour le peuple!*” That is what it is! In between there is another *gros capital* which has come inside! In between *courtiers*, Mr Speaker, Sir. Remember one thing else, I am saying this because I want to come to the 17,000 families whom we are empowering.

When the accord was being made, this Illovo deal, the Med Point Government, Med Point 1 Alliance, asked advice first from the Registrar of Companies. When the *accord* was being made, this Illovo deal, the Med Point Government, Med Point 1 Alliance, asked advice first from the Registrar General of Companies; a lady, Jacqueline Jatta, I think her name is. She was there then. She did her job. I don’t know her personally, but she did her job. She said: “Yes, you can do the deal, but these people have to pay all these taxes, capital gains, land transfer, whatever.” They have to pay; you can’t tell them everything is free. You know what their reaction was? “She is an idiot; she does not know what she is saying. Let’s get the advice of the State Law Office.”

The Solicitor General was not in the country. So, they asked the advice from his Deputy, who is now a Judge, Mr Ashraf Caunhye - he was the Deputy. They asked for his advice. Now, they say he has changed his advice. *L’Express* said that. Not true! When he was brought to Clarisse House to ask for advice, he was not shown all the details. How can you advise if you don’t know the details? From what he was shown, he said it appears to be okay, but when he looked at the details, he said “No, Sir. You cannot do that. These people have to pay the taxes.” Ah! He is no good either! Jacqueline Jatta *n’est pas bonne*. *Maintenant*, Ashraf Caunhye *aussi n’est pas bon*.

Attendons maintenant, le Solicitor General qui revient, Dheerendra Dabee. He arrives, he gets all the documents, he does not talk to these people, he sits down - and I know him; he is a

professional and a very, very able lawyer. We must thank heaven that we still have him here as Solicitor General. God knows what kind of work, what kind of pressure he is on; he looked at all the papers and he said the same thing: that these people must pay their taxes, all these taxes. They cannot do all these gains like this.

For the first time, Mr Speaker, Sir, the advice of the Registrar General, Mrs Jacqueline Jatta, was rejected, the advice of the Assistant Solicitor General, Parliamentary Counsel, Mr Ashraf Caunhye, was rejected, the advice of the State Law Office, the Solicitor General himself, Dheerendra Dabee, was rejected. They went to see another lawyer outside on what is the way they can make sure that these people get this *cadeau*, and don't pay any of these taxes; even though they have a lot of money, and even though they are making a lot of money on the deal.

I have respect, I must tell you, for former Chief Justice, Garrioch, but he is a Barrister like all Barristers, including me. He was told: 'find a way!' So, he found a way. He found a way. I don't want to go into the details, but while they were insisting that they should pay Capital Gains Tax, they decided with Garrioch, the advice they managed to get, that no, these people can get away with it. Remember what he is saying; that he did not say it. But everything is there. When they were about to sign, the State Law Office said no, they were asking for advice from outside, hon. Bérenger himself said: "Cancel the signing ceremony. *Il y a eu un macadam légal.*" But they went through afterwards.

But, Mr Speaker, Sir, I ask you. 17,000 people, 17,000 poor families, I should say, have State Land, not *Pas Géométriques*, where they have built their homes, but they cannot have the title because it's not theirs. I met them. I met some of them, and they were saying to me - and it is right, Mr Speaker, Sir. You have to feel for them - how can they, if they have no title - we all have to die one day or the other - so, the title, what they built cannot be transferred to their own family. How can it be right? And, I immediately said: "We must see." I asked. I took a bit of time, I must agree, because we wanted to have the advice of the former Magistrate, who is the Minister of Agro-Industry and Food Security. Then, I wanted to have the advice of the State Law Office, because what I don't want to do - I want to help the poor - I don't want to open the floodgate, and everybody this time wants to have land on the sea. I want to help the poor people who are needy and who have a just cause, and I feel this is a just cause. This is a just cause!

(Interruptions)

And, I am proud, Mr Speaker, Sir, that I found a way, we have put it in the Budget, and these people will soon become proud owners of their plots of lands. I am proud!

(Interruptions)

But I need to say, Mr Speaker, Sir, it is not the first time that the Labour Party is doing this. Let me remind people. That is why I say to people: “Don’t vote blindly. Because you use to vote for the MMM, you just put your cross there. Think with your head. God has given us a brain to think, to use. Don’t let other people, sitting in their armchairs in a bureau tell you what to do. Use your own head and your brain, because God has given you a brain.”

Let me remind them, Mr Speaker, Sir. When I came to power in 1995, I was told there were numerous promises made by the MMM in 1982, to pay pensions for the employees of the Cargo Handling Corporation. They were promised. They were workers of this country. They have put their sweat in this Corporation. We know what kind of work they do at the Cargo Handling Corporation. It’s not different from what the planters do in the sugarcane fields, and it is hard work. Look at the average years they live; the death rate. They die younger.

(Interruptions)

Yes! *Et il était syndicaliste en plus*. But it was never done. They kept asking; it was never done. Then, when I came to power, I did ask the MMM. We were in coalition, and I said: “why didn’t you do this? It sounds like a proposal that we should have looked at.” The answer, you know what it was? “Ah! MSM, Anerood Jugnauth *pas lé*. He objected. So, we did not do it.” They did not do it. I did it, Mr Speaker, Sir, because this was a blatant case of workers being used just for selfish political reasons, and being relegated once they had voted, relegated into oblivion forever. It is under my Primeministership; I took the humane decision to allocate a pension to those workers. We were trying to find ways; the MMM could not find ways, then they were out of the Government. It was in May 2000 that I decided that they will get their pensions, and I did it, and I enabled them to get their pension which they have been fighting for ages. Labour Party!

Again, Mr Speaker, Sir, the CHA Housing Estates, and this I must give credit also to my good friend, the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development. Let me remind the people who seems to have forgotten. It was during the by-election in Beau Bassin, in 1999, when hon. Xavier Duval was a candidate in our Alliance. We were in the *soi-disant bastion du MMM* à Beau Bassin.

(Interruptions)

Forteresse! He had the courage to stand, and we were backing his candidature. And, during the campaign, I suppose people had talked to him. He told me - and he mentioned it in public meetings - that it is unfair that people who have the CHA Housing Estates, they live there, again, they cannot be owners of their homes, and I agreed with him totally, because this is what socialism is about. Not about big capital. It's about helping those who did not have the chance they should have had in life. *Ce n'est pas corriger, pas changer le destin, mais essayer de corriger le destin de ceux qui ont été comme si désavantagés à la naissance.*

(Interruptions)

Yes, *laissés-pour-compte*. That is why I agreed to him. He is a man with heart, and he made the campaign for this. And it is again our Government - I can't remember the year now. I think it was afterwards; it must be. In other words, after 2005, we decided ...

(Interruptions)

In 2006, in fact. In the Programme we had put, that we will give these people, the estate owners to become owners of the land, and we have done it, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Second case where the MMM, supposedly, Left Wing, never did anything, but for Right Wing, yes, they sold La Pirogue and St Géran. They removed the *taxe de sortie*. All this possible! Illovo deal, possible! For the poor people, no! Difficulty, *macadam légal!*

(Interruptions)

Tousala pe trouvé là! CTDS is another example. They are talking about coal? That is why I made the reference between white and black coal. It is not in a way discriminatory, people know I don't make differences, but you must treat like with like. How is it that these people can bring

coal from the harbour to the south, day in day out, in big lorries? That is okay! This guy, no! “No, you can’t do it, Sir, it is coal!” It has to be the same level. That is what I want, a land of opportunity, of equality, everybody being treated the same way. We don’t look at the colour of his skin or his religion or what he does in life! We have to treat people like people!

Mr Speaker, Sir, I must say something else. There are 600 families earning up to Rs16,000 monthly, who have already - thanks to us - benefitted from the Sites and Services Schemes, and now, there are 300 lots on the way. And, Mr Speaker, Sir, the last thing that we have done concerns those 17,000 families. I must say hon. Ms Nita Deerpalsing got them an appointment with me, because I wanted to know exactly what the problem is. Now, they would become proud owners of their land, Mr Speaker, Sir, and I am proud that it is my Government, again, which is actually *dans les faits - pas effets d’annonce*, we are doing what we said we would do and stand by the poor people of this country.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker, Sir, whenever you want to break, it is okay with me, but let me continue and you will tell me to stop because I am going on for too long, I know. These ‘*roder bout*’ are outside!

(Interruptions)

Let them have tea! They will have to wait.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker, Sir, you remember and the House and indeed the nation, will recall the hue and cry of the Opposition about genocide in Sri Lanka. This is a code by his or her master’s voice in the press. Make no mistake; I am not afraid of naming people! I am not doing it today, but I will. Either you are independent or you are not, but say it! There are some independent people too.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister of Foreign Affairs knows how we managed to get Mauritius to come in. To cut a long story short, there was supposed, in Kampala, Uganda – that’s how they decide – the two next Commonwealth would-be Summits, they decide the two

countries. I think they decided that in 2009 it was going to be Trinidad and Tobago and 2011 would be Sri Lanka. It was decided and everybody agreed. It was decided before, but when we arrived at Trinidad and Tobago, there was this problem of human rights abuse. There was no accountability of what they were doing. They were going on and on. So, they wanted to change. In fact, Mr Speaker, Sir, I was asked – I don't want to mention by whom – whether I would like to put the candidature of Mauritius forward in Trinidad and Tobago, so that it is not held in Sri Lanka, but in Mauritius in 2011. I said to the person: “You want me to go and fight, why are you not putting pressure yourself? But I would be glad to do it”. Eventually, to cut a long story short, we said we will.

After I had agreed, I sent a letter to the Commonwealth Secretary, to say that Mauritius is prepared to host the CHOGM Summit in 2013, in other words. The next day, I got a phone call from the Australian Prime Minister, Kevin Rudd. I didn't know Kevin Rudd at that time, but he is a socialist Prime Minister in Australia. We have many Mauritians who live in Australia, and it is a big country. So, I cannot, for the interest of Mauritius, ignore him. He rang me and said: “Prime Minister, we have not met, but can I ask you for a favour?” I said: “What favour do you want me to do, Prime Minister?” He said: “Instead of doing the CHOGM in 2011, could you let Australia do it?” He thought, at that time, he didn't know – to use your phrase - he was going to be stabbed in the back – there was going to be a coup there. He said it would be advantageous to me to hold the CHOGM in 2011 for the prestige. He is a socialist Prime Minister. We have Mauritians living in Australia. It is a big country, an emerging country. I said immediately to him: “yes, okay, you do it.” I will see later for myself. In fact, he asked me whether I wanted to consult Cabinet. I said: “Don't worry, I will talk to them”. But I said I will do it when we get to Sri Lanka. And the Commonwealth Secretary told me on the phone: “Send your application, because Sri Lanka has withdrawn.” I had already shown when the Australian Prime Minister rang me. Anyway, when we reached Sri Lanka, there was a big crisis! The representative of the Sri Lankan Government was not the President; I think it was the Vice-Prime Minister. He says, now, that Sri Lanka has never withdrawn. He says that the Commonwealth Secretary is a liar. To this level! He said: “We have never agreed to remove ourselves because if we do, it will be an admission that we have abused human rights. Therefore, we will not.” The Commonwealth Summit is different from other Summits; it is very casual. You get to talk to other Prime Ministers and Heads of States. The Australian Prime Minister was livid with temper, because he

was planning on this; now this man is saying no, he is not moving! And also, the British Prime Minister Gordon Brown, whom I know very well, was also very upset. I said to him –

“Gordon, why are you so upset? I can understand Australia is upset.” He said: “Because the Queen is following very carefully what is happening to human rights, and she does not want to be involved in a country like this at the moment and I have told Her Majesty the Queen that it will not be Sri Lanka, it will be Mauritius. Now, what am I going to say to the Queen? Because, she will refuse to go; the Queen is supposed to go when there is a summit, always she has.”

And he said –

“I am really in big trouble”.

I said –

“Let me go and talk to this man”.

I remember, Prime Minister Gordon Brown said to me -

“What will you be able to tell him? He is not listening to the Commonwealth Secretary General. He is not listening to the British Prime Minister, and he is not listening to the Australian Prime Minister”.

Just like these guys here, they don't know my cards that I have got up my sleeves! I said, “Look, let me go and try. I will attack him differently.”

To cut a long story short, I told him – should I tell them?

(Interruptions)

I told him: “My brother, you don't want to change your mind?”

He said: “No! These people are trying to humiliate Sri Lanka!”

I said: “The real humiliation will come when you hold the Summit. Do you know how many countries there are in the Commonwealth?”

There were 53 at that time. I said, if you get 10 countries, you will be lucky - I won't go into the details. I said, even myself, because I trade with Europe. I have to look after the interest of my country first and foremost. Eventually, he agreed to my proposition. I told him: "Ring your President. Tell him you have had a civil war. Find a way out! The way out was to say that you have had a civil war."

The roads – they don't have a Bachoo in Sri Lanka, unfortunately!

(Interruptions)

They don't have a man like him. I could send him!

(Interruptions)

I am getting ideas! I said: "Say that you don't have infrastructure and, therefore, you cannot hold the Conference." So, the President agreed.

Then, they said: "Okay, 2013 now will be Sri Lanka". I am saying this to this House, I don't mind if it goes out now, but hon. Dr. Arvin Boolell knows. I said: "Wait a minute, what is this? We, in Mauritius - thanks to us - have managed to broker a deal, now you forget about Mauritius!" No! I said: "You must now agree for three countries." Never done before! They always choose two, now three countries! Therefore, Trinidad and Tobago – the whole thing happened in Uganda – I am mixing up. And then, Sri Lanka and then the third one has to be Mauritius, that is, in 2015.

But I must say to you, Mr Speaker, Sir, I made a private deal behind people's back with the British Prime Minister and the Australian Prime Minister that I don't believe that these people will change their ways and if they don't, then it would have to be Mauritius, if they can't do it. But that was a private deal. Both of them are not Prime Ministers anymore. But mission was sent; it seems they are doing things. Hon. Dr. A. Boolell knows, to hold the summit - it is a very important summit - there are lots of details that you have to follow. They want us to send a team to Sri Lanka, to see how to do it and then if there are mistakes we correct it and the Secretary General was after me, ringing: "But you need to tell us, what date, what this, what that." I said to hon. Dr. A. Boolell: "I don't want to speak on the phone; I will go and speak to him and I will tell

him.” I had some other people with me. I said to him: “Secretary General, there are conditions that I am going to see whether they are respected.”

First of all, the Government of Sri Lanka is not holding those local elections in the North where Tamils are majority. For so many years, there have been no elections. He has to hold the elections, and I told him point blank: “If he has no elections, I will never go.” I told him then and there. It is on record. Then, I said, he has to see if there has been abuse on both sides. Be careful! They also have abused people. They also have killed people with bombs, but we need to find the guilty.

Now, after the war, Government has continued from what we hear, to abuse people, raping women, stealing children and people disappearing. Are we going to accept it? And we say that we believe in human rights! So, I said to the Secretary General: “All this, I need to have a clear indication. Only then will I agree to host the meeting.” He said to me, he is putting pressure on them; everybody is putting pressure; send your team in the meantime, but things should be okay. Okay! We waited! But before the thing was happening, the Prime Minister of Canada said he was not happy. He is the first. I think the Prime Minister of India did not give reasons. It is probably connected to other things, but I was waiting to see what was happening.

Now, the Tamil Federation made this big meeting. They invited me and Minister Pillay Chedumbrum. On purpose, I told him not to go. A Prime Minister or a Government cannot be subject to pressure. This is not how you govern a country. So, this is the reason we didn't go because I want to be completely independent in my mind, no pressure! I will decide what I think is right or wrong for my country, for Mauritius.

(Interruptions)

That is why, Mr Speaker, Sir, when I started asking all these questions, I found all these abuses. They have done an enquiry and by whom you think? The army enquires on the army and they said: “Nobody did anything wrong.” Unbelievable! Unacceptable! In other words, it will continue.

I got information that now they are trying to reverse the elections that the Tamils have won in the North; they want to reverse it through creation of a Senate. In other words, the

devolution process is dead. I said: "In those circumstances, I will not go and I made the statement here." Then, the Secretary General was saying to our Foreign Minister: "Well, there is a problem, because the tradition and the convention is that the Prime Minister, who is going to host the Summit, has to be there; he has to make a small speech and invite those Heads of States or Presidents in person." I rang him. He told me this on the phone again: "This is the problem now." If I may say, he is very clever, he said: "Well, if you can't do it, I can do it."

(Interruptions)

Number two has to be watched, and number three, number four, number five and number six. So, I said: "No, I don't want you to do this." I don't want him to do this. I said: "Tell the Secretary General, since he says this is the tradition, this is the Convention, use the same argument, tell him, we don't want to disturb anybody, it does not matter. It is not the end of the world for us. Let somebody else do it. We will not do it." And that is how I retired.

(Interruptions)

But, Mr Speaker, Sir, I am telling you all this, because there is an important thing that nobody here knows. I am sure, nobody knows. But I know, and I will say it now. You will all be surprised, and I am speaking on facts. Let them deny if they want to try to deny!

Mr Speaker, Sir, they need to know that there was the election for the Director General of the World Trade Organisation. We were in Opposition, they were in Government. They wanted to project Mr Cuttaree, who is a friend of mine, as the new Director. Friend or no friend, Mr Speaker, Sir, we have to bear our crosses, because when we are in front of God, he won't say, because you are the father, or the son, or this or that, we have to respond to what we have done or not done.

Mr Cuttaree wanted to get the support of different countries. I don't know why he thought because there was Pascal Lamy who was opposite him, but there was canvassing. Who was helping him? Mr Vijay Makhan, who writes now every two days in '*Le Mauricien!*' Ask him! Who was canvassing for Mr Cuttaree? Mr Vijay Makhan, big foreign expert! There are some flowers which are born never to see the light. They will never open up. He is one of them.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker, Sir, he was then the Minister of Foreign Affairs, International Trade and Regional Cooperation. You know what, Mr Speaker, Sir? He went to Colombo. Listen very carefully! He went to Colombo. The human rights abuses are continuing. They have killed so many people; they have raped so many people. People have disappeared and they are continuing to do this, and yet the Minister went to Colombo, because he considers it is his candidature that he has to defend.

He has forgotten about the Tamils now. He does not see the Tamils now. It is his position. I am the Minister who wants to become Director General of the WTO. So, he goes to Colombo. Now, he goes to Colombo without hon. Bérenger knowing! Okay, he goes to Colombo, and he tries to canvass; he speaks with the Prime Minister of the country to canvass him, to help him become the Director General of the WTO. I think it must be around 2004. We all know, 2004, the abuse of human rights is continuing in Sri Lanka. The Tamils are being killed, but he goes to Colombo. They are telling me not to go, but he went!

Now, he talked to the Prime Minister of Sri Lanka. Who was the Prime Minister of Sri Lanka? I will give you the name – Mahinda Rajapaksa, the current President of Sri Lanka. He was the Prime Minister then. He went and spoke to him: “Can you help me to become Director General of the WTO?” He is the same person who is killing all these Tamils in Sri Lanka. Now, with his brothers, but they found it okay to go and talk to him then? Nobody says that, they never say this ! *Si ça n'est pas l'hypocrisie au plus haut niveau, qu'est-ce que l'hypocrisie veut dire, M. le président ?* When it comes to their personal interest, they will not hesitate for one second to swallow the most basic principles of human rights, of justice. They will go, because they want to defend their own interest, and never the interest of the Tamils in this country. Let them say that it was different...

(Interruptions)

That is what they have done. And had I not been here as Prime Minister, nobody would have known. I have my ways of finding out, and it is documented what I am saying. I am saying with proof, what I am saying.

(Interruptions)

You can go and tell them now! This is the kind of people that they are saying *grands défenseurs*. *Voilà*, what it is, Mr Speaker, Sir! The double face, *double face de l'alliance Medpoint*.

I will now invite those - they are not here on the other side - to see how many measures we have actually done in our programme, Mr Speaker, Sir. Mr Speaker, Sir, I always say this, and I will say it again, and today it is a fact, there is no age limit for learning. You must continue to learn. You never think you know enough, you can stop. Mr Speaker, Sir, I always say there is no expiry date for learning. Some people might have passed the sell-by date, they are still around, but you eat it you die. If the people of Mauritius want to eat it, they will pay the consequences, I can tell you. Expiry date, shelf life is gone! But, Mr Speaker, Sir, as I said, there is no expiry date for learning, but these Prophets of Doom, I think, are beyond redemption. It is difficult to see how they can be saved. But, Mr Speaker, Sir, because they just want power for power's sake to do their juicy deals like Illovo and Illovo is one deal. Let the time of the elections come! They want to run, run! Run rabbit, run, as they say, but wait for my turn round the corner, when I will run, then you will know. But, Mr Speaker, Sir, they just want power to do juicy deals, to be in power for their own benefits, *pour leur clan. Ce sont des clans qui sont importants maintenant, pas le peuple !*

M. le président, nous avons affaire à des démagogues et quand ils étaient là, je les écoutais de mon bureau, parfois ici, nous avons assisté, je me suis dit : j'ai l'impression je suis en train d'assister à un concours entre les démagogues pour voir qui va faire mieux de la démagogie que l'autre. Les uns voulant surpasser les autres, M. le président. Qui sait ? Peut-être, ils s'empressent d'avoir une meilleure place dans le Cabinet fantôme, hiérarchie. Mais c'est dans le Cabinet fantôme qu'ils vont rester jusqu'à la fin de leur carrière politique.

(Interruptions)

Forever and ever they will stay there. They will not reach here, I can tell you. Mr Speaker, Sir, I don't mind if you tell me to stop continuing...

(Interruptions)

I see everybody is enjoying my speech. I hope you are.

Mr Speaker, Sir, economics is known as the dismal science. It is an unpredictable science. Practically, nobody, no big expert foresaw – there was one, as far as I know one – but nobody foresaw the housing bubble in the United States of America and the toxic assets, this economic crisis will spread like wild fire across the globe and will culminate in the worst economic depression that the world has known. That is the result in 2008. We have to live with it. We are a small country, we are a trading nation. Our main partner is Europe. We depend on the Euro Zone. The Euro Zone is in depression at the moment. We depend on them. We are far away from our market, so, it is illogical to say that we are immune, we are not immune. That is why we have to continue to change our mindset and do the things that we have to do. Mr Speaker, Sir, otherwise we are dead in the water.

But, Mr Speaker, Sir, we did this in 2008, we reacted, we stayed ahead of the curve. I remember the former Minister of Finance was telling me: “There was the PRB coming up, should we give it?” I said: “Give it.” Give it because let money flow in the country. Because then, when the recession comes, we would have armed ourselves already. And we decided we will do, we have done it again. It is a stimulus in a way when we were doing this - Rs6 billion! But we have to be able, when I say for the Budget. This is why I congratulate again the Vice-Prime Minister because people do not realise. He is an *Expert-Comptable*, he is an economist also, maybe some people don't know. It is true. So, he has to act responsibly.

(Interruptions)

Two is enough! Don't try like me, three! He has to act and he has acted responsibly, but we have to adapt to changing circumstances. We must respond to the imponderables, we don't know what is going to happen in Europe or America or the rest of the world. We have to adapt and see. Nothing is fixed in economics, but we must never lose sight of the long-term strategic vision for our country and our people.

I remember, I think, he was Director of the United States National Economic Council, very famous, he nearly became Head of the Federal Reserve in the United States, a very clever man, Lawrence Summers. One day, he said one thing, then another day he said another thing. That is why, Mr Speaker, Sir, when Harry Truman was President of the United States, after he left office, one journalist asked him: “what is the thing that you had wanted to do or see that you have not achieved as President of the United States?” Do you know what he said, Mr Speaker,

Sir? He said: “I would like to meet a one-armed economist.” He said: “one-armed economist, why?” He said: “because these bloody economists always say on the one hand this, on the other hand that.”

(Interruptions)

Just to see an economist who was one-armed!

Lawrence Summers had a great sentence, because he was predicting, he was saying America should be doing this and then he changed his mind when the bubbles started. And a journalist asked him: “But, Mr Lawrence, you said this, you are supposed to be bright, now you are saying this.” He said to the journalist: “You know when circumstances change, I change”. That is why I am saying this, Mr Speaker, Sir. We have to be able to adapt and be flexible and be innovative and watch very carefully, being ahead of the curve so that we know that our approach to the economy and the management of the economy has been a success, our politics must always be based on these principles and values, not opportunism or power at any cost. That is why I think he has done this. We know, do you think we have just thought of this year, next year, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020 and then we say we will discuss again? What next? They may be discouraged, but that’s it.

Mr Speaker, Sir, if I say all this, all this has been said. The Budget shows the depth of our commitment on our long-term vision of a high-income economy, democratisation of the economy which is going on in spite of what they are saying. We want to eradicate absolute poverty completely, “absolute” I am talking about. And our vision of *Maurice Ile Durable* which they say nothing is happening, in fact, already a lot is happening. But we need to be very careful, Mr Speaker, Sir. I need to say this. When we say we want to become a high-income economy, it is not just going to happen like this. We must also make sure that we increase our productivity, it is linked. We have given the PRB, Rs6 billion. I expect the public service to deliver more, not go with the same way, come to work at 9.00 o’clock and go home at 4.00 o’clock. No, Sir! We are living in another age. If we want to survive and make every Mauritian in this country, every man, every woman and every child get the opportunity and become richer, we have to work and produce more. That is how we are going to achieve what we want!

(Interruptions)

It is not going to happen just like this. And we are not far from being a high-income economy. We think within the next six years, if things go according to what we say.

We must say, Mr Speaker, Sir, people don't realise that this Government has raised the income *per capita* - you calculate in US dollars - by an average, since we are in office, of 7.5% every year. That is what we have managed and this in spite of the turmoil, of the global recession and lingering crisis.

Mr Speaker, Sir, if leadership is about the capacity to see beyond the horizon, a leader does not see what he sees there, he sees way beyond. That is why we must be able, not to wait for things to happen, but we must be able to predict and think and see what we have to do to put our country on this path to become a high-income country.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the French philosopher Georges Bernanos says -

« L'avenir, on ne le subit pas, on le fait. »

Et c'est un budget pour l'avenir et l'avenir se construit, M. le président.

In fact, I won't go into all these, but I need to say, maybe people do not realise: how do we become a high-income country apart from working hard? What else? We have to create new pillars for the economy. We would not have been where we are. Make no mistake! Everybody accepts it, except the Opposition! I mean the Med Point Alliance 1 and 2.

(Interruptions)

Everybody accepts it! You must be blind and completely brainless not to see that it is thanks to free education that we have managed to move this country from where it was...

(Interruptions)

...to where it is now, and thanks to everybody! This is the difference, Mr Speaker, Sir. When the Labour Party or us with the PMSD, take measures, we take them for the whole country. We do not say the Hindus will have this, the Muslims will have this and the Creoles will have this. No! When free education was given, it was given to every child in this country, irrespective of their position, caste, community or what wages their parents were getting. That is what I believe in. I do not have much, Mr Speaker, Sir. I am curtailing anyway.

Mr Speaker: No, the hon. Prime Minister may carry on!

(Interruptions)

The Prime Minister: We are bringing in for the first time - people have not noticed - in this country, new economic pillars for development because we have to change. What I call the Ocean Economy is going to be huge potential. You will see what will happen later on. Later on, there will be other Prime Ministers who will say: "Oh! Thanks to this Prime Minister, we have managed, look where we are now!" I hope much, much later on!

(Interruptions)

We are looking at making Mauritius a bunkering hub. We want to have a petroleum platform. We want to make Mauritius an aviation hub and look what I have done with the airport, Mr Speaker, Sir. None of them, I can tell you, because they have no taste, to start with...

(Interruptions)

...they have no vision, none of them would have done what I have done. That airport is going to stay. If you want to bring your country up, you must show that what you are saying you can do. That is why you have this airport today. Every bit of it I oversaw, to make sure that we have the level to make us really a hub in the region. We can become an aviation hub. The Green Economy is another pillar, Mr Speaker, Sir. The Film and Industry is another pillar and we also have an Expanded African Strategy.

Again, Mr Speaker, Sir, SSR was a man of vision. When he wanted to join the Organisation of African Unity as it was called then, go and see what these people were saying, not the same people, but...

(Interruptions)

I think the same people, in fact, in 1976.

(Interruptions)

They were saying this Prime Minister has lost his head. Instead of going to Europe, he is turning to Africa! But Africa is the future. Rising Africa is the future, Mr Speaker, Sir! They are behind

their times. I am sorry, but the Leader of the Opposition spoke the other day of black Africa! Would you believe it?

(Interruptions)

He used the term 'black Africa'? I cannot believe it!

(Interruptions)

That means the mentality is there! You cannot say black Africa! Africa! Rising Africa! And, this, we have to ensure. He was going to the Organisation of African Union.

He told me a story one day, it was not just me, but to some other people also. We were not independent when he wanted to go to the Organisation of African Unity. When you are not independent, it means that you do not have a seat at the main table. You must sit in a corner. So, he went as an observer and he was telling the story that the Summit had not started, he was sitting and talking to the President of Tanzania, President Nyerere. While he was talking the people were coming in. The Summit was going to start. So, he was getting up to go and sit at the back because we were not independent. President Nkrumah who was the President of Ghana at that time said to him: "Ram, where are you going?" He said: "I am going to take my seat at the back." He said: "No, your seat is here, sit here." That is the connection that he had.

That is why, I am reaping in a way, the rewards and the connections that he had. I cannot understand because President Mandela told me, when I went for official visit and I visited his jail: "I was wondering how old is this man now?" when I was going to South Africa. I said: "How old?" He said: "Yes, I thought it was your father who was coming." And he said to me: "Your father was sending me letters in prison in South Africa." I do not know how he was doing it because he was being watched. But they had burnt all the letters, he told me.

(Interruptions)

Mr Laurent Kabila had been fighting Mobutu for years in the bush, so to speak. For years he had been in the bush. When he became President, I want to cultivate so that Mauritius can gain, I went to see him and I presented myself as the Prime Minister of Mauritius. He said: "I

know; you are the son of Ramgoolam.” I said: “You knew my father?” He said: “No, but he was sending me letters in the bush.” How? God knows!

(Interruptions)

Who was the one who was carrying the letters? I do not know! But immediately I managed to get lot of things with the son also.

Anyway, to cut it short, Mr Speaker, Sir, we are creating a new economic architecture because we want to create a new wave of prosperity for our people in this country. That is why we are doing all this. Because, as the hon. Vice-Prime Minister says, it is a Budget that builds the Mauritius of the future, long-term vision.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I do not think that I need to go on the Ocean Economy. I think that you will see the report is coming out very soon and I do not want it to coincide. Once the Budget is over - it is already ready. But one thing we need to know, we must stop speaking of small Mauritius. Why? It is because people do not realise the extent of our Exclusive Economic Zone. It is 2.3 million square kms. With the agreement that I did with the President of Seychelles - and again, because of personal diplomacy - perhaps people do not know, when two countries want to get the Continental Shelf in between, they never agree. When they do not agree they have to go to the United Nations and the United Nations takes between 10 to 15 years to decide. Then you can appeal. So, what does it mean? Nobody can exploit it. And, Seychelles decided that they could not agree with our people here and therefore they would have to go and contest. So, Seychelles was preparing its argument for the Continental Shelf and Mauritius started preparing for us, which meant that we were going to have discussions at the UN.

I rang the telephone a few days before and I talked to the President of Seychelles, President Michel. I know him very well, we were neighbours, and I said to him: “Do you really think Mauritius and Seychelles have to go and fight? Why don’t we give an example to the world that we can come to an agreement?” He said: “I agree with you, but how?” I said: “It is simple, let us cut it in two.” He said: “Okay.” I know what has happened. When he went back to his Ministers, they said: “Mistake!” They said to him: “It is a mistake! You should talk back to the Prime Minister of Mauritius. Maybe we should change it.” But he is a man of honour. He said: “I

have already given my word to the Prime Minister of Mauritius. I am not going to change it.” That is why today we have 2.3 million square kms if we take everything together.

We know what is happening in the region, Mr Speaker, Sir, unless we are blind and we do not know. We know the number of countries on the East, Mr Speaker, Sir. What they call the Davy Fracture Zone, if I am not mistaken. There are numerous exploitations for oil and gas. We have seen what has happened in Mozambique. I am on very good terms with the President of Mozambique. Do you know what we share together when we are at summits? He likes small green chillies and I like small green chillies, but I forget and he brings them in his pocket, so I sit next to him to get one of those chillies.

(Interruptions)

We have gas there, and we are in that zone and they are continuing to have enterprises which are getting licences. Therefore, Mr Speaker, Sir, Kenya is doing it, Tanzania is doing it, Mozambique, I have just mentioned.

We must, therefore, look very carefully at our Maritime Economy as the next wave of prosperity because - do not forget - people forget. I think when I say it this way they realise. I say we have a big Exclusive Economic Zone, 2.3 million square kms. They do not register. But, when I tell them: “You take France, Spain, Italy, Germany and the UK put them together, we are bigger!” They say: “We are that big?” That is how big we are, Mr Speaker, Sir. Therefore, we have to think about it. That is why in July of this year Government organised a national dialogue, I asked all the stakeholders to come in to see the framework and the policies, we want to implement the Ocean Economy Project in a sustainable manner. Now the roadmap is going to be published very soon and I can tell you there are food related activities in the ocean.

There are other economic activities, but also we are going to look at hydrocarbons and minerals, deep sea, ocean water applications, marine services, marine renewable energy, and all those things, Mr Speaker, Sir. And, things are starting already. We have two companies. Rs6 billion of investment is in the pipeline for the two companies for deep ocean water application projects. Upon completion of these projects, they will provide for a total of 80 MW of green cooling, which will result in about 40 MW of savings for us, Mr Speaker, Sir. Then, there are other things like bottling water, and all those things.

We have been blessed by the hands of God. We did not know it, but now when we analyse these deep waters, we have one of the best quality water in the world; better than Hawaii, very rich and very pure. This is water we will be able to sell. Albert Einstein said: “The Third World War will not be about gold or gas or petrol. The Third World War will be about water. Who controls water, will win that war.” And, we have that amount of water around us. So, let’s not talk about small Mauritius.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I don’t want to go into other things because I know I have talked about the infrastructure; I have mentioned the new passenger terminal, and I briefly mentioned what we are doing in the port as well. There are going to be big developments in the port.

Mauritius, Mr Speaker, Sir, used to be called the Star and Key of the Indian Ocean. Why? Because there was no Suez Canal, everybody had to go this way. Then, the Suez Canal was opened. But I believe we will regain the role of Star and Key of the Indian Ocean. That I believe!

(Interruptions)

Yes, it’s blocked. Mr Speaker, Sir, I don’t want to go through all these, because I will take too much of your time, and these *vautours* are still waiting there, they might get...

(Interruptions)

But I want to say one thing about education, Mr Speaker, Sir, because there are some people who do not understand. As we pursue our vision of a high income democratised economy, as we are doing this, we cannot and never should, and never will overlook the role of education because this is the basis, the bedrock of our economic progress today. Mr Speaker, Sir, I talked about free education. We gave free transport at a heavy cost, I must say, but we gave it because we believe in it, because, I don’t want any child in this country, any boy or any girl not to go to school because their parents are poor. That is why we are doing it.

(Interruptions)

And, you know, *pour éclairer certains*, some people are saying: “But why, if you want to help the poor, you are giving it to everybody, the rich and the poor?”, because they have not thought it

through. There is a reason why we are doing it that way. Because a child is a child! We are not talking about adults. We are talking about children. We do not want a child, whose parents are a bit richer, and the richer child will say to the poorer child: “Ah! Your parents are too poor, that’s why you are getting a subsidy.” We want to treat every child in the same way, so that they don’t start discriminating between themselves.

(Interruptions)

That is what we want to do!

Mr Speaker, Sir, I am sure the hon. Minister has already mentioned the figure, the massive investment we are doing in education. But, Mr Speaker, Sir, for too long now, we have been judging the effectiveness of our education system on the passes, and overlooked the thousands of children that the system leaves behind. Any child who leaves the system and does not complete the CPE, gets out of the system, is a child condemned to poverty, and going around for doing menial jobs. That is exactly what we don’t need if we want to move this country forward.

We know, Mr Speaker, Sir, that putting this testing on children of this age on a narrow set of subjects - I think, the tender age of up to 10, if I am not mistaken - is wrong, because they are not yet in the position to know. These children who fail today might pass tomorrow. People don’t know. Albert Einstein was a late learner. He failed mathematics, and he became the greatest physicist that ever was; double prize winner. People don’t know this. I can give you other examples. But we have to put an end to the trauma of failure for children who are barely 10 years old. It’s a trauma. If you tell a child: “You have failed. *To pa bon, tone fail*”. Finally, the child will think “really I am no good.” He will develop an inferiority complex. That is not what we want to do. That is what the idea of nine-year schooling is. But, Mr Speaker, Sir, I always say: education is the key to exclusion. *L’éducation est la clé à l’exclusion*. My father was born in a poor family, but he became Prime Minister of this country. Others have also, I know. My father said the same thing to me, and hon. Xavier Duval’s father said the same thing to him. He will confirm it. Both of them said to us: “We will not give you big, big ...

(Interruptions)

... unfortunately, houses or whatever, but what we will give you is education”, and this is where we are today. I don’t say I don’t have anything, but I have these additionally. But, Mr Speaker, Sir, what I want to explain also, because some people are saying *on va baisser le niveau* - some people are saying this. It’s not. What we are doing, we are sparing the small children the trauma of this CPE failure. But, Mr Speaker, Sir, we are not going to bring down the standards. Because we need, any country needs the best and the brightest in that country. We need those people, but the competition must not come at this age. They can do with the competition at a later stage. We can then know the very brightest will go whatever, but we need to have more people going to universities. Our Tertiary enrolment was very low when we came in. It has improved dramatically, I must say, but not enough. We need more people to go to universities. That is why we have given all those things like help, money actually for those who can’t afford to go to university, because we need to attract more of our people, because there is a direct connection between the number of children who go to university and the GDP of a country. Prosperity depends also on education, and we need to ensure quality education. I mentioned that to the hon. Minister of Education and Human Resources. We are not going to sacrifice quality. We are deciding; for health, for example, we want quality doctors. Some people are not going to like it. You know the expression: you can either like it or lump it. They will have to lump it, because I want quality. I don’t want everybody - quality is very important.

(Interruptions)

Without quality education, we will never reach our target, Mr Speaker, Sir, and we know the world now is driven by first competition. People get work; it depends on what qualifications you have, and we need to meet. We all know the next wave of prosperity is not just physical; knowledge economy is going to be very important. That is the path to success.

Mr Speaker, Sir, just two words; I need to say this about health. I just want to say one thing. I know hon. Dr. Satish Boolell very well. In fact, I am surprised he is on the other side. I am very surprised. There are at least two. I am not talking about you; there are two here. I am very surprised because they don’t fit in.

(Interruptions)

It does not matter. *Tant ki pena deux Ramgoolam, tou okay!*

(Interruptions)

Lerla ki problèm la pou levé.

But, Mr Speaker, Sir, I was surprised. A doctor like us, like you, who was saying that we don't need foreign doctors here in this country; to tell us what we know, they don't learn. We need to have this spur of foreign doctors to tell them to bring the level up, because there is no constant learning. If that was so - in fact, I was laughing in my office; he was making up a story. He is a great actor, I know him. He was saying that he got a piece of wood in his finger, and he went to the hospital. I don't know, seven doctors and nurses came, and nobody could take the piece of wood out, and a driver of an ambulance took it out. You believe this story, you believe anything.

(Interruptions)

Ene tirer plan, comment dire. Pas pé dire di bois, pé tire plan la.

And he said we don't need doctors, we don't need levels. I think the hon. Minister of Health and Quality of Life explained why we need those exams; we need to have the standards. Now, some people are not going to be too happy, they will go and see Ministers. They will say they are related. This is not the way of modernity.

If you want a modern strong country, there should be no interference. If you are no good, you have not passed, you will have to go again until you pass, but you cannot just start treating people if you can't treat people. That is what I want. I am sorry, but some people are not going to like it. That is the way it is going to be because we need standards, if we want to become strong like Singapore is today.

Mr Speaker, Sir, we need those foreign doctors. You know, Mr Speaker, Sir, the proof of the pudding is in the eating. Tell us then, why Mauritius was practically top of the list on diabetes? All these doctors are here. Everybody knows, so many people have diabetes. Why nothing has been done? You know how much research we are doing and what these people are saying? That we are not treating our people! You know Professor David Owens is an authority on diabetes. When I went to England, I made it a point of going to meet him in Cardiff. I could have stayed in my hotel and go to see a piece of theatre. I went to Cardiff to meet him because I

wanted him to come here to help us, put up this Unit, the International Unit for Diabetes, because there are consequences. Do you know how many people are losing their eyesight because of diabetes or losing their legs? They have kidney problems. They have heart problems. They are dying young. All this because of diabetes! And we are going to say: “Yes, continue with your insulin” or whatever drugs they are giving? We are not doing it right. You know, Professor David Owens – to answer hon. Dr. Satish Boolell – came here. I wanted him to help us to move this country out of this diabetic situation we were in. He is a Welsh, in fact, like Anquetil, so he has a different approach. He came to my Office with the Chief Medical Officer, Dr. Gopee, but he did not mince his words. First of all, he said he wanted to go and visit a hospital where they are treating diabetes.

The CMO said in front of you: “I will arrange that, I will tell them”. He said, “No, I don’t want you to tell them. I want to go on my own”.

(Interruptions)

Surprise! An English man! He wanted to go and surprise. He went and saw; he is a witness. He came to see me afterwards in my Office. Do you know what did he tell me? “I am not surprised, Prime Minister, that so many people have diabetes, because you are not telling them what to do and you are not training them. The nurses are not being trained. Nobody knows what to do.” I said: “What do you mean?” He said to me: “But you are a doctor. Do you know, when I went to this diabetic clinic, not one doctor asked one patient: “Take your shoes off and let me look at your feet.” And yet, people are losing legs. Hon. Dr. Satish Boolell was not there, I wish he was. So, it had to be an English doctor to come and tell the doctors: “Tell the patient to take his shoes off and let me see his feet”.

Not one doctor takes an ophthalmoscope and looks in the eye of a patient, and yet, they are turning blind because they are not looking. Not one doctor did this! He said to me: “You have to change and you have to train nurses”. In England they are trained, we know. There is a special unit for training of nurses just for diabetics, for foot care, for eye, for all the tests that you need to do. And there were none! You know what we do here - and that is why sometimes you see me say I also would like to have a three-quarter majority. Why? Because I am blocked by the system that we need to change! And to change the system, there is no way you can tell

somebody: “Ah, you have done it wrong.” You must take sanctions! You must apply sanctions for people to change their minds! You cannot have promotion automatically because you are the oldest on hierarchy. I don’t believe in it! I believe in giving promotion to the best people that we have in this country! And we know what is happening. Today, the good people are not getting promotion and the system is there.

We have to fight against this. We have to break these chains. I was telling you about this Professor Owens and he said that we have to train the nurses and specialise them. You know what he did, Mr Speaker, Sir? Because I spoke to him, he brought three apparatus to test eyes. They are not new, but they are practically new, to look at people, look at them in their eyes properly, and take a picture and see whether they are getting problems early, because if you have retinopathy – what we call it – your eyes are going to be affected. You need to act early, not late when he is already blind. What is he going to do when he is blind?

(Interruptions)

It is digital as well. The first one, he gave us for free from his hospital. And then, what do I see? An article in “Mauritius Times”! ‘What does this foreigner come and do here? We can do our own things!’ Same attitude! This attitude has to change. We need these people to bring the standard up. Now, Mr Speaker, Sir, you know how much it costs Government when somebody’s leg has to be cut. You have to give pension; he cannot work. He becomes a weight for the State, whereas this man should not have lost his leg. People continue to drink bottles of coke and – I should not say this maybe – pepsi. You know how much sugar there is in a small can of pepsi or coke? Eight spoonful of sugar! Therefore, you are bound to get diabetes at the end. It is a disease that we must control, and properly control. Now, they say that diabetes and cardiac disease are well linked; that is why we have this big international forum. All these doctors that I know personally, I went to see them – Dr. Warker, Professor Yellen and all those people - to come here and help us. They are doing research as well. I must say I didn’t know, I don’t think the hon. Minister knew. They went to visit the hospital. They are saying, yes, you are doing well, but you could do better. They are saying when people have heart problems, their hearts are blocked. We do great operations, we have great doctors here. They put stents in the vessel. He said to me: “But do you know what they are doing, Prime Minister? They are putting stents that are now not used in Europe, in the big cardiac centres. We have stents now which are special,

especially for a country where many people have diabetes.” It is a different stent that we should use, that will not clog up in five years.

(Interruptions)

Exactly! You see! He is becoming a doctor! I said these people are dangerous. They all want to take my place - you see what it means! They are putting the stents, yes, but there are better stents. And worst now, when I started investigating, you know what, Mr Speaker, Sir, these new stents are being fabricated here in Mauritius, and exported to Europe, and we are buying the old stents from Europe here. So, somebody is not thinking properly.

(Interruptions)

Yes, at Ébène! New stents are being done. And do you know why these people came here? Because of the depreciation in Europe, the tax in France: 75%. 15% - who will not come? They are doing those stents here. They are manufacturing them here – the new ones - which are much better than the stents we are using. We are making them here and exporting them to Europe and America, and we are importing the old stents, and paying through the same bloody system that we have here, tender, so that you can get the cheapest. If you want to give peanuts, you get monkeys, my friends! You get monkeys!

But they have this tendency of cheapest is best; it is not. I don't believe in this. I believe in the best for my countrymen. Look, at the difference! Now, these stents are being exported to Europe and we are importing the old stents here - and when the stents are here! So, now, we are making arrangements, I think, to buy these stents here. These are the differences that we have to look at; for animals as well. Why do you think we want an animal hospital? Because, there is no proper treatment being done! I brought some top people for veterinary services. They came and gave lectures here. Again, same mentality! Some vets – you were there, I was not there – said: “We don't need you here people.” We know we are dealing with this every day, but one of them came from Cambridge. You don't go to Cambridge or Oxford, or I should add LSC, for nothing! You don't go just like this, open the door and walk in. He said: “Oh, is that the case? You know everything. You deal with everything?” He said: “Yes, we are dealing with this every day, why do you have to come here to teach us?” He said: “Okay, lift your hands, those veterinary surgeons who have treated a dog with diabetes?” Not one! Because nobody thinks that a dog

can get diabetes! They are treating skin disease as well as they can, but nobody thinks a dog can get diabetes in this country. And he said to them: “If your population is such a high risk of diabetes, the dog is bound to have diabetes. Let’s go and test the dogs.” All the dogs – they did not test many - had diabetes, but nobody knows that dogs have diabetes here. That is why, because of the way you treat animals – because animals too have lives; they have a right to live. I will tell you something which will make you emotional.

When I was small, my father was living in the old house where Curé was born actually. It was an old house; there was no hot water. He would open the tap to shave. I was watching him. Every time, he would tell me: “Go and get a tissue.” So, I go and bring him a tissue. Do you know what he was doing? He would take one by one the ants *qui sont dans le bassin*.

(Interruptions)

Fourmis!

One by one, he will put them out and then he will open the tap. I was just a child and I said: “what are you doing?” He said: “I am saving the ants.” I said: “But why are you saving the ants?” He said: “The ants are also God’s creatures. They also have a life. They also have a right to live; that is why I am removing them so that they don't get drowned.” This is the kind of person he was. I have learned a lot of things from him. If ants we are treating like this, what about human beings? We have to treat people as if he is our neighbour. Don't look at his religion, his colour or whatever. That is what I want Mauritians to understand, that is how we are going to become a strong and unified nation.

Mr Speaker, Sir, on law and order, I just want to say one thing. I am sure they will ask me, if they have time, on this question of Serious Fraud Office. I will tell you why. We have seen in this country. Now, I will ask the people of this country: “Do you want to find corruption or do you want to give the impression that you are fighting corruption?” We have seen the Economic Crime Office, I have just told me. We have brought the taxes at 15%, one of the lowest tax jurisdictions in the world in fact. Yet, people who are rich are tricking, avoiding paying tax so that they can buy big cars by all means. I like cars, but pay with your money. Don't cheat the Government! Because when you cheat the Government, you are cheating all these people. So, people who are rich have to cheat to enjoy a good life and people who are poor or of middle

income have to sweat day and night to make ends meet! I said in my Government Programme, those who have to pay taxes and are not paying will pay the consequences of their greediness, because there is greed. You have seen all these big cars. I won't go into the details because it is no good. There is a case in Court and all this, but I know how it is happening.

We have identified a tax gap. A tax gap means there are people who should be paying taxes and are not being taxes. We can decide; we live as we are. We stay a middle income country, corruption continues and we are all happy. We celebrate Divali, Christmas, and everything. Fine! But that is not what I want. That is not my mission on this earth. My mission on this earth is to make this country even better than it is now. That is why I am bringing people from outside, because here the problem, I'll tell you, Mr Speaker, Sir. We have seen the Ponzi scheme. Why do you think I want a Serious Fraud Office when I have the ICAC, the FIU, the FSC, the Police - God knows what else - the Bank of Mauritius?

Yet, there is no collaboration, there is no exchange. We have seen. On the Ponzi scheme, I have two reports. Two experts: one from India, one from the UK and both said the same thing. The way we are doing things is not professional. I am sorry to say. The way they are doing things, they will never even get all these people in five years' time, because there are other ways of doing these things and they are not doing it. The two reports are there. It is a private report; I'm not going to give it because it is not good. But it is there and we need to do things differently. I want everybody to do the work as they should be doing. I wish to God that people who are paid to do a job, do the job, not try to protect X, because he is married to my cousin or Y because he is a Vaish or he is this or he is that. Then, we run a mafia country. I become the head of the mafia, I become the godfather myself.

(Interruptions)

If you want that kind of country, okay, we decide this. I can do that too.

But we want a country which is modern, where people are treated like people equally. That is why I brought the Equal Opportunities Commission. So, if somebody has a problem, he is going to ring a Minister or a Policeman to say: "You know, this is my cousin, see what you can do." It is not going to work. That is not the way forward. I am as if fighting with a head

against the wall, Mr Speaker, Sir, I am afraid to say. But my head is stronger than the wall. So, I will break that wall!

(Interruptions)

I will tear that wall out, if you want to put it differently. I will tear that wall out, but I need to be able to do this. That is why the Serious Fraud Office is going to be here. We have seen certain things and I must tell you when this thing about cars started here, people importing cars on false names and all this - I must tell you not my asking - there are people who came from the UK in this area. They wanted to get the details because what does it mean? Some firms in the UK are cheating also. They want to know; I said: "I am very glad to give you, please, put them in jail, if you can." They have taken all these names, and they are doing things there. I know!

Today, we are integrated well, you take your money, you put in Switzerland, you think you are safe? Think again, my friend!

(Interruptions)

Disclosure! Think again! And the Serious Fraud Office is not going to be managed by somebody who will have these kinds of *tentacles*. I will put, if need be, somebody from abroad to be in charge and now we'll never interfere and nobody would be able to interfere, because I want to put order. Those who think they can cheat, well, I will tell then think again. And don't come and see me! I nearly said what I don't want to say, because you know what I want to say. These greedy people will have to know that there is going to be one law and they will have to respect the law. You don't become rich like this! The former Prime Minister, the President now, wants to become Prime Minister again, I will tell you something. Go and check, my friends, the journalists!

In 1982, when he became Prime Minister, there was no law about disclosing your assets. But he was being Mr Clean and he declared his assets in 1982. I have the declaration. Now, tell us in 1982, he became Prime Minister until 1995. How the hell did he become rich on his pay? I would like to know!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Bérenger himself told me, when he was in coalition - you know how hon. Bérenger is like, he told me: "One day there was a case - I asked Mr Anerood Jugnauth to defend me, he came with so many papers and then I lost the case and I said never again."

(Interruptions)

He himself told me. But you declared your assets, okay. You won a lottery; there was no *loto* at that time. How? Let us see how you want to fight against corruption. I asked the hon. Leader of the Opposition: "You are going to fight corruption? On one side, the man who was poor has become rich when he became Prime Minister, on the other hand, the man you, yourself, said *l'homme le plus riche de l'Océan Indien*. Now, with these two people, you will say we will put an end to corruption?" Again, every Mauritian *inn marqué couyon là?* You think you will fool us? You can fool some of the people some of the time, but not all the people all the time, Mr Speaker, Sir. That is the question that we have to put. That is why the Serious Fraud Office is here. They are discussing with all stakeholders and the first thing I heard - I must say the hon. Vice-Prime Minister, maybe we haven't had time - is that they are putting a Coordinating Committee. No Coordinating Committee! To coordinate what? So, X will talk to Y, Y will talk to - you know what Harold Wilson, former Prime Minister of the UK used to say? If you want to kill a project, put it in a committee. It is dead. They will keep talking, like hon. Bérenger *comité sur comité, sur comité, sur comité, résultat zero!* No committee! They will have the power to go in and do the business. One of the problems we have, Mr Speaker, Sir - I will say it because I am a frank man, I am not afraid of saying it - is that we have leakages, sometimes in the Police itself. In which country, have you seen, you have a case, the Police want to interview you, because you are a politician, 10 Barristers, 100 people come in the Casernes. What is this? Circus! This has to stop. This will stop with me. Make no mistake, this will stop! Even tomorrow if it is me! I am not one of those - they have sent Police to me before. I have not hesitated. I did not say I am ill. I did not go and get a medical certificate and say I am going to clinic. I am a man. I have seen big men tremble like *feuille*.

(Interruptions)

Gros feuille, ti feuille tou ena ladan. I will face what I have to face. I am not afraid. I have never been afraid. But people will have to face what they have to face. And then, how can a Court case

go one day? Barristers are ill, Barristers are this; Barristers are that! What? It will go on forever? Court cases take four to five years? This will have to stop. If they do not stop, I will bring legislation. This also will have to stop. You cannot have cases which go on for ages. You cannot. Where is justice? Justice delayed! And then, do you know what they do? The same Barristers who have delayed the case go to the Supreme Court and say: "Sir, my rights have been abused. These people have not judged me, it is nine years now." What is this nonsense? This will stop. Just like the Serious Fraud Office, watch carefully and you will see. There are some people who are afraid, because if they are asking me for information, I have to give. They have information now, since they are going to collaborate. You will see, just watch! Just watch, you will see what movement there will be!

(Interruptions)

Exactly! I won't say more. One last thing I want to say - since he mentioned cross-border, Mr Speaker, Sir; I have nearly finished - we have seen what has happened in Kenya. I know the President of Kenya very well. He is the first Head of State I have met when I went abroad. My father went to meet Jomo Kenyatta. Many people do not know. Jomo Kenyatta was President of Kenya, when we were fighting for our independence, he sent a top Constitutional lawyer to help Mauritius gain independence and his name was Tom Mboya. He was assassinated later on in Kenya because of caste, very able man, some people know, most people do not know. I know President Kenyatta. He has told me a few things already. We exchanged information. There was something that went wrong in Kenya. I am not going to say it here. But we need to make sure that this does not happen here. There is no cost. This good lady was in charge, there is cost. There is no cost for security. There is no cost. What do you want me to do, to close the airport completely? No! So, there is no cost.

We shall tighten our present border control system, Mr Speaker, Sir. We will introduce state-of-the-art, again, Passenger Information Service. I am going to introduce it. There will be different systems in place. Such systems will be able to keep track of *malfaiteurs*, if I may say so, Mr Speaker, Sir.

I think on Maurice Ile Durable, we all know about the project, the biomass development. In my own Constituency, I was surprised myself, always some people are saying these plants can propagate, we have to be careful. But it is biofuel. He wants to invest. Again, he has come here

because of 15% tax; 75% in France. We know, Mr Speaker, Sir, that we are doing solar energy. Those people - let me say this because I know this is an opportunity to say it - blacken people's name. The former President one day gave me an envelope. I won't say what he said. My friends here know the language he used against one community, as he usually does. He said these people are blocking my friend, Seetaram - his father - he was not with me then. He said it is a good project. He is the one who brought this to my attention. His son - the Minister of Finance knows - went to Switzerland to explain, to argue for the project. He knows. There is evidence, there are Minutes. As Minister of Finance, he went to plead for the project, the Seetaram project. Now, he is saying Seetaram project is not good. Actually, we know, there are some people who try to block it at different levels. But now I am being told - the Deputy Prime Minister has told me himself - that it is, in fact, going to be cheaper than the rest and better, probably. But we hope he succeeds.

(Interruptions)

It is quicker.

Therefore, Mr Speaker, Sir, last thing, I always say we are one nation. We have seen what we are doing. I am trying to englobe the vision. Why I brought this project called NICE? NICE is the project for the young. I want to teach them. They will go to a camp. I think we are going to do it around 12 December, but I think we are going to change the date. It is not going to be the 12th, later in December. We tried a pilot project; it worked so well, the young people liked it so much that I have decided that I will do it every year for young people, to teach them what it means to treat human beings like human beings. Don't think in terms of caste, community or colour! To teach them what patriotism means, their country must come first, to teach them what discipline means. There is not enough discipline in this country, I must say it. People walk on the street; they throw a piece of ...

(Interruptions)

Our flag! People do not know the colour of our flag in this country. They think any blue is blue, turquoise is blue. In other countries, you are shot if you put the wrong colour of the flag. Here, they put any colour. Blue is blue! *Ki li turquoise, ki li bleu pale, bleu foncé, tout correct.* It cannot be. The flag of the country has to be the colour it was meant to be. So, I want to teach them discipline, working with communities, working with young, patriotism and all those things

and it works very well. That is the project I am doing and we are going to do it again this December. It also involves the young from Rodrigues. I have not mentioned Rodrigues in detail, but we all know Rodrigues and Agalega, all Mauritians, in fact, will be invited and they will know about other things like road safety, how to treat their neighbour. This is very important in a multiethnic society. We must know how to treat our neighbour. It is so easy. We have seen these people who can put a spark like this - *pyromane communal*, I would say that. They are not happy, they have got some frustration. They will write in "*Le Mauricien*".

(Interruptions)

It is right, my friend! Fortunately, ink does not vote; people who vote. So, they can write as much as they want. But they are these people who are dangerous. We have seen on the Facebook and all this, provoking one community against the other. That cannot be accepted. You want to go and sit in prison? Fine! Twenty years in prison! Go and sit! Don't complain! All this we have to do, but we need time. All this I want to do.

All these I am saying, Mr Speaker, Sir, because I know our policies, as I say, speak of the values and the progress that this Government has done. We have always believed in leadership and sincerity. I don't say everything I do is right. I am human, I am sure I make mistakes, like everybody else, but, at least I know the sincerity of purpose that I am speaking to you today. We have always believed in the power of change, to change the nation for the better. We have always believed – that's the two of us; there are already two people who spoke about it earlier – on empowering people, on giving equal opportunities to people. There is nothing worse than somebody who is doing well, who is able, who has got everything, every certificate and then you see - I will say it - the PSC, he is no good. The other one is good, who cannot speak a word of English, suddenly, you see he has got a promotion. I am not afraid to fight for these people, because these people are sitting, these people here, they elected me to put this country right as much as God will give me the courage and the blood and the tears to do it.

(Interruptions)

That is what I want to do. So, I am not afraid to fight against anybody. I will fight against the system because we have to fight. This cannot be! There is somebody in my office who passed the Lena. Do you know what is Lena? And here, they say this girl is no good. Why? Because of the

community or what? What is the reason? That is not acceptable and I will not accept it. I have told the Secretary to the Cabinet: "Tell them, I will not accept it". Because we have to give people - you need the best to go up, that is how this country will become good. What is the future for these people if their children are not going to be treated properly? What is the future? That is what we want to change, Mr Speaker, Sir. I refuse to accept, Mr Speaker, Sir, that people are equal only in God's eyes. I believe, Mr Speaker, Sir, my engagement in politics is about a society of equal opportunity. That is what I believe in, because we are all human beings and we need to be treated like human beings. What I hate, Mr Speaker, Sir, when I talked of Judas the other day, it was not my Minister; they missed it. I said I don't want *béquilles*, it was not them, I am saying them, they want alliance with the Labour Party, I don't want. No, Sir! I am prepared to fight on my ground. If they can join my ground, join, but I am not going to compromise on my principles just for the sake of power. I have never done it and I will never do it, Mr Speaker, Sir.

(Interruptions)

Every man, every woman, every child in this country has a dream, Mr Speaker, Sir. If my father's father was a labourer, that means what? My father has to be a labourer, that therefore today, I should have been a labourer? We have a dream to uplift ourselves with a vision that we can do better. If my father was a labourer, I would like to be a doctor or an accountant or a lawyer or whatever.

This is what progress is about and that is why I want to give opportunities to everybody. I do not say everybody will become doctors and accountants, but, at least, they can take part in the race. They are part of the race and they achieve. Maybe they are great artists. There are people who are great artists. I have a friend, I do not want to mention his name. He is a professional in this country and he wanted his son to be a doctor and then join politics. He said: "Talk to the son." I said to him: "You are making a mistake. Today, you must allow the child to do what he wants." He said: "No, please! Please!" So, I talked to the boy and said: "Your father says he would like you to..." He said: "My father does not know; I want to be an artist." He plays music. Do you know what? Today, this boy is being invited all over the world to play! The same boy! Now, he is much richer than he would ever have been, had he been a doctor or a politician, even worse! That is what we need! We need to let people develop their talents. Every child has a

potential to develop his talent. We have to give him the opportunity to develop that talent, Mr Speaker, Sir.

That is why I say, Mr Speaker, Sir, we have come a long way in charting out a roadmap on the land to make Mauritius a land of equal opportunities. We have come a long way. But we are not dream pedlars, Mr Speaker, Sir, like those of Med Point 1. We are not dream pedlars. Theirs is a record of recklessness and betrayed hopes and trust of the people. They have betrayed everybody. We have not done this. Our track record speaks for itself: achievements on the economic front, achievements on the social justice front. The road may be long. It is a long road. It is a difficult road. I always tell people if you have choice between a well tarred road and a country road, I will choose the country road. Difficulty is what makes you the better person, not the easy way out. The road may be long. There may be many turns on the road, Mr Speaker, Sir. The road may be rough, but we shall never, never relent on our determination to reach our ultimate destination, that is, the well-being of each and every Mauritian in this country, Mr Speaker, Sir. That is our goal.

Mr Speaker, Sir, those in the Opposition, I must say the Med Point Opposition keep saying everything is wrong! When hon. Bachoo makes roads, he is the one who is guilty for flooding. When he does not make roads they say: "You see, he is sitting there and is doing nothing." It is like the story of the man and his son who went to buy a mule. They went to the market to buy a mule. Then they brought the mule on the way going home and they were walking with it. Some people were sitting on the pavement and they said: "Look at these two idiots! There is a mule these two idiots instead of making the young man sit on the mule, they are walking!" So, the father heard it and said to the son: "Sit on the mule." The son sat on the mule and the mule was going. Some other people made the comment: "Look at this young man, instead of putting his father on the mule, he is sitting on it. He is young and he is making his father walk!" So, the father said: "Come down and I will sit on the mule." Then somebody else said: "Look at this man. Oh! He is a grown up and he is making this poor child walk and he is sitting on the mule!" So, the father said: "Okay boy, you go back on the mule." Then somebody else said: "Look at these idiots! There is a mule instead of both of them sitting on the mule one is walking and one sitting." He said: "Okay, I will also go on the mule." Then when they both sat on the mule, somebody else said: "Look at these people, two people on one mule!"

(Interruptions)

This is the Opposition that we have. Whatever you do...

(Interruptions)

Whatever you do, they will never say...

(Interruptions)

They will never say it is right!

(Interruptions)

They will never! Whatever you do!

(Interruptions)

Ils vont dire: "Moi j'aurais fait mieux !"

(Interruptions)

They keep saying everything is wrong. They will create this climate of despondency and doom and put fear in people's mind. They make the mistake because they doubt the intelligence of the ordinary people. I keep saying to my Ministers, it is the ordinary people who put me here not the semi-intellectuals who sit in an office and write articles! It is them. It is them that I will have to answer to and it is them who will put me back because they know what I am doing. At the end of the day they will know. Because they will always say - they doubt the energy and determination of our team and also of our people. But when they say everything is wrong or they say: "If we had done it, we could have done better. If we were there, we would have turned MBC to be...", and all these things. I tell them something for those people who create doubt in people's mind and who do not believe that we can achieve – as I say, we are not the United States of America. Even they cannot, now there is no free health in America, you see what President Obama is having. I am going to quote President Obama - because I am saying to them: We come from different continents, but we are in one country. We are in the same boat -

“Out of many, we are one.

While we breathe, we hope.

And where we are met with cynicism and doubt - like they do - and those who tell us we can't,

We will respond with that timeless creed that sums up the spirit of a people and of a nation in three simple words -

“Yes we can!”

Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: I suspend for half an hour.

At 5.57 p.m. the sitting was suspended.

On resuming at 6.42 p.m. with Mr Speaker in the Chair.

Mr Speaker: Yes, hon. Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development!

The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development (Mr X. L. Duval): M. le président, premièrement, laissez-moi vous remercier pour deux choses : la qualité, pour vous-même et le vice-président, à présider les débats de manière exemplaire. Je vous remercie pour les longues heures que vous avez mises à la disposition de l'Assemblée nationale, et aussi, M. le président, je vous remercie pour ce don de l'*iPad*. L'*iPad* c'est un plaisir parce que je ferai un discours cet après-midi en mode *paperless* ; pas de papier. Merci pour l'*iPad*. J'ai installé sur mon *iPad* un téléprompteur. Donc, je n'ai même plus besoin de tourner les pages. Voilà, la technologie, M. le président!

Donc, M. le président, premièrement, laissez-moi remercier tous les intervenants des deux côtés de la Chambre pour leurs interventions. C'est vrai qu'il y a eu aussi du côté de l'opposition beaucoup de négativité. Mais, je présume aussi que c'est ça un peu leur travail; trouver les failles. Je regrette l'absence de la majorité de l'opposition. Cela n'a pas été ma chance, M. le président. Depuis que je suis ministre des Finances - trois ans - je crois que je n'ai

jamais vraiment parlé ou fait un *summing-up* où il y avait les bancs de l'opposition remplis. Donc, l'année dernière, ils n'étaient pas là, cette année-ci ils ne sont pas là, et l'année d'avant, je crois que c'était assez parsemé. Donc, c'est un peu du pareil au même. Je regrette leur absence néanmoins.

Mais je tiens aussi à dire, M. le président, que je pense très sincèrement que ce budget a été bien accueilli dans la population ; très sincèrement. Je pense que la grande majorité des Mauriciens retrouve, dans ce budget, un projet d'avenir pour le pays, et retrouve aussi des solutions pour les grandes préoccupations du moment, et j'y reviendrai.

A titre d'exemple, M. le président, concernant les commentaires qui ont été émis de part et d'autre, je prends un peu les firmes de consultants ; Grant Thornton qui a trouvé le budget visionnaire, BDO qui a trouvé que le budget était un *game changer* - bien sûr, je cite de leur *budget brief* - KPMG qui a parlé de *responsible Government* et *PriceWaterhouseCoopers* qui a parlé de *strategy for long-term growth*. Donc, je crois, généralement, le budget a été bien accueilli par la population.

C'est un budget audacieux. Ça na pas voulu être un budget timide. On a voulu que le budget soit un budget audacieux. Un budget qui...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: I don't want any interruption! Okay! Proceed, hon. Minister!

Mr Duval: ...un budget audacieux...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Stop it! Hon. Hossen, I said stop it! No comment from you! Proceed! You are interrupting the hon. Minister of Finance and Economic Development.

(Interruptions)

Hon. Bhagwan!

Mr Duval: Un budget, M. le président, qui a un objectif bien défini, et c'est ça qu'il faut bien préciser.

M. le président, je crois fermement que nous sommes à six ans, à six budgets, à devenir un *high income nation*. Très important! Nous sommes aujourd'hui à 9,300 dollars par tête d'habitant de notre PIB *per capita*; 9,300. Nous arriverons à 12,000 dans six ans, et peut-être un peu moins. C'est donc à la portée de la main. Et quand on parle d'un *high income nation*, on parle, bien sûr, M. le président, d'un *high income people*, de chaque Mauricien qui puisse vraiment vivre bien, dans la prospérité, avec suffisamment de moyens pour pouvoir vivre sa vie dans la dignité et dans le confort. Et c'est ça, M. le président, qui est à la portée de la main, et en tant que ministre des Finances responsable, en tant que gouvernement responsable, il est de notre rôle de mettre donc tous les moyens nécessaires à la disposition, pour que nous puissions arriver, dans ces six ans-là, à ce rêve qui est de faire de la petite île Maurice un *high income nation*. Nous y sommes presque, M. le président.

M. le président, à part, bien sûr, cet objectif, le budget essaye de répondre d'une façon positive, d'une façon efficace aux grandes préoccupations des Mauriciens. Cette année, ça a été, bien sûr, la sécurité routière, avec ce que nous avons vu sur nos routes; les inondations que nous avons vues au début de l'année ; l'emploi chez les jeunes, chez les femmes; l'éducation aussi, M. le président, a été un sujet à débattre. Cela a été le sujet d'actualité pendant toute l'année, et surtout l'équation entre l'éducation et le monde du travail. Nous avons eu le scandale des *Ponzi Schemes* ; nous avons eu des accidents de travail, les problèmes des mineurs dans le pays, et j'en passe, M. le président. Comme toute année amène son lot de bonheur et de problèmes, il est le devoir du budget national - avec tous les collègues ministres ensemble - de répondre à ces attentes, et d'apporter des solutions à ces problèmes.

M. le président, le budget non seulement répond à ces attentes, mais amène de nouvelles idées. Ce budget, d'après moi, est rempli de nouvelles idées : pour le transport public - le *semi-low floor bus*, peut-être ; pour l'éducation - il y a eu un grand débat qui a été lancé ; pour le sport, avec mon collègue le ministre des Sports - là aussi, il y a un grand débat qui a été lancé ; la Sécurité sociale et l'Intégration sociale.

Nous avons fait quelque chose de merveilleux dans ce budget-là. Peut-être, là, ce que nous avons fait n'est pas encore bien clair pour la population. J'aurai l'occasion d'en parler rapidement.

En ce qui concerne l'endettement, M. le président, combien de nos concitoyens n'ont pas été écrasés par les dettes, envers surtout le secteur bancaire, et ce budget apporte un soulagement. Le logement, surtout pour la classe moyenne, et, bien sûr, les PME. Je peux continuer comme ça ; je ne vais pas refaire le discours budgétaire.

Donc, nous avons un projet d'avenir, mais le gouvernement, comme je l'ai dit, M. le président, a adopté un budget audacieux. Parce que gouverner, ce n'est pas subir; gouverner, ce n'est pas juste laisser les choses passer, et voir ce qu'on aurait pu faire. Mais, au contraire, M. le président, pour moi, le gouvernement a la responsabilité d'agir, et il faut toujours avoir le courage d'agir, parce qu'il y aura toujours des mauvaises langues. Il y aura toujours des avis contraires. Il y aura toujours des *vested interests*; comme on voit un peu peut-être dans l'éducation ; comme on voit ailleurs. Donc, c'est notre devoir d'agir, d'avoir le courage d'agir, d'avoir le courage de nos convictions. Et aussi, M. le président - c'est important - ce gouvernement, à la huitième année au pouvoir, montre que nous sommes encore capables d'innover, encore capables d'amener le changement, et ceci est très important pour la population.

M. le président, nous avons écouté le Premier ministre à l'instant. J'aurais voulu, bien sûr, lui dire un remerciement particulier, parce que c'est vrai qu'un budget c'est avant tout un Premier ministre qui fait confiance à un ministre des Finances. Ça ne peut pas être autrement pour les 341 mesures que nous avons amenées dans ce budget-là, et donc, je le remercie pour sa confiance. Je le remercie aussi, M. le président, comme je l'ai fait l'année dernière, et probablement l'année d'avant, pour son ouverture d'esprit, pour son acceptation de nouvelles idées, ses suggestions extrêmement valables qui ont permis donc à faire ce budget, que je qualifierais de visionnaire et d'audacieux, et aussi qui a été très bien accepté comme je l'ai dit, par la population.

Le budget, avant tout, a un objectif économique. Ça c'est la base même, parce que sans argent on ne peut pas dépenser ; sans une économie prospère, sans la croissance, comme je l'ai dit dans le budget, il ne peut pas y avoir de social. Donc, le budget, le raisonnement économique, la base fondamentale et économique du budget doit être solide. Et, M. le président, nous avons présenté un budget responsable, ni dépenses outrancières.

Vous verrez que les déficits budgétaires de cette année-ci, on va en débattre dans les deux semaines à venir, 3.7%. L'année prochaine, 3.2%, bien moins que les années 2000 à 2005 où le déficit budgétaire était bien plus conséquent. Donc, un déficit budgétaire très raisonnable pour cette année-ci, malgré le fait, M. le président, que nous avons déboursé R 6 milliards pour le *PRB* - la rémunération et l'augmentation des salaires des fonctionnaires. R 6 milliards, cela peut paraître beaucoup ou même pas beaucoup, parce que c'est tellement énorme. Je vous dirai seulement ceci, pour récolter R 6 milliards, la TVA aurait dû sortir de 15% et arriver à 18%. Ça nous aurait ramené R 6 milliards.

Donc, cela explique un peu l'effort budgétaire que le gouvernement a fait cette année-ci sans que la population vraiment se rend compte que nous avons fait un effort immense pour pouvoir non seulement payer le *PRB* sans augmenter les taxes, sans non plus avoir un déficit budgétaire qui dépasse les normes. Cela est, donc, le travail d'équilibre que nous avons fait cette année-ci, et que nous avons démontré pouvoir faire encore l'année prochaine. Cela souligne beaucoup plus que n'importe quoi la résilience de l'économie mauricienne, il n'y aurait pas eu beaucoup d'économie. Beaucoup de pays qui auraient pu faire autant de dépenses, toutes proportions gardées, sans augmenter les taxes et sans voir le déficit budgétaire *shoot up*. Et ni l'un ni l'autre ne démontre - plus que tout - la résilience de notre économie. Mais, bien sûr, pour continuer à être résilient, nous devons avoir la croissance, pour continuer à pouvoir faire du social, faire le développement, construire des infrastructures, faire de Maurice une île prospère, nous avons besoin de la croissance. Il n'y a rien qui peut remplacer la croissance, M. le président.

Nous avons fait une bonne performance cette année-ci de 3.2%. C'est une très bonne performance malgré la crise en Europe. Là, je voudrais souligner un petit truc. L'Afrique du Sud à côté de nous - le géant à côté de nous - avait prévu au début de l'année une croissance de 3% ; elle vient de rabaisser sa croissance à 2.1% et la semaine dernière à seulement 1.9%. Ça c'est l'Afrique du Sud. On connaît les ressources naturelles et minérales de l'Afrique du Sud. On connaît son pouvoir économique, pourtant, voilà, M. le président, elle a subi de manière dramatique la crise économique.

Maintenant, il y a aussi quelque chose que je veux souligner, c'est le problème avec les chiffres. On peut tourner les chiffres de n'importe quelle façon qu'on veut pour présenter telle

ou telle histoire comme on veut, mais allons comparer un peu la croissance économique de l'île Maurice, la prospérité de l'île Maurice avec l'Afrique sub-saharienne. Souvent, ici, dans cette Chambre, les gens comparent, disant : « Ah oui, à Maurice, on ne fait pas bien. Le continent sub-saharien fait bien mieux que nous ». Mais, en fin de compte, quelle est la réalité ? *Because there are absolute figures and there are relative figures, it is not the same thing at all. When you compare absolutes or you compare relatives, you can play around with it, Mr Speaker, Sir.* Notre PIB par habitant: 9,300 dollars. Le PIB par habitant de l'Afrique sub-saharienne est de 2,500 dollars. Cette année-ci notre PIB par habitant va augmenter par 280 dollars, tandis que pour l'Afrique sub-saharienne, le PIB ne va augmenter que par 125 dollars. Mais, bien sûr, ces 125 dollars, quand vous les divisez par une base beaucoup plus faible que le PIB mauricien, vous allez avoir un gros pourcentage. Vous allez avoir 5.5%, parce que la base est très faible. L'augmentation est beaucoup plus faible que Maurice : 125 dollars. Mais la base est encore plus faible, donc la croissance est de 5%.

Tandis que pour nous, c'est une croissance de 280 dollars par habitant, puisque nous sommes sur une base forte de 9,300, voilà qu'en fin de compte nous n'avons que 3.2%. Donc, il faut faire attention, il ne faut pas essayer d'embêter la population et de faire croire que l'Afrique sub-saharienne, soudainement, dépasse Maurice. Ce n'est pas le cas ; c'est le contraire. Par habitant, nous avons fait mieux mais dépendant, bien sûr, de quelle façon vous voulez présenter les choses. Je suis le premier à dire, M. le président, qu'il y a encore des efforts à faire. Nous avons fait bien. Nous aurions pu, peut-être, faire un peu mieux. Nous avons des efforts à faire et c'est pour cela donc qu'il y a le budget annuel pour justement voir dans quelle direction l'effort doit être fait.

M. le président, encore une fois, beaucoup a été dit dans cette Chambre et ailleurs concernant l'investissement. L'investissement privé surtout, parce que pour l'investissement du gouvernement, nous faisons de notre mieux et nous avons quelquefois des problèmes, des retards, etc., mais, en général, nous faisons de notre mieux pour l'investissement. Qu'en est-il de l'investissement privé ? Comme beaucoup de pays émergents, l'île Maurice subi une crise de la demande. C'est ça la nature du problème que fait face l'île Maurice. L'île Maurice ne fait pas face à d'autres problèmes - bien sûr, il y a toujours des petits problèmes. Le problème majeur, c'est la crise de la demande. Nous avons dans notre économie un *spare capacity*. C'est ça la

vraie situation. Nous avons un *spare capacity* dans notre économie. Qu'est-ce que je veux dire par là ? Nos hôtels, le taux de remplissage est plus faible que l'habitude. Qui c'est de nos jours qui va construire de nouveaux hôtels quand il y a déjà un *spare capacity* dans nos hôtels ?

Nos centres d'appels aussi aujourd'hui ont un *spare capacity*. Notre textile, c'est la même chose ! Il y a une petite baisse dans le volume d'exportation de notre textile pendant l'année. Donc, à Maurice nous avons une crise de la demande. Notre grand marché, notre marché principal, l'Europe, subi encore – et toujours - la crise. Il y a quelques lueurs d'espoir, dépendant si on est dans une bonne semaine ou dans une mauvaise semaine, quelquefois cela empire, quelquefois cela s'améliore un peu. Nous sommes loin d'être sortis de l'auberge. Donc, nous avons une crise de la demande, et quand il y a une crise de la demande les gens investissent moins. Ce n'est pas une question de marque, de *savings* ou d'autres choses. Des gens investissent moins quand il n'y a pas de demande. C'est normal. S'il y avait une grande demande de la part des touristes, tout le monde aurait construit des hôtels, surtout sur tous ces terrains qui sont disponibles. S'il y avait une demande pour les chemises, pour les T-shirts, tout le monde aurait construit des usines et c'est la même chose pour tout le reste, M. le président.

Donc, nous avons un *spare capacity* dans l'économie qui freine l'investissement. Bien sûr, le budget essaie de répondre à cela. Nous avons donc ce *spare capacity*. Nous avons, dans les banques, un *excess liquidity* d'environ plus de R 5 milliards qui ne trouvent pas d'investisseurs pour utiliser cet argent-là et c'est pour cela que nous avons voulu créer dans ce budget, des opportunités réelles d'investissement. C'est ça donc tout le début de la première partie du budget, créer des opportunités réelles d'investissement. Dans quels secteurs ? Dans les *marine services* ! En premier, j'en ai parlé. Nous sommes aujourd'hui à côté de cet énorme trafic de bateaux qui passent près de nos côtes, souvent ils ne s'arrêtent pas. Ils vont se ravitailler à Durban, dans des ports sud-africains probablement. Ils ne viennent pas à Maurice. Une des raisons, c'est parce que nous avons une taxe sur l'exportation du *bunker fuel* de 25 dollars, que nous allons retirer, car cette taxe nous rendrait non-compétitive vis-à-vis des autres ports. Une fois cette taxe retirée, nous allons maintenir une autre taxe pour l'environnement qui est de 10 dollars. Mais une fois cette taxe retirée, nous espérons voir plein d'investissement autour du port, sur la côte, des compagnies qui voudront ravitailler les bateaux en fuel, mais aussi tout le reste, tout ce qu'un bateau a besoin. Ce sera très bon pour l'économie parce que

nous allons développer là un secteur extraordinaire. Le Suez Canal est aujourd'hui *clogged up*. Les gens préfèrent passer par Maurice, faire le cap et remonter. Donc, Maurice a une opportunité qu'il ne faut pas rater.

Comme on dit, M. le président, il y a un *window of opportunity* que Maurice doit prendre. Si nous ne prenons pas ce *window of opportunity*, quelqu'un d'autre le fera. Nous avons déjà des investissements dans le *pipeline* pour créer la *marine services platform*, le *bunkering* et le ravitaillement des navires. A côté de cela, il y a aussi le *hub* du pétrole qui est différent parce que là nous parlons de stocker le pétrole pour le réexporter dans la région et là aussi, M. le président, nous avons des investissements en cours.

Nous avons la chance d'être entre l'Asie et l'Afrique. L'opportunité est là pour notre aéroport qui est un fleuron, de se développer et d'être une vraie plateforme pour le cargo, pour la maintenance, pour la réparation, le *overhaul* des avions, pour le *pilot training*, pour tout ce qu'il y a en termes de services, n'est-ce pas ? Et nous voulons donc que Maurice aide à augmenter la connectivité en Afrique. C'est crucial pour l'Afrique, c'est crucial pour notre pays.

L'*Ocean Economy*, encore une fois, le Premier ministre en a parlé rapidement. Si demain nous allons découvrir – et j'espère qu'un jour nous allons découvrir - le pétrole, le gaz et d'autres minéraux, peut-être des *rare earths* dans notre *marine zone*, ce sera un vrai *game changer* pour l'économie mauricienne. Il nous faut donc faire face à cette possibilité-là et faire de sorte que nous ayons le genre de *framework* qui soit non seulement transparent, qui soit compétitif pour la taxe et qui soit, bien sûr, la protection nécessaire pour notre environnement. Ça c'est l'*Ocean Economy*. Nous avons le *Green Economy* et nous avons aussi le *Film Economy*.

M. le président, je vais parler rapidement de l'*Africa Strategy*. Il faut que je vous parle du *Mauritius Africa Fund*. Nous allons mettre R 500 millions, *taxpayers' money* dans ce fonds. Pourquoi est-ce que nous le faisons ? Quelques personnes se demandent: « Mais pour quelle raison est-ce que nous allons aider nos compatriotes à investir en Afrique ? »

Premièrement, parce qu'il y a de nombreuses opportunités à prendre en Afrique, mais aussi, M. le président, il est important que nous donnons de la crédibilité à nos entrepreneurs qui s'installent en Afrique. Souvent, ils ne sont pas connus et souvent donc quand ils se présentent

dans une capitale du continent comme ils ne sont pas connus, on ne les prend pas, donc on ne donne pas l'importance nécessaire.

Le gouvernement veut de cette façon - avec un maximum de 10% de la capitale, des projets initiés par les mauriciens en Afrique - sponsoriser d'une certaine façon ces investissements, crédibiliser ces investissements, faire de sorte que nos entrepreneurs aient toute la priorité nécessaire quand ils investissent en Afrique. Investir en Afrique, c'est créer de la richesse pour notre pays, c'est créer aussi la richesse sur le continent et, bien sûr, créer des opportunités pour les mauriciens, que ce soit comme *managers*, comme travailleurs, etc. dans ces endroits-là.

Donc, nous avons, dans ce budget-là beaucoup de possibilités d'investissements dans les nouveaux secteurs. Et maintenant, bien sûr, il est important que nos investisseurs locaux sortent de leur *comfort zone*. Ce n'est pas juste investir dans IRS, dans RES ou investir dans les *shopping malls*. On s'attend plus que ça. Nous attendons plus de dynamisme, plus d'originalité de la part de nos investisseurs, de nos hommes d'affaires et l'appel que je voudrais faire ce soir, M. le président, c'est envers nos investisseurs: «Sortez de votre *comfort zone*, le gouvernement vous accompagnera dans tous les nouveaux secteurs que nous avons identifiés. Ce n'est pas au gouvernement d'investir dans les projets privés. Nous croyons dans le partenariat, dans une économie mixte et nous allons encourager nos hommes d'affaires à saisir les opportunités. »

Mais aussi non seulement dans ce secteur-là, il y a énormément de projets d'infrastructures publiques. Je vous ai parlé tout à l'heure d'un *excess liquidity* en ce moment-ci dans l'économie d'environ R 5 milliards et mon collègue, le Vice-Premier ministre Bachoo a d'énormes projets d'infrastructures. Comment financer ces infrastructures ? Prendre des emprunts, ça nous coûte cher, ça augmente la dette publique et, en même temps, à côté de là, nous avons des possibilités, une masse monétaire excédentaire dans les banques. Nous allons encourager des vrais PPPs (*Private/Public Partnerships*). Dans les routes, dans la construction du Pont de Sorèze, dans le tunnel et aussi dans le fameux *flyover* de Phoenix ; nous allons encourager des projets PPP financés conjointement par le secteur public, par le secteur privé pour donner des possibilités d'investissements au secteur privé mais aussi pour réduire le poids de ces projets sur la bourse publique, M. le président.

Donc, voilà des projets, des nouveaux secteurs, des PPPs pour encourager l'investissement. Pourquoi encourager l'investissement ? Parce que ce ne sera pas possible pour Maurice d'atteindre son but dans six ans de *high income nation* si nous n'avons pas vraiment le niveau d'investissement qu'il faut. Mais souvent vous entendez aussi que nous voulons investir mais le dossier tarde, ça prend du temps, les permis tardent à venir, etc. M. le président, je dois dire que c'est principalement une idée qui vienne du Premier ministre lui-même. C'est le nouveau *Business Facilitation Committee* qui va être présidé maintenant par le secrétaire financier. Leur rôle va être de débloquent les gros projets parce que ce sont les gros projets qui vont nous amener vers notre but éventuel dans les six ans à venir. Il y aura donc ce *Facilitation Committee* qui sera instauré et qui va être là avec les pouvoirs nécessaires pour débloquent les gros projets.

Mais il y a aussi, bien sûr, le *e-monitoring* qui va être au niveau du ministère du *Local Government* parce qu'une des raisons c'est que nous avons baissé récemment dans le *ranking* du *Ease of Doing Business*. Pourquoi ? Parce que nous sommes à la 123^{ème} place dans le monde concernant la délivrance des permis de construction. Nous sommes *overall* 20^{ème} mais catégorie par catégorie, quelques fois nous sommes 5^{ème}, 6^{ème}, je ne sais pas trop, mais pour cette catégorie-là, délivrer des permis de construction, nous sommes 123^{ème}. Vous serez d'accord avec moi que ce n'est pas possible de continuer comme ça et il est très nécessaire de prendre le taureau par les cornes. C'est pour cela donc qu'il y aura ce *e-monitoring*-là, qu'il y aura ce *silent agreement*, qu'il y aura cette loi qui va obliger la CWA, le CEB, la *Wastewater Authority*, etc. de répondre dans un délai court à ces demandes de permis. Bien sûr, soit oui soit non, mais il faut répondre. Il faut donc que nous démontrons clairement que nous pouvons régler une fois pour toutes ces gros délais qui sont concernés avec l'octroi des permis de construction en tout cas en ce qui est perçu par les agences étrangères.

Maintenant, c'est très bien le *Business Facilitation* mais comme a dit le Premier ministre, nous ne sommes pas là que pour faciliter le *business*. Nous avons les citoyens à côté et ce sont les citoyens qui votent. Ce sont les citoyens qui nous ont amené là où nous sommes. Et notre client principal - si je peux mettre ça comme ça, un peu le secteur privé - c'est le citoyen. Budget après budget, nous parlons de *business facilitation*, mais on parle très rarement de *citizen facilitation*. Pourtant, nous sommes là, bien sûr, pour faciliter la vie du citoyen. Je me demande,

au courant de l'année, combien d'heures, combien de jours est-ce que nous passons vraiment dans les ministères, à se dire : « En fin de compte, la population, est-ce que vraiment nous facilitons la tâche? Ou est-ce que plutôt nous sommes là, nous sommes bien un peu dans notre petit bureau à Port Louis ou je ne sais plus trop où et nous avons maintenant oublié un peu les citoyens. »

C'est pour cela, M. le président, que le budget veut remettre les citoyens au centre de notre préoccupation en tant que gouvernement avec le *citizen facilitation*. Avec le *citizen facilitation*, nous voulons donc nous servir principalement de la technologie pour rendre la vie du citoyen mauricien facile.

Nous voulons, par exemple, qu'il puisse nous contacter par internet, qu'il puisse payer ses licences et ses taxes par internet. Bien sûr, il y a le principe de *Tell us only once*, c'est-à-dire où vous allez nous fournir vos renseignements une seule fois et nous allons garder cela dans nos *records*, maintenant électroniques, et vous n'avez plus besoin, chaque fois que vous avez besoin de quelque chose, de ramener votre acte de naissance, votre acte de mariage, etc. Nous voulons, dans le courant de l'année prochaine, c'est un de mes objectifs, M. le président, l'objectif aussi des ministres et du gouvernement de faire de sorte que nous rendons la vie du citoyen plus plaisant à Maurice. Faire de Maurice un plaisir vraiment pour vivre, c'est possible aujourd'hui, M. le président. Nous allons commencer par les certificats de moralité qui prennent des mois et des mois aujourd'hui et qu'on peut livrer dans quelques semaines. En France, un français fait une demande de certificat de moralité par l'internet et quelques jours après il reçoit la réponse. A Maurice, cela prend trois mois. Imaginez vous avez eu un emploi et l'employeur vous demande d'amener le certificat de moralité, cela vous prend trois mois pour l'amener. Ce n'est pas gai et vous risquez même de perdre votre place. Donc, allons faire de sorte que nous allons faciliter la vie des citoyens.

Pour pouvoir le faire, nous avons ouvert la possibilité dans ce budget pour que les ministères s'adressent directement aux *startups*, aux jeunes qui font les applications, qui font des programmes sur ordinateur, qui sont peut-être beaucoup plus capables que les gens que nous avons *in-house* et nous allons ouvrir aujourd'hui la possibilité pour que ces ministères, ces départements puissent avoir accès directement à ces *startups* ; en même temps cela encourage

l'innovation, en même temps cela encourage les jeunes et en même temps cela va nous amener la technologie aux portes du gouvernement .

M. le président, les réformes administratives pour pouvoir accompagner notre développement, pour que vraiment nous soyons un pays à haut revenu, il nous faut, bien sûr, avoir des institutions capables de mettre en pratique et d'appliquer la politique gouvernementale. Et c'est pour cela donc que nous avons pris le rapport de l'Audit très au sérieux. Nous avons plusieurs innovations, dans ce budget-là, concernant la réforme administrative.

Premièrement, on n'en a pas beaucoup parlé, l'instauration de ce *Board of Enquiry*, qui aura le pouvoir de passer en revue les commentaires souvent assez forts du directeur de l'audit. Jusqu'à présent, les commentaires se faisaient, il y avait un peu de *tapage* pendant deux semaines et puis tout le monde oubliait à peu près et on continue. Aujourd'hui, à partir de maintenant, il y aura la possibilité donc que ce *Board of Inquiry* revoie les commentaires du directeur de l'audit. Quand il y a eu, bien sûr, une erreur - tout le monde fait des erreurs, c'est possible il n'y a pas de problème, mais quand il y a eu *mismanagement*, quand le travail n'a pas été fait comme il faut, pas seulement pour un jour, mais pendant longtemps, quand il y a eu gaspillage de fonds publics, voilà aujourd'hui que nous avons ce *Board of Inquiry* qui va permettre de situer les responsabilités et après de faire un rapport à la *PSC for action*, d'envoyer le cas après à la *PSC for action*. C'est une première. J'espère que cela va amener beaucoup plus de rigueur dans le *management* dans la fonction publique et que les gens ne puissent plus agir, M. le président, avec impunité.

Quelque chose de nouveau aussi que nous avons, c'est le *Key Performance Indicators*. Tout le monde en parle dans le privé, on n'en a jamais fait dans le secteur public. Des *Key Performance Indicators* qui sont dans le budget. Nous avons mis de côté R 50 millions pour récompenser – ça c'est le revers de la médaille, l'autre côté de la médaille - les fonctionnaires qui font leur travail correctement. Comment cela va marcher, je vous explique. Au début de l'année, the *Secretary to Cabinet* tombera d'accord avec le *Permanent Secretary*, the *Senior Chief Executive* de la performance qu'ils attendent du ministère pendant l'année à venir, ils vont accorder leur violon, ils vont déterminer les *Key Performance Indicators* pour chaque ministère et ces hauts fonctionnaires seront tenus à cela. Pour l'Assemblée Nationale, je ne sais pas, ce qu'on verra peut-être le *paperless* complètement, on verra ce qui sera décidé, mais chaque

ministère, chaque département établira avec le *Secretary to Cabinet* les *Key Performance Indicators* pour ce ministère-là. Pour le ministère des Finances, ce sera peut-être la gestion de la dette publique, ce sera peut-être la mise en application des mesures budgétaires. Dieu seul sait ce que ce sera, mais chacun aura. A la fin de l'année, ceux qui auront accompli leur tâche, ceux qui auront dépassé même les KPIs auront donc une partie de ce pactole que nous – R 50 millions ce n'est pas 5 sous, R 50 millions c'est beaucoup d'argent – avons mis de côté pour récompenser les fonctionnaires qui font leur travail bien. Je suis sûr que nos amis de l'Assemblée Nationale, le *Clerk* se rappelle de ce *saying* dans la fonction publique –

“The only reward for hard work is more work.”

Tous les fonctionnaires, quand ils font bien leur travail, la récompense c'est :

“Voilà un peu plus de travail encore, tu travailles très bien.”

Aujourd'hui, nous aurons la possibilité de les récompenser à travers des fonds publics.

M. le président, je vais venir maintenant à quelques sujets qui ont retenu l'attention. Premièrement, je dois dire que le rôle important du budget c'est d'encourager le débat, c'est d'amener un débat sur les problèmes qui existent souvent, mais qui sont un peu *swept under the carpet*. On ne s'occupe pas trop, on va à autre chose.

L'éducation, cette année-ci, a eu un rôle primordial. Dans le budget, nous avons donné plus de 11% d'argent, plus que la somme dépensée cette année-ci. L'année prochaine donc il y aura 11% en plus. Mais, M. le président, pour les écoles ZEP, pour les écoles les plus pauvres, pour les gens les plus pauvres de Maurice, le budget a augmenté, pas de 11%, mais de 30%, M. le président. Le budget est arrivé aujourd'hui, pour la première fois dans l'histoire, à R 440 millions pour 30 écoles ZEP et ce n'est que pour les fonds de roulement, les écoles ont été déjà construites. Donc, c'est là un effort considérable, une augmentation de 30% alors que le taux d'inflation n'est que de 3.6%. Voilà donc, l'effort budgétaire qui a été consenti pour les écoles ZEP. Mais quand on regarde ces chiffres, bien sûr, il y a pleine de choses, les repas chauds, tout ce qu'on veut, mais il y a aussi l'*ESA Foundation*. Et je crois qu'on n'a pas mentionné – on a souvent dit ici qu'on ne fait pas suffisamment pour la pauvreté, etc. Mais si ces 30% d'augmentation dans les écoles ZEP n'est pas une mesure pour combattre la pauvreté, qu'est-ce que c'est, M. le président ?

Qu'est-ce que c'est ce *ESA Foundation* ? *ESA Foundation* est venue à Maurice sponsorisée un peu par l'*African Development Bank*. *ESA Foundation* est avant tout une organisation qui a connu beaucoup de succès en Angleterre, principalement à Bolton où ils ont appliqué une nouvelle pédagogie, un nouveau *management*, surtout aussi beaucoup d'équipements de dernier cri. Ils ont pris une école très défavorisée où le taux de réussite était de 30%, ils l'ont amené en moyenne à 80% et souvent beaucoup plus ou même allant jusqu'à 98%. Donc, c'est une fondation qui a connu un grand succès en Angleterre et nous avons mis les fonds nécessaires avec l'*African Development Bank*, parce que nous croyons qu'il faut essayer quelque chose de nouveau dans les écoles ZEP. On a tout essayé, pendant des années on a essayé, et nous savons tous que cela n'a pas vraiment marché.

Cela a marché un peu quelques années mais d'autres années cela ne marche pas. Mais vraiment, voilà donc une bouffée d'air frais que nous amenons dans les écoles ZEP. Un nouveau souffle, un nouvel espoir et un réel effort que nous faisons. Avec ces écoles, nous espérons que l'*ESA Foundation* fera des miracles à Maurice et que ce taux de réussite au CPE disparaîtra bientôt, mais ces taux de réussite néanmoins qui ont détruit des dizaines, des centaines et des milliers d'enfants. Ce faible taux de réussite sera, M. le président, quelque chose du passé. Ces six écoles ZEP, qui seront donc concernées par la réforme *ESA Foundation*, feront honneur au ministère de l'Éducation et au gouvernement. Ce sera une nouvelle approche, des nouvelles technologies, des *iPads*, comme l'a dit mon collègue, un nouveau style de *management*, les échanges de professeurs entre ici et l'Angleterre, des équipements de dernier cri. Voilà donc l'*ESA Foundation*. C'est vraiment quelque chose que j'attends avec impatience et que j'espère fera son effet dans les écoles les plus pauvres de Maurice.

Nous avons, comme vous le savez, M. le président, pour les écoles secondaires, donné encore une fois de l'argent pour les tablettes. Ces fameuses tablettes qui vont être livrées j'espère en janvier ou au plus tard en février en tout cas dans les classes *Fifth Year* l'année prochaine mais aussi pour la Forme IV aussi. Donc, exceptionnellement deux années pour l'année prochaine. Pourquoi cet acharnement du gouvernement vers les nouvelles technologies ? Pourquoi mettre R 80 millions dans le wifi pour les écoles, pourquoi donc dépenser autant d'argent dans la technologie, M. le président ? C'est parce qu'aujourd'hui nous sommes dans l'ère de l'information. Jamais nos enfants ne pourront être en compétition avec des élèves des

autres pays qui ont eux accès à l'information. Nous sommes dans l'ère de l'information. Pour que nous soyons une société moderne, une société avec de réelles perspectives de développement économique, il faut avant tout maîtriser l'information et la technologie. Notre développement passe par la maîtrise de l'information et la technologie, et nous allons directement vers les générations à venir pour les aider à franchir ce pas. Comme vous savez, M. le président, autrefois nous avons trois stages de développement économique: le stage agraire, le stage industriel et le stage de service. Aujourd'hui, nous avons un quatrième stage qui est l'ère de l'information et nous devons aider nos enfants à entrer de plain-pied dans l'ère de l'information.

Surtout, M. le président, nous avons eu beaucoup de débats cette année concernant l'équation entre le monde de l'éducation et le monde du travail. Nous avons un taux de chômage parmi les jeunes de 24%. C'est fort, c'est très fort ! Cela a été historiquement fort à Maurice et ce n'est rien de nouveau. Mais cela ne peut pas continuer. Nous avons 5000 gradués chômeurs. Qu'est-ce qu'on va faire de ces gradués chômeurs ? Qui a tort ? Qu'est-ce qui s'est passé pour que ces jeunes personnes prennent leurs degrés et après cela les prend un ou deux ans pour avoir du travail ? Il est clair qu'il y a quelque part quelque chose à faire. L'année dernière, nous avons instauré des comités consultatifs dans toutes les institutions tertiaires. Cette année-ci nous avons continué nos réformes pour mieux disséminer l'information pour que chaque six mois il y ait une étude, une tendance qui soit publiée afin que les enfants sachent ce qu'ils doivent faire. Nous voulons aussi qu'il y ait ce *tracer study* pour les institutions pour qu'ils puissent expliquer dans la transparence à leurs étudiants ce qui se passe de leur alumni, qui a trouvé du travail et qui est resté chômeur, qui a été sous-employé et qui a été sur-employé pour que nos enfants aient un meilleur choix universitaire et un meilleur choix quand ils font l'éducation après le secondaire.

Donc, il nous faut éliminer ce fameux *mismatch*. Le *HSC Pro* ira certainement dans la bonne direction. Le *Dual Apprenticeship* qui est aussi quelque chose de très nouveau en tout cas de ce qu'il s'agit des *degree holders* qui pourront travailler en même temps que faire leurs études.

Au niveau de l'éducation tertiaire aussi nous avons ces écoles spécialisées dans les langues. C'est très important, M. le président, si on considère où se trouve Maurice et quelles sont les possibilités de développement que ce soit dans le tourisme, le *financial services*, les *call centres* ou vers l'Afrique, les langues vont jouer un rôle prépondérant dans le développement de

notre pays. Ces huit écoles spécialisées, deux par région, vont grandement aider à préparer nos enfants pour les *jobs* qui seront disponibles à l'avenir. Et aussi, bien sûr, souligner que nous avons huit bourses d'État additionnelles pour l'ICT l'année prochaine encore une fois pour encourager nos enfants - pas tous médecins, avocats ou comptables - à faire quelque chose qui sera porteur pour l'avenir, M. le président.

Pour notre éducation tertiaire, l'avenir est dans la qualité, bien sûr, comme l'a souligné le Premier ministre. C'est la qualité dans tout ce que nous faisons et avec le budget, le Premier ministre a fait des changements concernant les responsabilités ministérielles et l'année prochaine nous irons avec beaucoup plus de contrôle sur les unités qui offrent des services aux étrangers parce que c'est là où le bât blesse et là c'est où notre réputation risque de prendre un coup. Donc, nous allons vers un *Quality Standardisation Agency* qui va amener beaucoup plus de contrôle l'année prochaine et assurer une grande qualité dans l'éducation tertiaire à l'Ile Maurice.

M. le président, juste avant de terminer sur le domaine de l'éducation, le *9-year schooling* qui a été adopté dans les pays phares du globe tels que la Finlande, le Singapour, la Chine, le Brésil, la Suède, le Danemark. Ce sont les *best performers* dans le monde de l'éducation, M. le président. Ce sont les *best performers* et Maurice doit donc pouvoir faire le saut et avoir le courage d'appliquer *the best practice* en ce qu'il s'agit de l'éducation. Je suis d'accord avec le Premier ministre et le ministre de l'Éducation qu'il faut donner la chance aux jeunes. A 11 ans on ne peut pas décider de l'avenir d'un enfant. C'est détruire une personne à l'âge de 11 ans surtout quand on sait que 25% des jeunes ne passent pas le CPE *at first attempt*. Il y a une partie qui passe *at second attempt* mais quelle malchance à l'âge de 11 ans déjà donc d'être un *failure* ! C'est pour cela que moi, personnellement, je soutiens totalement le projet de mon collègue, le ministre de l'Éducation concernant le *9-year schooling*. Il y a, bien sûr, tout à faire pour assurer un autre curriculum plus adapté à la situation, une autre méthode d'évaluation annuelle. Ce sera des évaluations qui ne décideront pas du *streaming* et de l'avenir de l'enfant mais simplement qui vont juger de sa compétence, des compétences des écoles, de la compétence des professeurs et je pense que nous allons vraiment amener une révolution en 2015 comme on a dit. J'espère donc qu'en 2015 nous aurons une vraie révolution et nous donnerons une vraie chance aux enfants et, encore une fois, M. le président, ce sera là un moyen phare de lutter contre la vraie pauvreté qui débute à l'école à partir du CPE. Bien sûr, cela va créer plus de places dans les

écoles phares. Cela va créer plus de places dans les *stars schools* parce qu'il y aura moins d'années et donc plus de classes pour les élèves qui y seront.

M. le président, quelques mots sur l'innovation avant que je ne passe à autre chose. Nous avons parlé de l'éducation et de l'investissement mais un des problèmes à Maurice est que nous ne sommes pas vraiment des chercheurs, nous ne sommes pas vraiment des gens qui vont innover.

On va prendre un peu les méthodes d'antan, etc. Mais, dans le budget 2014, nous avons mis R 100 millions pour l'innovation. Nous voulons vraiment encourager l'innovation, nous voulons que cet argent-là soit *matched* avec l'argent du secteur privé, que nous développons petit à petit une culture d'innovation. Nous avons déjà un accélérateur pour les jeunes informaticiens à Ébène qui démarre, mais qui marche très bien. Nous voulons créer un second accélérateur au nord de Port Louis, pour faire la même chose, et je suis sûr, encore une fois, que ça va marcher très bien.

Je passerai rapidement à un autre sujet qui a défrayé la chronique ; c'est le football. Pourquoi tant de méfiance envers nos concitoyens, M. le président? Pourquoi est-ce qu'on se méfie de ces dirigeants de clubs de football? Pourquoi est-ce que nous pensons que ce sont tous des racistes ? Que dès qu'ils vont avoir un nom, Cadets, Fire Brigade, soudainement ce ne seront plus des Mauriciens, ce ne seront plus les citoyens de ce pays, ce seront des racistes. Et ils vont opérer leur club pour faire avancer la notoriété de telle communauté, ou d'une autre communauté. Allons essayer, allons donner la chance, M. le président, au football. Allons leur donner la chance, et allons essayer de voir si, sous les bonnes conditions, avec le contrôle nécessaire, nous ne pouvons pas recréer les grandes équipes, sans qu'on recrée le communalisme, qui allait peut-être avec à l'époque.

Il ne faut pas mélanger le hooliganisme et le communalisme. Ce n'est pas la même chose. Dans tous les pays du monde, ils ont eu des problèmes avec le hooliganisme ; cela a été contrôlé; Maurice, je suis sûr, M. le président, en fera de même. En tout cas, ce qui est clair pour moi c'est que la régionalisation ne va jamais marcher. Elle ne va jamais marcher, parce que les régions n'ont pas la masse critique. Allons prendre Chamarel Football Club en première division, M. le président. Il y a combien ? 1,000 habitants à Chamarel. Dans ces 1,000 habitants, combien vont

suivre Chamarel Football Club? Quand ils vont jouer, combien de spectateurs y aura-t-il ? Si on prend encore une fois Petite Rivière Noire Football Club ; il y a 5,000 habitants à Petite Rivière Noire. Quand ils vont jouer, qui c'est qui va aller?

Donc, il nous faut avoir des clubs de niveau national. Si on n'a pas de clubs de niveau national, jamais il n'y aura des spectateurs dans les stades. Moi, je suis de Grand Gaube, je ne sais pas s'il y a une équipe à Grand Gaube, mais même s'il y en avait, je soutiendrai Grand Gaube. Mais il y a combien comme moi? Les gens de Goodlands vont soutenir Goodlands, les gens de Petit Raffray vont soutenir Petit Raffray. Donc, ce sera toujours des petites équipes. Jamais on ne pourra donc redynamiser le sport si on ne crée pas des équipes d'envergure nationale. Et c'est pour cela donc que je félicite mon collègue, pour le courage de ramener cela, avec les garde-fous qui sont nécessaires, et qui ont été introduits dans la loi, M. le président.

Qu'en est-il de la télévision privée, et bien vite, je passe là-dessus. M. le président, la loi était votée en l'an 2000, il y a treize ans de cela. Combien de télévisions privées avons-nous à Maurice ? Zéro! Il faut faire face à la réalité. Il n'y a pas. Donc, quoi faire? On reste comme ça ? *Statu quo*? On essaye de faire quelque chose. Et là, on ne dit pas qu'il n'y aura jamais de télévision pour les nouvelles, *News Channels*. Pas du tout ! On dit, dans un premier temps, *shortly*, allons donner la chance à des chaînes de télévision qui vont faire l'*entertainment*, le cinéma, des documentaires, des loisirs et la culture. Allons donner cette chance-là ! Allons développer cette partie !

Dans un second temps, si tout se passe bien, on donne pour les nouvelles. Et là, j'ai pris la peine de consulter le bouquet de DStv ; DStv que j'ai à la maison d'ailleurs. DStv a 150 chaînes. Sur 150 chaînes, il y a juste 15 chaînes qui font - dans toutes les langues ; hindi, anglais, français - les nouvelles. Les 100 autres chaînes font autre chose que les nouvelles.

C'est comme ça. On accepte, dans un bouquet, qu'il y ait des chaînes de télévision qui font autre chose ; qui font le sport. Il y a tellement d'autres choses à faire. Et donc, M. le président, ce que nous disons c'est laisser l'occasion de développer les chaînes de télévision à Maurice, dans un premier temps, comme c'est, sans nouvelles, et d'aller après, vers une télévision plus audacieuse, parce que nous savons tous les problèmes. Comme je vous l'ai dit, M.

le président, si depuis 2000, il aurait été possible de le faire, ça aurait été fait. Le fait est qu'après treize ans, on n'a pas bougé, et qu'il est temps de bouger.

Rapidement, M. le président, je vous parle des problèmes d'emprunt envers les banques. Nous connaissons tous des gens qui ont pris des petites sommes d'argent, et qui finissent par devoir énormément. Il y a quelqu'un que je connais, qui a pris R 500,000 en emprunt, qui a repayé R 2 millions, et qui doit encore, je crois, R 6 millions. Ce n'était pas possible de continuer comme ça. Ce n'était pas possible, et il fallait faire quelque chose. Et là, nous avons trouvé une solution. C'est une solution innovante, parce que personne n'en a parlé à Maurice ; je n'en ai jamais vu. Mais c'est une solution innovante qui est appliquée dans certains pays dont l'Afrique du Sud où, arrivé à un certain moment, les intérêts sont *frozen*. Il n'y a plus. On ne parle plus d'intérêt au pourcentage de la banque, mais il est réduit.

Aujourd'hui, il sera réduit au *Repo rate*, M. le président, 4.65 % ; pas plus que ça. Nous allons aussi contrôler les intérêts punitifs qui étaient de 5%. A partir de maintenant, les intérêts punitifs seront de 2%. Donc, nous allons nous assurer que jamais, à partir de maintenant, quelqu'un qui prend un emprunt ne va devoir plus de deux fois le capital qui est *outstanding*, c'est-à-dire, il a pris R 100,000, il a rendu R 80,000, il lui reste R 20,000 de capital. Les intérêts accumulés sur son compte ne pourront pas dépasser R 20,000. Là, c'est une grande révolution pour l'emprunteur, M. le président ; une grande révolution. Et, à partir de ça, il va payer le *Repo rate* en termes d'intérêts. C'est une grande révolution.

Mais, étant donné que nous sommes des gens raisonnables, cette nouvelle provision ne s'appliquera que pour les nouveaux emprunts. Légalement, ça va s'appliquer à partir du *Finance Bill* pour les nouveaux emprunts. Ce ne sera pas *backdated*. Là aussi, il faut faire un appel. Je fais un appel aux banques pour qu'elles appliquent, qu'elles se servent de ça comme *best practice* pour les emprunts existants. On ne va pas légiférer pour ça. On ne va pas les obliger à faire ça, mais il est clair que s'ils peuvent le faire pour les emprunts à venir, ils peuvent aussi le faire pour les emprunts existants. Donc, l'appel que nous faisons aux banques c'est d'appliquer cet *in duplum rule* indistinctement pour les nouveaux emprunts - d'ailleurs, ils seront obligés de le faire - mais aussi pour les emprunts existants, M. le président.

Rapidement pour le *Housing Empowerment Scheme*, il n'a jamais été aussi facile pour un Mauricien de s'acheter un logement. Jamais aussi facile ! Aujourd'hui, nous ne lui demanderons que 5% du prix d'achat, nous allons le rembourser R 300,000 sur le coût de la TVA qu'il a dépensé sur le coût de l'achat, nous avons éliminé le *registration duty* sur les terrains jusqu'à R 4 millions, et tout cela à la seule condition que ce *household revenue* ne dépasse pas R 50,000. Voilà la condition ! Du moment qu'une personne *middle income* touche jusqu'à R 50,000, toutes ces conditions vont s'appliquer pour qu'elle puisse s'acheter un logement avec seulement 5%. *And, on top of all that*, le gouvernement va le garantir à hauteur de 20%, M. le président.

M. le président, j'aurais voulu rapidement parler de l'*Income Support Scheme*. Il y a eu quelques critiques, encore une fois, qu'on n'a pas fait assez pour les pauvres. Mais c'est la première fois dans l'histoire de Maurice que nous allons aider les pauvres parce qu'ils sont pauvres. Nous n'allons pas aider les pauvres parce qu'ils sont divorcés, ou parce qu'ils sont handicapés, ou parce qu'ils sont ceci ou cela; nous allons aider les pauvres parce qu'ils sont pauvres. Point à la ligne. C'est la première fois que nous allons traiter la pauvreté comme ça. Je regrette que ce que nous voulons faire n'a peut-être pas été assez bien compris.

C'est exactement ce que nous voulons. Aujourd'hui, si on est pauvre, divorcé – *abandoned women* - si on est handicapé ou si on a une circonstance particulière on est aidé par le gouvernement. Mais, à partir du 02 janvier, les gens seront aidés parce qu'ils sont pauvres. Et comment on va savoir s'ils sont pauvres? Il doit toujours obligatoirement y avoir un contrôle, donc, ils vont se faire enregistrer dans le *Social Register of Mauritius*. Le *Social Register of Mauritius* est un logiciel. C'est aussi une visite à domicile qui identifie les besoins de la personne qui dit : vous êtes pauvre, voilà votre situation ; quel est votre besoin ?

Une fois donc la personne est enregistrée dans le *Social Register of Mauritius*, elle aura droit à un *income support* pour aider sa famille, pour avoir une vie décente, M. le président. Bien sûr, nous ne pouvons pas continuer cela *ad infinitum*. Il faut qu'il y ait un *time limit* pour cela. Je vais vous dire pourquoi. Ce *income support* que nous allons donner est lié à une intervention de la *National Empowerment Foundation*, qui va identifier comment mieux aider cette personne pour qu'elle soit *empowered*. Est-ce que c'est parce que la personne ne sait pas lire et écrire? Est-ce que les enfants ne vont pas régulièrement à l'école? Est-ce que peut-être la personne est alcoolique? Quel est le problème de la famille? Peut-être c'est un ancien

prisonnier ! Est-ce que c'est un problème de manque de *skills*? La NEF, avec le ministère de l'Emploi, aura deux ans pour aider cette personne à réintégrer la société et retrouver un travail. Si la personne est de bonne foi pendant ces deux ans, elle suit ses cours, elle fait les efforts d'*empowerment*, l'aide financière continuera. Mais c'est un *conditional transfer*. Si jamais la personne ne suit pas le programme d'*empowerment*, l'aide cessera. Parce que, bien sûr, l'argent c'est l'argent du contribuable. Nous sommes très contents d'aider, mais il faut qu'il y ait en retour un effort de la part de la personne. C'est ça l'*empowerment*. Nous aidons, mais en retour, il faut un effort. Ce sera la première fois, comme je dis, M. le président, que nous allons aider les pauvres parce qu'ils sont pauvres, et pas pour une autre raison. Mais, bien sûr, nous allons les aider et nous voulons aussi qu'ils aident eux-mêmes à sortir de la pauvreté.

M. le président, il y a un peu de démagogie de part et d'autre concernant la pauvreté. A Maurice, si on prend le chiffre de l'*absolute poverty*, comme défini par la Banque Mondiale, nous ne sommes même pas à 2%, pas à 1% ou 0.5%. Nous sommes à 0.2%, si on prend le chiffre de l'*absolute poverty* défini par la Banque Mondiale. Il n'y a qu'à vérifier, c'est cela la vérité. Donc, il ne faut pas faire de la politique sur les pauvres. Il y a la pauvreté relative qui est tout à fait autre chose. La pauvreté relative est une *measure of income distribution*, comme je suis relativement aux autres citoyens mauriciens. Cela n'est pas la pauvreté. La pauvreté est avant tout l'incapacité de subvenir à ses besoins matériels. Il fallait juste que je mentionne ce chiffre de la pauvreté, M. le président.

Rapidement pour amener un peu de lumière sur l'achat des bus, *semi low-floor*, je dois dire que le *scheme* est d'inclure ce fameux une roupie dans le *price structure*. Pourquoi cela ne va pas amener d'augmentation ? Parce que c'est une réallocation. Il y a déjà dans le *price structure* d'autres items. Une roupie va sortir de l'item *adjustment* et ira dans l'item *Build Mauritius Fund*. C'est pour cela que vous n'allez pas voir une augmentation; parce que pour le *price structure*, le total restera le même. C'est une réallocation dans le *price structure*.

M. le président, rapidement avant de terminer, je parlerai de la réduction de *Land Transfer Tax*, qui est passée de 10% à 5% quand on vend un terrain dans les cinq ans après l'avoir acheté. C'est une mesure très importante. Avant, nous pensions que la taxe était punitive, non seulement on achète un terrain et on paie la taxe dessus, le vendeur paie la taxe et l'acheteur

paie la taxe ; deux ans après on revend le terrain et on repaie cette fois-ci encore une fois la taxe à un taux punitif. Donc, cela a été retiré. J'espère que cela aidera à stimuler la construction.

En ce qu'il s'agit des téléphones mobiles, les téléphones mobiles qui coûtent à l'importation moins de R 1,000, ont vu la taxe de l'environnement de R 50 totalement éliminée et, bien sûr, pour ceux qui sont plus chers - à partir de R 1,000 - cela a été augmenté de R 50 à R 70.

Je vais parler rapidement de la taxe sur les appareils électroménagers, électriques qui sont inefficients. Nous avons mis la taxe cette année-ci sur les *frigidaires*, les fours électriques et les *dishwashers*. Il y a moins de 1% des importations qui ont eues à subir cette taxe. C'est vraiment une taxe pour les équipements qui sont très énergivores, qui consomment beaucoup trop d'électricité. Cela concerne qu'une infime portion mais cela protège le pays contre le *dumping*. On a vu les problèmes récemment avec les ventilateurs, etc. Cela protège le pays contre le *dumping* d'équipements qui sont énergivores, et là, nous allons introduire cela sur quelques nouveaux équipements, M. le président.

Nous avons retiré - c'est quelque chose de très important - la taxe sur les appareils photovoltaïques de 15%. Les prix auraient dû baisser par 15%, pas juste sur les panneaux mais sur tout l'appareil. J'espère que cela va aider les mauriciens à se servir plus des appareils photovoltaïques pour leur électricité, etc.

M. le président, les taxes que nous avons augmentées cette année-ci - il y a eu quelques taxes qui sont augmentées - ne sont pas des taxes pour augmenter les revenus. Ce sont des taxes que nous avons augmenté pour des raisons spécifiques, telles que la protection de l'environnement et protection de la santé principalement.

M. le président, en ce qui concerne les voitures, il y a beaucoup trop de voitures à Maurice. Il fallait faire quelque chose pour réduire le nombre. Vous avez vu vous-même ce que cela coûte en termes de route, etc.

Le *sugar content*, l'honorable Premier ministre en a parlé. On a augmenté la taxe sur le *sugar content* parce que les boissons gazeuses sont très mauvaises pour la santé ainsi que l'alcool

et les cigarettes. Et, bien sûr, il y a une augmentation assez forte sur les *betting taxes* parce que nous pensons qu'il y a là un abus de la part des opérateurs qu'il fallait contrôler.

Je vais expliquer un peu rapidement ce que c'est que le *zero rating* que nous avons maintenant mis sur le miel, la viande, les conserves, etc. Autrefois, les opérateurs ne pouvaient pas réclamer la TVA sur les intrants dans la production du miel, la viande, les conserves, les saucisses, le lait, le beurre, les épices, le thé, etc. Aujourd'hui, ils peuvent le faire. Cela va encourager la production locale et va amener une certaine réduction - pas dramatique - à terme dans le coût de ces items-là à l'île Maurice.

Nous avons voulu encourager la réexportation des bouteilles PET, en mettant quand même une grosse subvention là-dessus. Nous avons aussi voulu encourager l'usage de composte pour le projet Maurice Ile Durable pour l'environnement.

M. le président, en conclusion, je dirai ceci, ce budget-là n'a pas qu'une série de mesures en l'air. Pas du tout ! C'est un budget qui a été ficelé avec un objectif que nous pensons réalisable dans un prochain avenir. C'est tout à fait possible, c'est-à-dire, le *high income nation*. C'est ça ce budget-là. Cela fait tout pour encourager l'investissement. Cela fait tout pour encourager la prospérité. Cela veut non seulement encourager l'investissement, la diversification de nos marchés, de nos secteurs économiques, mais aussi sans oublier qu'il n'y aura pas de développement sans le développement de la personne.

C'est pour cela qu'il y a énormément d'investissements dans l'éducation tertiaire. C'est pour cela aussi, M. le président - on n'a pas eu le temps d'en parler mais on en parlera la prochaine fois - l'investissement dans les PME, un autre secteur qu'il faut encourager. Là je dois remercier mon collègue, le ministre du *business* qui a amené chez nous un expert indien pour nous encourager à instaurer ce nouveau régime de prêts sans garantie en tout cas de la part de l'emprunteur remplacé par une garantie du gouvernement. Si ça marche bien, avec le concours des banques, les banques vont faire le *due diligence*. Ce sont les banques commerciales qui feront l'*assessment* du projet. Nous allons fournir la garantie, mais si ça marche bien, comme en Inde, il y aura très peu de *default*, il y aura très peu de faillite, et nous espérons donc de cette façon donner un espoir qui n'a jamais existé pour un grand nombre de la population.

Toute cette population qui avait des idées, qui avait des projets mais pas d'argent, les gens qui habitaient peut-être dans ces 17,000 maisons ne peuvent pas donner de garantie. Les gens qui sont jeunes, qui ont un désir de faire quelque chose et qui ne peuvent pas le faire, aujourd'hui, ils pourront se présenter dans une banque sans garantie. Obtenir un emprunt du moment seulement que leur projet est jugé valable et jugé bancable comme on dit et ça c'est aussi une grande révolution.

Notre révolution aussi pour les PME, M. le président, où avez-vous vu dans le monde qu'un gouvernement offre des sites web gratuitement ? Gratuitement on va offrir des sites web à toutes les PME. Bien sûr, ce sont des sites web modestes, ce n'est pas de 50 pages, mais j'espère que quand ce projet-là aura sa vitesse de croisière que chaque PME à Maurice aura une présence, une visibilité sur l'internet. Il vous suffira de taper le nom de votre *supplier* pour pouvoir voir ce qu'ils offrent et voilà donc un moyen peu cher offert gratuitement par le gouvernement pour les sites web modestes et, bien sûr, nous allons payer 50% pour les sites web plus élaborés.

Donc, M. le président, nous pensons aux investissements. Nous avons eu une attention spéciale pour les PME; nous avons pensé à l'éducation, aux pauvres et aux femmes aussi. Comme le projet *Youth Employment Programme* a marché à merveille, nous avons mis de l'argent cette fois-ci pour le *Youth Employment Programme*, pour continuer le programme, mais aussi pour aider les femmes parce que le chômage chez les jeunes est fort, le chômage chez les femmes aussi est de l'ordre de 13%. C'est beaucoup plus fort que le chômage chez les hommes qui est de 5% et donc nous avons un devoir comme un gouvernement responsable d'aider les femmes et notre programme, particulièrement avec le ministère de l'emploi, c'est d'aider les femmes à *rejoin the labour market*.

M. le président, pour terminer, je dirai donc que le budget a été bien reçu par la population. Depuis que nous sommes là, nous avons publié chaque budget avec une liste de mesures, avec un *time table* bien défini, pour chaque département, pour chaque ministère. Le *time table* du budget 2012 a été complété à 90%, M. le président. Celui de 2013 que nous complétons là est arrivé à 80%. M. le président, ça démontre clairement que le gouvernement prend très au sérieux l'exercice budgétaire, que c'est un programme que nous avons discuté entre nous, que nous avons adopté entre nous. Je remercie le Premier ministre et tous mes collègues pour leurs aides dans la formulation et la préparation de ce budget. C'est un budget

qui nous tient à cœur. C'est un budget que nous croyons fermement va aider notre pays pour arriver à cette ère prospère que nous voulons tous. Mais c'est aussi un budget qui répond aux problèmes que nous avons eus cette année-ci. Ce sont des problèmes que tous les pays ont, mais, néanmoins, en tant que gouvernement responsable, ces problèmes-là n'ont pas été *swept under the carpet*. Que ce soit les inondations, que ce soit la sécurité routière, que ce soit les *Ponzi Schemes*, tout a été pris en considération et nous avons essayé, M. le président, de répondre au mieux de nos capacités aux attentes des mauriciens.

Merci beaucoup, M. le président.

Question put and agreed to.

Bill read a second time and committed.

At 7.57 p.m. the sitting was suspended.

On resuming at 8.17 p.m. with Mr Speaker in the Chair.

THE APPROPRIATION (2014) BILL

(No. XXIII of 2013)

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

(Mr Speaker in the Chair)

The Office of the President - Programme Code 001: Presidency Affairs was called.

The Chairperson: We will take page by page.

Mr Bhagwan: At page 3, *Programme Code 001, Presidency Affairs*.

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: We will devote 20 minutes for each programme code.

Mr Bhagwan: Mr Chairperson, at page 3, under item 22180 *Overseas Travel*, there is a substantial increase from Rs1.8 m. to Rs4.5 m. and it is mentioned *Mission and Capacity Building*. Can we know from the hon. Prime Minister, the apportionment for Mission and

Capacity Building, whether there is a list of official missions already approved for the population to know which countries our President would be visiting next year?

Secondly, Mr Chairperson, on the same page, under item 222060 *Maintenance*, there is a substantial increase of Rs6.7 m. on maintenance. Can I ask the hon. Prime Minister whether he can inform the House about the status of the health track which was inaugurated by hon. Dr. A. Boolell and me?

(Interruptions)

Yes, it was in 1996. There is a health track which is completely abandoned at the State House which was used by the sportsmen and the public in general. Can I know whether provision has been made by the Office of the President and his personnel to have this main health track maintained and also a special corner for the Mauritius Scout movement? There is a special corner for the Mauritius Scout movement at the State House which is completely abandoned. Can I know whether provision has been made in the Rs6.7 m. for the maintenance of this health track and the Scout corner?

Mr Obeegadoo: Would the hon. Prime Minister wish to answer or should we take all the questions?

The Chairperson: We will take all the questions.

Mr Obeegadoo: Well, I'll refer to the very same items raised by my hon. Colleague. On page 3, item 22060 *Maintenance*, I would wish to have some explanation as to what we are maintaining that would justify a 50% increase in the recurrent expenditure on maintenance from one year to the next. And further down the page, under item 22180 *Overseas Travel*, I am also troubled by the threefold increase in the sums budgeted. I have looked at the Strategic Note on page 2. There is no mention of any added responsibility that the President is assuming next year in terms of our diplomacy. I would, therefore, wish to know whether this additional expenditure forecasted refers to the President himself or to his staff. I think my Colleague raised the issue of apportionment as between missions and capacity building. He asked which missions, I would like to ask what capacity building and for whom?

Mr Ameer Meea: Mr Chairperson, on page 3, under item 22900 *Other Goods and Services*, we have a sum of Rs5.3 m. May we have the breakdown of this figure?

Mr Seeruttun: Mr Chairperson, still on page 3, item 22010 *Cost of Utilities*, I can see an increase of 50% over 2013. May we know what justifies that increase?

Mr Obeegadoo: May I raise one additional point?

The Chairperson: Do you have another question?

Mr Obeegadoo: Yes.

The Chairperson: Okay.

Mr Obeegadoo: Just on the issue of *Publications and Stationery*, item 22100, I would like to know whether there is any projected publication by the Office of the President for the forthcoming year 2014.

The Chairperson: Okay, no more questions?

The Prime Minister: Yes, Mr Chairperson, let me answer the questions and to work out which one they have asked first. I think they asked a question about *Overseas Travel (Mission and Capacity Building)*. Mr Chairperson, my understanding is that they include the mission he has travelled and he will be travelling hopefully for the subsistence allowance and also capacity building. The capacity building, in fact, for the presidency is taken care of now by the Ministry of Civil Service. So, that will not be included in this item. The figure, therefore, reflects on the basis of what invitation he has had and what he will want to do and all this, by precaution we have done this, but for the very figures we will have to wait until these expenses occur.

I think there was a question on *Maintenance*. For the *Maintenance*, in fact, Mr Chairperson, there are many things that have to be maintained all the time because we spent a lot of money for this Château du Réduit and we cannot just let it go as it is. There is need for varnishing of the roof, windows, doors and floors and the painting of the *Château*. Also, there were some maintenance work at the Energy Services Division which cost, in all, Rs900,000. Then, there was the upgrading of the administrative buildings which includes repair to the roof structures and flooring. This again cost Rs900,000. There was the fire alarm system and extractor fans and all those things for Rs500,000. There is provision for the maintenance of the generators

and that is a yearly cost which is Rs275,000, for the air conditioning and ventilation system and other minor works.

Then, I think, there was a question about a track for jogging.

(Interruptions)

Is it inside the *Château*?

(Interruptions)

Well, there should not have been. I am sorry, there should not have been. This is a place where the President is supposed to stay, also neither for the staff, I am sorry but this is not something that I will accept. It should not be! You treat the President like anybody else! No, no, no! It has to be somewhere else.

I think there was a question about *Utilities*. Was it about *Utilities* that the hon. Member asked?

(Interruptions)

Let me just tell you about the *Utilities*. There is an increase because there has been an installation of a PABX and supply of electricity for the sentry box which was not there at the residence. Then, there are the charges for telephone, water and all this. Was there something else that I missed?

(Interruptions)

The *Goods and Services* is for the provision of uniform and personal secretariat of retired Presidents and Governor-General. There is also an increase in the provision for the payment of salary to secretarial staff following the PRB and the Errors and Omissions Report.

Mr Baloomoody: Mr Chairperson, I come back again to the *Overseas Travel*, item 22180. From the answer given by the hon. Prime Minister, it would seem that this is only for travel and there is no capacity building. So, may we know why there has been such a threefold increase? Are there specific countries which have been earmarked for the President to visit and is there any specific reason why we have increased that budget for so much?

The Chairperson: Are there other questions?

Mr Obeegadoo: On just the very same point, Mr Chairperson, with all due respect, of course, for the Office of the President, what is intriguing and why we feel it is our duty to question this is the scale of the increase from Rs1.8 m. to Rs4.5 m. So, surely, Mr Chairperson, there must be some reason, there must be some plan, there must be some projected mission that would justify an increase of such magnitude.

(Interruptions)

The Prime Minister: I am very happy where I am now!

(Interruptions)

And I intend to stay here! No, Mr Chairperson, from what I understand is that we want to increase our economic diplomacy. There are certain countries that we are planning, but it is not definitive yet, but we are making the provision just in case. You must remember that he became President; he has not done the full; we are now putting everything on a yearly basis.

Mr Ameer Meea: Mr Chairperson, under item 21210 *Social Contributions*, may we have a list of those contributions and to which organisations are those contributions being paid to?

The Prime Minister: Probably the hon. Member is new and he does not realise this. This is the provision for the contribution to the National Savings Fund. It is not for any kind of what the hon. Member might have in mind. It is for these NSF...

(Interruptions)

Normally, that is why there is this increase. They have to pay, I think, 2.5%, if I am not mistaken, of their monthly salary. There is a ceiling to that and that is what the contribution is about.

(Interruptions)

Mr Jugnauth: May I then know whether the hon. Prime Minister is confirming that with regard to the *Overseas Travel*, there is no amount that is earmarked therefore for capacity building for the staff?

The Prime Minister: No, the hon. Member did not understand. There is an amount for capacity building, but it does not fall under this item. It falls under the item for the Ministry of Civil Service.

Mr Uteem: Under item *31112041 Construction of Agricultural Store*, may I know from the hon. Prime Minister what is the total project cost for construction and who was awarded the contract?

Mr Bhagwan: On page 4, Sir, under item *31112417 Upgrading of Cultural Complex*, there is a sum of Rs2.5 m. Can we have an idea about this cultural complex that we have? Is this a museum that we have at the State House?

Mr Baloomoody: I will take the same point raised by my learned friend *Construction of Agricultural Store*. We see that we earmarked Rs3 m. last year and Rs3 m. for next year; then Rs1.1 m. What exactly is that agricultural store and what stage have we reached now with regard to the construction of that store?

Mr Seeruttun: Again, on the same item *Construction of Agricultural Store*, a sum of Rs3 m. was earmarked for year 2013. May we know how much so far has been spent for that store?

Mr Jhugroo: Mr Chairperson, under item *31112001 Construction of Office Buildings*, there has been a provision of Rs2 m. for this year, and another Rs1.4 m. for next year. Can we know what building is being constructed there and by whom?

The Prime Minister: Let me start one by one, Mr Chairperson. First of all, on the agricultural store, what I have here is that provision is made for the construction of a new agricultural store. I believe the work will start, in fact, this very month, in November, and is expected to be completed by March of next year. Part payment of Rs1.5 m. will be effected this year and the rest later. The project consists of a concrete building, because they have dangerous chemical substances also that they have to store properly, and there will also be a garage, from what I understand, Mr Chairperson. They need to make it secure.

There was a question about the *Cultural Complex/Buildings*. There was a survey done by the Ministry of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping, and they found the building to be in a bad state, and there is a danger of it actually crumbling.

In addition, the ruins constitute an eyesore at the same time - that's what they say. Therefore, they have informed the Office of the President that this building, in fact, located on the compound of the State House, was not listed. This building was not listed as heritage site under the National Heritage Fund Act. Maybe, they have missed this, but work orders have already been issued by the Ministry of Public Infrastructure. First of all, they have to demolish the building, and then they will realign. I believe, they have to do a realignment of the pavement stones. As I said, the cost is Rs2.1 m., and after rehabilitation, that part of that building will be used as a cultural corner. That is the intention.

I think there was a question on the construction of the office buildings, if I am not mistaken. Provisions made have been utilised in connection with the construction of a sentry box at the residence of the President. After survey effected to household staff quarters by the Ministry of Public Infrastructure, the quarters need to be demolished and quarters near *Centre National de Formation de Football*, the building has been surveyed, and demolishing works as well as carting away of the demolished items are estimated to cost about Rs431,250. Then, there is the Ex-Samuel Quarters; the building has been surveyed again. Demolition works as well as carting away of the demolished items have to be done.

As for the quarters occupied by the SMF, there also, there is need for upgrading and repairs, and the cost of this is estimated to be Rs379,900.50.

The Chairperson: We move to page 5.

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Chairperson, I note that for gardening purposes 2014 as 2013, we have on the establishment four positions of Head Gardener, six positions of Senior Gardener, 31 positions of Gardener, which all adds up to 41 staff in charge of the garden. I would like to know, Mr Chairperson, whether these are full time posts which are attributed on a permanent and full time basis just to Le Réduit, and, if so, whether there has been an assessment of the necessity to have so many positions attributed to that purpose on an ongoing basis.

(Interruptions)

The Prime Minister: I don't think this is a question, Mr Chairperson. The gardens have to be maintained; whatever we have. In fact, you will see some of the items are going to be filled in later on, because we have to make sure that it is properly entertained.

Mr Baloomoody: I refer to item 0200100 *Secretary to the President*. This post has remained vacant. It has not been filled, and there is no intention to fill that post. So, if we don't have any intention to fill that post, shall we remove it from the budget?

The Prime Minister: It's not a question of no intention. There is an Acting PS who is working there and doing the work, but the intention is to fill the post.

The Chairperson: Time is up!

Office of the President - Programme Code 001: Presidency Affairs (Rs63,750,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Office of the President - Programme Code 011: Vice-Presidency Affairs was called.

Mr Bhagwan: At page 7, item 22180 *Overseas Travel (Mission and Capacity Building)*, Mr Chairperson, I see only a meagre sum of Rs800,000, unlike the President who has obtained a substantial amount. Can I know from the hon. Prime Minister whether provision has been made for our Vice-President, who is a lady, very competent, to travel elsewhere than Rodrigues?

(Interruptions)

But she is a very competent lady. She was once my colleague in 1995, in my constituency, and I am very happy to see her Vice-President. So, can I know from the hon. Prime Minister whether he will make sure that our Vice-President also can represent Mauritius in different fora, where also women's affairs are being discussed, not only in Rodrigues and Outer Islands, but even in other countries, even at the UN, where she can represent Mauritius?

Mr Soodhun: Mr Chairperson, on page 7, item 22030 concerning rent, I would like to know from the hon. Prime Minister which rent it is, whether the office or the residence of the President.

Second, with your permission, Mr Chairperson, item 22060, concerning maintenance, I would like to know it is for which maintenance, whether office, and, if so, which office; if we can get some details.

Mr Baloomoody: On the same issue of rent, I would like to know whether it is rent for the Office of the Vice-President, and, if so, whether we are contemplating having an official residence. Government should buy a building to make it the official residence of the Vice-President, instead of renting premises in Sodnac, somewhere. I would like to ask whether it is time now for us to have a proper Vice-President's residence.

Mr Jhugroo: Mr Chairperson, item 22060 *Maintenance*, can I know from the hon. Prime Minister why maintenance has nearly doubled?

Mr Obeegadoo: I apologise for the question. I just want to know, on page 7, when we are referring to rent and office expenditure and maintenance, I presume we are referring to some rented building, which presently houses the staff of the Vice-President. May we know where exactly this is located? What is the nature of the premises that are rented?

Mr Seeruttun: Mr Chairperson, again on page 7, item 22100 *Publications and Stationery*, I can see a substantial increase in the amount for 2014. May we have some details as to the publications to be made in 2014?

The Prime Minister: Yes, Mr Chairperson. First of all, I will start by the overseas travel and all that. In fact, you might be happy to hear that the Vice-President also travels to other countries, not just to Rodrigues. She went to China not so long ago to represent our country. She went to the UK as well. We must be careful when the President is going; we must make sure that there is no conflict. We can't equivalent the two officers. One is President and one is Vice-President, but they do go.

There was a question about maintenance. The provision is for the maintenance of plant and equipment. There is additional maintenance cost for two vehicles. The vehicles are used for the conveyance and escort of the Vice-President when she goes to functions.

I think there was a question on rent. The provision is made, as you rightly said, for the rental of the building for the Office of the President. I must say, Mr Chairperson, in fact a

portion of State land – I think it is 1 acre 15 – in Quatre Bornes itself has already been vested in the Office of the Vice-President for the purpose of constructing an office. I think it is planned to be an official residence for the Vice-President. That has been vested since 2001, but, apparently, because of financial constraints, it has been decided that this is not the right moment. It is kept in abeyance since then.

As for the publications and stationery, yes, the increase is due to the purchase of additional stationeries in respect of official functions.

Mr Obeegadoo: Yes, if I may. Under the same issue of *Publications and Stationery*, in the past, I seem to recollect there was a fund for creative writing which was under the responsibility which was driven by the Office of the Vice-President. I would wish to know, having regard to the sum budgeted for next year, whether that is still the case.

The Prime Minister: I think that was when Mr Bundhun was the Vice-President - for English especially, from what I remember. He wanted to do that and it was a good thing. I suppose that it will continue. I don't know whether it does continue at the Ministry of Arts and Culture.

The Chairperson: No more questions.

Office of the Vice-President - Programme Code 011: Vice-Presidency Affairs (Rs13,375,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

The Judiciary - Programme Code 021: Administration and Delivery of Justice was called.

The Chairperson: Yes, page 9.

Mr Baloomoody: On page 9: Major Achievement for 2013. I take the 4th bullet, *Introduction of fast track process for children victims attending Court as witnesses before the Intermediate Court.* May I know from the hon. Prime Minister what is that fast track process, when it came into effect and how long does it take for a case where there is a child as victim for the case to be heard before the Intermediate Court?

With regard to the 5th bullet, *the Bail and Remand Court operational 7 days a week all year round*, can I know from the hon. Prime Minister how many bail motions there have been during the weekend? Mr Chairperson, the Bail and Remand Court is supposed not only to release on bail, but to hear motions and sometimes in urgent matter.

I now come to the Major Constraints and Challenges and how they are being addressed. In last year's Budget, it was provided that each Judge will have a Judicial Research Officer. May we know how many have been recruited and, if so, what are their qualifications?

With regard to item *Continuous training to supporting staff, various training schemes will be implemented across the board for all the staff to improve the quality of service*, may we have some details about those training schemes?

With regard to *Programme of renovation and construction of Court houses*, can I know from the hon. Prime Minister when Souillac will have its District Court, because now we have a commercial building which is being turned into a Court at Surinam?

The same applies for the Bambous District Court, where, as at now, we have a Court in a commercial building in Bambous which is not a fit building for a Court. May we know when are we going to have a proper District Court in Bambous?

Also, in the Prime Minister's constituency, the Pamplémousses Court where we are supposed to have a third Court, is he aware that in that Court there is only one table and three chairs? The Magistrate sits here, the Prosecutor sits here and Defence Counsel sits here. Otherwise, everybody stands and it is a very small place where members of the public cannot attend. And we are supposed to have an Open Court Justice! It is in Pamplémousses. I am sure the hon. Prime Minister, while visiting his constituency, must have come across that Court.

In last year's Budget, it was stated that we will have a proper Family Court. Where is that proper Family Court? Implying that we have an improper Family Court! So, when are we going to have that proper Family Court?

With regard to the introduction of electronic filing of cases, may I know from the hon. Prime Minister who is managing that finance and how much revenue the Judiciary has collected from this e-filing project? Because we know that it is very expensive to file documents, and

even Counsels who appear before the Commercial Court have to pay Rs10,000 in advance before you appear. So, who is managing that e-filing and how much money has been cashed with regard to that? I stop here for the time being and I am sure my learned colleagues will take on.

Mr Uteem: With respect to the number of cases at the Mediation Division of the Supreme Court - the last item on page 9 - may I know from the hon. Prime Minister, the number of cases that have been referred to the Mediation Division this year and the number of such cases that have been settled for this year?

Mr Bhagwan: At page 9, *Space constraints to deal with increasing number of cases and old and inappropriate premises.* We have been informed of the appointment a Project Manager for design, supervision and monitoring of all infrastructural projects for the Judiciary. Can I know from the hon. Prime Minister whether this Project Manager has been appointed?

And also, for *the Programme of renovation and construction of the Court houses*, I will take one particular Court, the Rose Hill District Court where there is a real problem of infrastructure for the public attending that Court.

Mr Roopun: On *Major Constraints, Delivery of Judgments in a timely manner*, in the last speech of the hon. Prime Minister, he mentioned that there are going to be amendments to the Judicial and Legal Provisions Bill for timely judgments. I would like to know whether the hon. Prime Minister is still contemplating to bring such amendments for the delivery of timely judgments.

As regards Strategic Direction 2014-2016, at the end of page 9, can we know what is the situation regarding the Court of Appeal and where matters have reached? There is also the intention of creating more specialised Divisions. Could we know what special Divisions the Prime Minister has in mind?

Mr Obeegadoo: I am on page 9, moving from top to bottom, third bullet, the Major Achievements for 2013 mentions “75% of drug cases are disposed of between one to six months.” I would like some clarifications here. What do we understand by “disposed of”? Is this the time taken for judgment to be delivered? Are we to understand that it is one to six

months for cases to be lodged, tried, heard and determined? That is not clear and it is not my experience of drug cases before our Courts. I would like to know what it means.

Secondly, on the issue of fast track process for children victims, hon. Baloomoody asked what the fast track process is. Only this morning, I was involved with a case of a child who has been going to Court for several years now, as the victim of rape and still cases get postponed. So, I would like to know how this is an achievement. What is the fast track process that is being generalised to all child victims attending Court as witnesses?

My third point concerns the Bail and Remand Court operational 7 days a week. The point was raised by hon. Baloomoody. I would like to know from the Prime Minister whether the present situation whereby bail motions are not heard and bail cannot be furnished beyond Saturday morning because there is no arrangement for payments to be effected at our Bail and Remand Court and deserving applicants are released on the undertaking that they will turn up on Monday morning, what is being termed as achievement and whether this will continue for the year 2014.

Further down the page on the *Major Constraints and Challenges*, second bullet - *Space constraints to deal with increasing number of cases*, would the Prime Minister kindly agree to give us some indications as to what change is occurring. What is the percentage increase in cases from one year to another? What is the magnitude of the problem that our Courts are facing?

On the next point - *Renovation and Construction of Court Houses*, hon. Baloomoody mentioned the number of District Courts. May I raise the issue of Moka where we have a historic building, which I had understood was being refurbished and would operate again as a Court of Justice, instead a Court is presently accommodated in what used to be the House of the Sergeant or Inspector of Police who was in the old days assigned to Moka Police station?

My final question concerns the Court of Appeal. Hon. Roopun asked where we stand. I would like to be more direct. Is this Court of Appeal planned to come into operation in 2014?

The Chairperson: The hon. Prime Minister has 10 minutes to answer.

The Prime Minister: I will try to be quick. Let me just clarify something. I get the impression from hon. Members that - be careful I am the Prime Minister, I am not the Chief Justice, neither do I administer the justice system. You asked me questions which depend on the Administration of Justice. I don't even want to go into them. You can write, I suppose, to the Registrar and ask for these details that you are asking. But I am not the Chief Justice. I will not be able to answer for the Chief Justice. There is a separation of powers in our Constitution, which is clear. But there are certain things that you are asking me that I am not prepared to answer because it doesn't concern me. But I can give you what I can. For example, you are asking about Souillac and Bambous District Courts. The indications are that they should be ready to be used in 2016. They have started the process.

There was another question about bail motion. How many - I think the question was from hon. Baloomoody - were heard during the weekends. In fact, I am told there is an average between 13 to 15, that are heard during the weekends.

Then, there was a question about the Judicial Research Officer, which is a new post. This has been a post that has been recommended, Mr Chairperson, by the PRB in its report of 2013 and 24 posts have been created and established in this. But these officers are required to provide Judges with the necessary assistance for legal research, to locate precedents and international Court decision. I will try to be quicker. Further with the creation of the Mediation Division and the proposed setting up of the Court of Appeal - I would come back to that - Judges will imperatively have to be provided with the necessary documentation within a reasonable time so that they can dispose of cases which are referred to them in the least possible delay.

I understand that the Scheme of Service is ready and the Judicial Research Officers will be recruited shortly from among candidates qualified to practise as Barristers-at-law in Mauritius.

Now, I think there was a question about the e-Judiciary. The project was awarded in January 2010 to Mauritius Network Services. Phase 1 of the project comprises the Commercial Division and the Civil Division of the Supreme Court. And for this phase, commissioning is ongoing and is expected to be completed in December of this year. My understanding is that when they have started, they have detected all sorts of bugs in the application of the software.

And this has to be addressed. So, the cost of Phase 1 of the project is in the order of USD3,600,000 of which 75% is being funded by the Investment Climate Facility for Africa (ICF) and only 25% by the Government.

There was also a question of how much finance for the e-Judiciary. I think somebody asked. It is Rs250,000 per month which have been collected.

As for Mediation, my understanding is that 377 cases have been referred and 183 cases have been disposed of.

I think there was a question about the Project Manager. It is the State Land Development Corporation (SLDC), which will be doing this. I think there were two questions on the major achievements and then there were questions on the major constraints. Let me say, Mr Chairperson, that the Judiciary said that they have achieved the objectives of the year 2013.

With regard to the fast track for child victims, from what I am informed there are pre-trial conferences being held by the Trial Magistrate, with the representatives of the DPP's Office and Defence Counsel. The child victims are made to appear before the Court only when the cases are ready, and their presence is absolutely required for adducing of evidence and this is scheduled during school holidays as far as possible, I suppose.

In sexual offences, upon the motion of Counsel for the Prosecution, the child victim is heard by video conferencing system so that he doesn't have to face and confront his perpetrator.

As for the Major Constraints, I think I referred to the 24 Judicial Research Officers. The Institute for Legal and Judicial Studies has already provided courses for the continuing of professional development. There are concerns about space, there are constraints. As I said, they are being rented for the moment, where possible, but, for example, Pamplemousses will be housing the Pamplemousses and Rivière du Rempart District Courts, but the latter, unfortunately, has to be refurbished. So, this is what is being done. The Judiciary is in the process of renting four floors at the Astor Court Building. This will be for additional office space that they will need.

There was a question also on the Strategic Direction. I must say to hon. Members – as I said I am not directly involved - there is a difference of opinion on the family division. If I am

not mistaken, the hon. Vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Finance was also in touch about the Family Division. There is no total agreement on how it should be done. So, this is going to be pending.

With regard to the electronic filing and management of all cases, since 4 April of this year, they have launched the e-Judiciary Project as I said, and as for the Mediation Division, I think I gave the number, 256 cases have been referred and as for the cost of the cases, they are reduced since the parties do not have to pay witnesses' fees, cost for summoning witnesses, etc., and the time also has been limited. I don't know whether I might have had ...

(Interruptions)

The Prime Minister: The Court of Appeal is ongoing. I think I mentioned it. The Court of Appeal is being actively looked at. The Court of Appeal, I remind hon. Members, it was through my initiative that I asked the former Lord Chancellor, Lord Mackay to come and look at this. He suggested, and I am all for it because let us not forget he is a former Lord Chancellor. But in line with this implementation, they are hoping that it will be operational soon. My understanding is that there is a need to relook at the whole staffing structure. It does involve the creation of five posts of Justice of Appeal, one post for Presidential High Court and ten posts of Senior Court Officers so as to suit the specific requirement of such a Court. These Court posts are already reflected in the PRB report of this year.

Now, I understand, Mr Chairperson, the present staffing structure at Judges' level at the Supreme Court, as it is, I think you all know, it is the Chief Justice, the Senior Puisne Judge and I think there are 18 Puisne Judges. All these Judges are based at the Supreme Court and they hear cases up to this Court and then the newly created specialised Divisions, as I said, there is a problem in the Family Division. But let us say the other Divisions: the Commercial, the Criminal and all these, they will sit also as appeal cases. I think that is all I can say, but the Judiciary is awaiting. We want to settle all these matters that remain to be settled and then, we will come with a Constitutional (Amendment) Bill to the House.

The Chairperson: We are left only with two minutes.

Mr Roopun: Mr Chairperson, I asked a question to the hon. Prime Minister. Last time, he mentioned that he intended to come with a Bill to ensure timely judgment. I wish to know whether Government is still envisaging that possibility.

The Prime Minister: In fact, if you were here – supposedly, you were not here - you would have heard in my speech, I again said we need timely judgment. We can't have Barristers finding all sorts of excuses – and I am not afraid of saying it - to postpone cases and then, they themselves would go to Court and would say their rights are being abused. That thing must be a thing of the past. So, I am all for it.

Mr Baloomoody: Just one last question. Probably I was not clear or the hon. Prime Minister did not get me. My question about the Bail and Remand Court was not about the cases which come before the Bail and Remand Court, but the number of cases which are heard. Because nowadays if there is objection for somebody to be released on bail, we get dates in 10 or 15 days for the motion to be heard, because they are not taking motion during the weekend and probably this may assist if we can hear motions and arguments during the weekend. This is my question. How many cases? In practice, it does not happen, but the hon. Prime Minister replied 37.

The Prime Minister: I have already answered. I know time is up, but let me say, again, the administration of justice is not for me to decide, how many this and how many that. I think the hon. Member will have to refer to them. I am sorry, time is up.

The Judiciary - Programme Code 021: Administration and Delivery of Justice (Rs604,000,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

The Chairperson: Time is up!

Mr Obeegadoo: So, it is 20 minutes for the whole programme of the Judiciary.

The Chairperson: Yes, 20 minutes. I said for each Programme Code, you have 20 minutes. This is an agreement between the Whips.

National Assembly - Programme Code 031: Parliamentary Affairs was called.

Mr Baloomoody: I thought we were going page by page, but we have not attacked pages 12 or 13 yet.

The Chairperson: Yes. But if you take 20 minutes on one page, time will be over. So, we are on *Programme Code 031*.

(Interruptions)

Silence! Silence!

(Interruptions)

I say order!

(Interruptions)

Silence ! Put the question !

Mr Bhagwan: *Reste tranqui do mo camarade ! Si to envie alle boire dité, alle boire dité. Assizé ta, transfuge! Harish Boodhoo pé rod twa, aller.*

The Chairperson: Put your question, hon. Bhagwan.

(Interruptions)

Mr Bhagwan: *Aller do ta are mwa do!*

The Chairperson: Time is running!

Mr Bhagwan: Mr Chairperson, which page are you taking?

The Chairperson: Page 16.

Mr Bhagwan: I take Programme Code 031, Mr Chairperson.

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Silence, let's listen.

Mr Bhagwan: I take Programme Code: 031, Mr Chairperson. I will ask the hon. Prime Minister about Parliamentary Private Secretary. Mr Chairperson, people of my Constituency would like to know from the hon. Prime Minister...

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Is it page 16, hon. Bhagwan?

Mr Bhagwan: Yes, Programme Code: 031, at page 16 and it follows on page 21 also, Parliamentary Private Secretary. Can I know from the hon. Prime Minister, on behalf of the people of my Constituency, Beau Bassin and Petite Rivière, who is that lucky person, man or woman, who is my PPS? Can I know from the hon. Prime Minister whether he has recommended to the President somebody to look after Constituency No. 20 as PPS.? The other time hon. Bachoo gave us the name of hon. Mrs Bholah. Can I know from the hon. Prime Minister whether that has been confirmed?

Mr Obeegadoo: May I proceed, Mr Chairperson?

The Chairperson: Yes, of course.

Mr Obeegadoo: We are moving across the programme? No, on page 16, I have not done.

The Chairperson: You have no question on page 16.

Mr Obeegadoo: No.

The Prime Minister: On page 16, with your permission. The question of PPS, as you probably know there is a vacancy at the moment. Hopefully, the person will, but I can't prejudge the issue so I am not doing anything. But we are doing temporary arrangements at the moment until we see how these things are evolving, if it takes longer then, I will obviously name somebody else.

(Interruptions)

The Prime Minister: Don't worry, we know how to manage.

The Chairperson: On page 16.

Mrs Labelle: Thank you, Mr Chairperson, I am on *Programme Code 031*, and I am at page 19.

The Chairperson: No. Let us start on page 17 first, if there is nothing on page 17, we move ahead. No question on pages 17.

Mr Bhagwan: Can I know from the hon. Prime Minister - we have a vote of Rs7.2 m. for overseas mission and capacity building - whether he will see to it that, I think it is through the Chairperson, which organisations our Parliament is involved? Formerly, we had the CPA and now, we have the Parliamentary Forum of Africa, SADC and so on. Can a list be circulated as to which organisations our Parliament is affiliated to and also whether it would be the practice. It can be asked to those going on missions to submit a report to Parliament - whoever it may be - those going on missions to CPA or Pan African Conference so that when they come back, they submit a report in Parliament.

The Prime Minister: Mr Chairperson, from what I know we have hon. Members of the Opposition also who participate. So they don't give any feedback?

(Interruptions)

Because on our side they do, that is why I am asking but...

(Interruptions)

Mr Bhagwan: *Ferme to la bouche!*

The Chairperson: Withdraw these words!

Mr Bhagwan: I withdraw that, but you must ask them to stop disturbing.

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: That is not possible. I have said there should be no provocation and no interruptions and I do not want any Member to utter any unparliamentary words or else I will have to take the necessary decision. Do you have a question?

The Prime Minister: I'll answer a little bit more Mr Chairperson.

The Chairperson: So we are still at page 17 or we move to 18. I have to explain that item 031, if you move to page 19, you will find that it is more explained there, so you better move to 19 ...

Yes because it is more in detail there, it is clearer.

Mrs Labelle: I am on page 19, Mr Chairperson and I am on item 28211, the last item, *Transfers to Non-Profit Institutions*. I would like to know which institution we are talking about and what activities have been carried out by these institutions during the present year 2013?

Mr Roopun: On page 19, item 22100, *Publications and Stationery*, I see the amount has remained the same, but we know that Parliament has now moved to an *e-Parliament*, how is it that the amount has remained the same?

Mr Ameer Meea: Yes, Mr Chairperson, on page 19, *Compensation of Employees*, there is a total estimate of Rs136,570,000 it has been increased by Rs12 m. and when we see for the post on page 21 ...

The Chairperson: Page 19.

Mr Ameer Meea: I am just comparing the number of employees, it is the same code. There has been an increase of only four in the number of posts. Can I ask the hon. Prime Minister why there has been such a huge increase of Rs12 m.?

The Chairperson: Before we proceed can you identify the item?

Mr Ameer Meea: I have already said it, *Compensation of Employees*, the main one, the first one.

The Chairperson: The first item, 21: *Compensation of Employees*.

Mr Roopun: Mr Chairperson just for the cognizance of the hon. Prime Minister I was referring to item, 22100: *Publications and Stationery*, why the amount has remained the same?

The Chairperson: Yes any more question.

Mr Seeruttun: On item, 22180: *Overseas Travel (Mission and Capacity Building)*. Some Rs7,200,000 has been earmarked for 2014. May we know how it splits between *Mission and Capacity Building*?

The Chairperson: Any further question. It appears that you have a question. Still 19, the hon. Prime Minister may answer.

The Prime Minister: Let me try to see if I go one by one. Let me go through the order even if it is not quite the order that they've asked. There is a question of I believe about *Personal Emoluments*. Well there is the basic salary for 96 funded positions and then you have the allowances that you usually have, then you have the cash *in lieu* of leave and there is provision for refund as we know for unutilised sick leave and then there are facilities allowances to hon. Members for telephone and tax facilities. All MPs are eligible for a telephone, for a fax machine, for a laptop every five years, then there is the end of year bonus, the increase in provision is due first of all to the additional post. One Parliamentary Librarian and Information Officer, three Management Support Officers, then you have the payment of the increments as I have mentioned, then we have the revision of the allowances to staff following implementation of the Errors and Omission and Anomalies Committee and then you have the increase in facilities allowance which is from Rs18,200 to Rs22,000 per month for all hon. Members. Then I think there was a question on *Publications and Stationery*. I am not quite sure what the question was, but it is for printing and stationery and also for publications. There is also the overseas travel - I think that the question was asked; again this is the provision to meet the cost of overseas mission for MP's and staff. The increase in provision, Mr Chairperson, is due to the trend that we have seen that is why it has been increased. It might have been less. There are also the *Transfers to Non-Profit Institutions*, this is I think hon. Labelle who've asked this question. This is for the Mauritius Branch of the *Assemblée Parlementaire de la Francophonie* (APF), Rs200,000 and the second one is for the Mauritius Branch of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association known as CPA, again Rs200,000.

The Chairperson: Page 20.

Mr Bhagwan: On page 20, Chairperson, can I ask the hon. Prime Minister on vote 31112421: *Upgrading and Refurbishment of Old Government House*. We are being asked to vote

for an additional amount of Rs37 m. If I can recall last year, I think the hon. Prime Minister informed the House that there would be a penalty fee to the contractor. Can we know whether, at this point in time, what has been the total cost, final cost of this building which if you ask me I am personally not satisfied with the finishing of this building compared to the State House and for what purpose we have been asked to vote this Rs37 m. and whether penalty clause has been applied to the contractor who undertook that job?

Mr Obeegadoo: On the very same item raised by my colleague, *Upgrading and Refurbishment of Old Government House*, I was on the impression that most of the upgrading and the refurbishment works were completed, why are we budgeting another Rs37 m. for 2014 and in that regard there is some spare capacity space wise, is it provided that we shall have an Office for the Leader of the Opposition on the present premises in year 2014 and finally the last item which is, *e-Government Projects (e-Parliament)*, I would like to know whether the Wi-Fi, the wireless network which is rather unreliable, raising serious connectivity issues these last few days or weeks will be attended to in 2014?

Mrs Labelle: Mr Chairperson, I am on the same item, *Upgrading and Refurbishment of Old Government House* – I would like to know whether the leakages that we all see in the verandas of this building and elsewhere, there are leakages in the roof of the building whether the contractor has been called upon to take care of that and what has happened to these problems?

Mr Uteem: In relation to the very same item, *Upgrading and Refurbishment of Old Government House*, may we know from the hon. Prime Minister, what is the scheduled date for completion of all outstanding work on the Government House?

Mr Li Kwong Wing: Yes, same item, can we know from the hon. Prime Minister what is the breakdown of the sum of Rs37 m. which is being provided year after year, the same amount. Can we have a breakdown of this item?

Mr Jhugroo: Mr Chairperson, under item, 31112421, *Upgrading and Refurbishment of Old Government House*, can we know whether the Project Officer is still in office and if so, for how long?

Mr Ameer Meea: On the same item, can I ask the hon. Prime Minister about the sum of Rs37 m. to whom will it be paid? Whether the sum will be paid to the same company that refurbished our Parliament, that cost almost around Rs350 m. would this be paid to the same company or to another company?

The Chairperson: We are left with five minutes, hon. Prime Minister.

The Prime Minister: Let me first of all say, Mr Chairperson, there are two things. For the all *Upgrading and Refurbishment of Old Government House* the estimated cost for the renovation and restoration of the old Parliament House is Rs330 m. and the project which started I think in March of 2010 and completed by the end of February 2012. But I understand, Mr Chairperson, there has been no cost overrun as such, but there have been penalty fees which have been applied to the tune of Rs6.6 m.

As for the other one, construction works were completed, and an amount of Rs37 m. was retained; hopefully to be paid. There were some snags that appeared, and they had to be remedied by the contractor. It is in the contract.

Once the remedial work is over, then the final completion certificate will be issued by the consultants with the retention money, but minus whatever has been the cost of the snags which appeared. The difference will be paid, but once it has been completed.

My understanding is that it is hoped that, by mid-December of this year, the completion of the whole building will be completed.

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Chairperson, on page 21, *Office of the Clerk*, I will take one example, under item 046479. I think all colleagues of Parliament will agree that the present IT Unit is doing a great job, in terms of supporting Parliamentarians and the E-Parliament project. However, I would like some clarification about the positions relating to ICT. It seems that Parliamentary ICT Manager, Deputy Parliamentary ICT Manager, Parliamentary ICT Officer and ICT Support Officer are not going to be filled in 2014. So, I was wondering what is the status of the dedicated staff of the IT Unit presently, and what hope do they have of present accommodation on the establishment in year 2014.

Mr Jhugroo: Mr Chairperson, regarding page 20, I am still waiting for my answer regarding the ...

The Chairperson: We are on page 21. Have you any question on page 21?

(Interruptions)

I say page 21! Don't argue with me?

(Interruptions)

You should not argue with me. Page 21! Yes, hon. Bhagwan!

Mr Bhagwan: I think there is a reduction in the post of Financial Officer/Senior Financial Officer, under item 014565. Can I know why there is a reduction of one post of Financial Officer/Senior Financial Officer?

The Prime Minister: Mr Chairperson, I keep telling Members - that's the way that we do it here, but I am not responsible why a Financial Officer has not been taken. It has nothing to do with me.

But, I must say one thing about what hon. Obeegadoo had said. I totally agree with him. That is one fact what I have said. They are very capable; I have seen them at work, I have asked them to come to my office, in fact. It is a very able team. From what I understand, the scheme of service is being prepared by the Ministry of Civil Service and Administration Reforms. I have, myself, indicated that my wish is that the duties are performed by them because they are delivering. If there was a problem, then we could have looked somewhere else, but they are delivering. I have, in fact, asked that the scheme of service needs to be done quickly. I think, by precaution, they have not put it, but, hopefully, they will be the ones who will do the service.

The Chairperson: Time is up!

Programme Code 031: Parliamentary Affairs (Rs214,700,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development (Mr X. L. Duval): Mr Chairperson, I beg to move that we do report progress and ask leave to sit again.

Question put and agreed to.

On the Assembly resuming with Mr Speaker in the Chair, Mr Speaker reported accordingly.

ADJOURNMENT

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that this Assembly do now adjourn to Wednesday 27 November 2013 at 11.30 a.m.

The Deputy Prime Minister rose and seconded.

Question put and agreed to.

Mr Speaker: The House stands adjourned.

At 9.27 p.m., the Assembly was, on its rising, adjourned to Wednesday 27 November 2013 at 11.30 a.m.