



SIXTH NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

PARLIAMENTARY

DEBATES

(HANSARD)

(UNREVISED)

FIRST SESSION

TUESDAY 28 MARCH 2017

CONTENTS

DEPUTY SPEAKER – *election*

DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON OF COMMITTEES - *election*

ANNOUNCEMENTS

PAPERS LAID

QUESTIONS (*Oral*)

MOTION

BILL (*Public*)

ADJOURNMENT

QUESTIONS (*Written*)

THE CABINET**(Formed by Hon. Pravind Kumar Jugnauth)**

Hon. Pravind Kumar Jugnauth	Prime Minister, Minister of Home Affairs, External Communications and National Development Unit, Minister of Finance and Economic Development
Hon. Ivan Leslie Collendavelloo, GCSK, SC	Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities
Hon. Sir Anerood Jugnauth, GCSK, KCMG, QC	Minister Mentor, Minister of Defence, Minister for Rodrigues
Hon. Showkutally Soodhun, GCSK	Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Housing and Lands
Hon. Seetanah Lutchmeenaraidoo, GCSK	Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade
Hon. Yogida Sawmynaden	Minister of Technology, Communication and Innovation
Hon. Nandcoomar Bodha, GCSK	Minister of Public Infrastructure and Land Transport
Hon. Mrs Leela Devi Dookun-Luchoomun	Minister of Education and Human Resources, Tertiary Education and Scientific Research
Hon. Anil Kumarsingh Gayan, SC	Minister of Tourism
Dr. the Hon. Mohammad Anwar Husnoo	Minister of Health and Quality of Life
Hon. Prithvirajsing Roopun	Minister of Arts and Culture
Hon. Marie Joseph Noël Etienne Ghislain Sinatambou	Minister of Social Security, National Solidarity, and Environment and Sustainable Development
Hon. Mahen Kumar Seeruttun	Minister of Agro-Industry and Food Security
Hon. Ashit Kumar Gungah	Minister of Industry, Commerce and Consumer Protection
Hon. Ravi Yerrigadoo	Attorney General
Hon. Jean Christophe Stephan Toussaint	Minister of Youth and Sports
Hon. Soomilduth Bholah	Minister of Business, Enterprise and Cooperatives
Hon. Marie Roland Alain Wong Yen Cheong, MSK	Minister of Social Integration and Economic Empowerment

Hon. Mrs Fazila Jeewa-Daureeawoo	Minister of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare
Hon. Premdut Koonjoo	Minister of Ocean Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping
Hon. Soodesh Satkam Callichurn	Minister of Labour, Industrial Relations, Employment and Training
Hon. Purmanund Jhugroo	Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands
Hon. Marie Cyril Eddy Boissézon	Minister of Civil Service and Administrative Reforms
Hon. Dharmendar Sesungkur	Minister of Financial Services, Good Governance and Institutional Reforms

PRINCIPAL OFFICERS AND OFFICIALS

Madam Speaker	Hanoomanjee, Hon. Mrs Santi Bai, GCSK
Deputy Speaker	Teeluckdharry, Hon. Kalidass
Deputy Chairperson of Committees	Jahangeer, Hon. Ahmad Bashir
Clerk of the National Assembly	Lotun, Mrs Bibi Safeena
Deputy Clerk	Ramchurn, Ms Urmeelah Devi
Clerk Assistant	Gopall, Mr Navin
Hansard Editor	Jankee, Mrs Chitra
Serjeant-at-Arms	Pannoo, Mr Vinod

MAURITIUS

Sixth National Assembly

FIRST SESSION

Debate No. 01 of 2017

Sitting of 28 March 2017

The Assembly met in the Assembly House, Port Louis at 11.30 a.m.

The National Anthem was played

(Madam Speaker in the Chair)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

HON. BHADAIN – SEAT ALLOCATION

Madam Speaker: Hon. Members, before proceeding with the business of the House today, I have the following announcement to make.

I have been informed that hon. Bhadain has publicly stated that he has been informed by the Opposition Whip that I am not agreeable to his request to be seated next to the hon. Leader of the Opposition because he has raised certain personal matters against me.

I wish to reassure the House that I have exercised my prerogative as provided for in Standing Order 6 and practice which has prevailed regarding the allocation of seats to hon. Members.

I also wish to add that no other consideration whatsoever has influenced my decision. I take this opportunity to reassure the House that I stand guided by the oath and the declaration I made on my assumption to the Office of Speaker.

Thank you.

ELECTION - DEPUTY SPEAKER

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, in accordance with the provisions of Section 32 of the Constitution and Standing Order 7 of the Standing Orders and Rules of the National Assembly, I move that hon. Kalidass Teeluckdharry be elected Deputy Speaker of the House.

The Deputy Prime Minister rose and seconded.

Madam Speaker: Is there a counterproposal?

There being no counterproposal, I declare hon. Kalidass Teeluckdharry elected Deputy Speaker of this Assembly. I offer him my sincere congratulations.

Mr Teeluckdharry: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Allow me to convey to you, hon. Members, my sincerest thanks, my special thanks to the hon. Prime Minister and Leader of the House. *J'espère que je saurai mériter la confiance que vous avez placée en moi.* Allow me to reassure you, all hon. Members, that I will endeavour to my utmost best to conduct the affairs of our legislature, to uphold the decorum of this august Assembly and to uphold the dignity of the national flag. My best wishes to all hon. Members.

Thank you again.

ELECTION - DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON OF COMMITTEES

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, in accordance with the provisions of Standing Order 7 of the Standing Orders and Rules of the National Assembly, I move that hon. Ahmad Bashir Jahangeer be elected Deputy Chairperson of Committees.

The Deputy Prime Minister rose and seconded.

Madam Speaker: Is there any counterproposal?

There being no counterproposal, I declare hon. Ahmad Bashir Jahangeer elected Deputy Chairperson of Committees of this Assembly. I offer him my sincere congratulations.

(Interruptions)

Mr Jahangeer: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, I am deeply honoured to be elected by this august Assembly as Deputy Chairperson of Committees. I can assure the House that I will discharge my responsibilities to the best of my abilities faithfully. I thank the hon. Prime Minister for the trust he has placed in me.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

(Interruptions)

OBITUARIES – (i) Mr ANANDISSWAR CHOOLUN

(ii) Mr BALKRISHN GOKULSING

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, it is with deep regret that we have learnt of the demise of former hon. Member Anandisswar Choolun on 09 December 2016 at the age of 71.

Late Mr Anandisswar Choolun first stood as candidate in the 1982 General Elections under the banner of the MMM/PSM Alliance and was returned Second Member for Constituency No. 11 – Vieux Grand Port and Rose Belle.

He contested the 1983 General Elections under the banner of the MSM/Mauritius Labour Party Alliance and was returned First Member for the same Constituency No. 11 - Vieux Grand Port and Rose Belle.

Madam Speaker, late Mr Anandisswar Choolun was returned Third Member for Constituency No. 11 – Vieux Grand Port and Rose Belle at the 1987 General Elections under the banner of MSM/Mauritius Labour Party Alliance.

Late Mr Anandisswar Choolun unsuccessfully stood as candidate for the fourth time in the 1991 General Elections in Constituency No. 11 – Vieux Grand Port and Rose Belle under the banner of *Alliance* MSM/MMM.

Madam Speaker, Mr Choolun is another example of an hon. Member who, at all times, dedicated himself to his parliamentary duties and responsibilities while being also attentive to the tribulations, hopes and desires of his constituents.

Madam Speaker, may I request you to kindly direct the Clerk of the National Assembly to convey the deep condolences of the Assembly to the bereaved family.

Thank you.

The Leader of the Opposition (Mr X. L. Duval): Madam Speaker, I associate myself with the tribute made by the hon. Prime Minister to late Mr Balmik *Gokulsing* ...

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: No, it is for Mr Choolun!

Mr X. L. Duval: Sorry, Mr Choolun. Excuse me, to late Mr Anandisswar Choolun – it must be the stress of the first day...

(Interruptions)

... former Member of the National Assembly and I request the Clerk to convey our condolences to the bereaved family.

Madam Speaker: I associate myself...

(Interruptions)

Hon. Bérenger wanted to say something?

(Interruptions)

Okay! Okay, please proceed.

(Interruptions)

I associate myself with the tribute paid to late hon. Choolun and I direct the Clerk to convey to the bereaved family the condolences of the Assembly.

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, it is again with deep regret that we have learnt of the passing away on Monday 26 March 2017 of Mr Balkrishn Gokulsing at the age of 76.

Mr Gokulsing was born on 05 June 1940. He attended Louis Nellan Government School in Quatre Bornes for his Primary Education and the Royal College of Port Louis for his Secondary Education.

Mr Gokulsing is no stranger to this august Assembly. In fact in 1987, Mr Gokulsing ran for the General Elections in Constituency No. 18 - Belle Rose and Quatre Bornes under the banner of MSM/Labour Party Alliance and was returned as Second Member to serve the said Constituency.

Mr Gokulsing again, but unsuccessfully, stood as a candidate for the 1991 General Elections in Constituency No. 18 - Belle Rose and Quatre Bornes under the banner of the Labour Party/PMSD Alliance.

Madam Speaker, in 1965, Mr Gokulsing qualified as an Attorney-at-Law, and had practised in Mauritius since then. In his professional life, Mr Gokulsing acquired a wealth of experience in general litigation as well as in expertise in corporate and banking solutions. He was also one of the leading experts on succession and Constitutional law in Mauritius.

Mr Gokulsing, during his lifetime, and particularly during his career, had impressed by his humility and his dedication to the service of his clients and to all those who sought his assistance and his advice.

He was always available both in his professional capacity as an hon. Member of our august Assembly where he followed with dignity in the footsteps of his father Mr Koomar Gokulsing who was also an hon. Member of our august Assembly which he served to the best of his abilities.

Madam Speaker, with these words, may I request you to kindly convey the deep condolences of the Assembly to the bereaved family.

Thank you.

Mr X. L. Duval: Madam Speaker, this time, I associate myself to the tribute made by the hon. Prime Minister to late Balkrishn Gokulsing. He was elected first time with me in 1987. I remembered him not only as a friend, but as a formidable debater, a very intelligent man and an excellent Attorney-at-Law. May I also request the Clerk to convey our condolences to the bereaved family.

Thank you.

Madam Speaker: I associate myself with the tribute paid to late hon. Gokulsing and I direct the Clerk to convey to the bereaved family the condolences of the Assembly.

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY – PROCEEDINGS – LIVE BROADCASTING

Madam Speaker: Hon. Members, the implementation of Phase I of the Live Broadcasting of the Proceedings of the House project, which consisted of broadcasting the proceedings of the House on Television through the Parliament TV Channel of the National Assembly and on radio, has now been completed.

All media organisations wishing to use the broadcast signals of the Proceedings of the House are henceforth able to do so, on entering into an agreement with the National Assembly, with the undertaking that the use thereof will be made according to the prescribed Rules.

Hon. Members, I also wish to inform the House that Phase II of the project, which consists of the streaming of the proceedings of the House on the Internet, is being launched today on a test case basis and will be accessible live and on Video on Demand on the Parliament TV portal.

Hon. Members, to mark the event, I am exceptionally allowing the photographer of the Government Information Service to take a few shots for archiving purposes.

I thank you for your attention.

COMMITTEES - COMPOSITION

Madam Speaker: Hon. Members, I also have a few announcements to make regarding the composition of Committees -

(i) The Committee of Selection

Hon. Purmanund Jhugroo, having been appointed Minister, has resigned from the Committee of Selection.

I have, pursuant to Standing Order 69(1)(b), nominated the following hon. Members to serve the Committee of Selection -

Hon. Maneesh Gobin, MP, Chief Government Whip, in replacement of Hon. Jhugroo; Hon. Mrs Marie Claire Monty, MP, Parliamentary Private Secretary; Dr. the hon Z. Joomaye, MP and hon. K. Teeluckdharry, now Deputy Speaker, to serve on the Committee of Selection.

(ii) The Public Accounts Committee

Following the resignation of hon. Vedasingam Baloomoody, as Chairperson of the Public Accounts Committee in December last, I have, pursuant to Standing Order 69(2)(a), appointed hon. Mrs Marie-Aurore Marie-Joyce Perraud, MP, as Chairperson of the Public Accounts Committee on 11 January 2017.

Hon. Mrs Marie Claire Monty, Parliamentary Private Secretary and hon. Gowkaran Oree, MP have also submitted their resignation as Members of the Public Accounts Committee.

The Committee of Selection nominated three hon. Members to fill the three vacancies on the Public Accounts Committee -

- (a) Hon. Maneesh Gobin, MP, Chief Government Whip;
- (b) Dr. the Hon. Zouberr Houssein Issa Joomaye, MP;
- (c) Hon. Sudesh Rughoobur, MP.

(iii) The House Committee

The Committee of Selection has nominated the hon. Toolsyraj Benydin, MP, Parliamentary Private Secretary to serve the House Committee in replacement of hon. Marie Cyril Eddy Boissézon, who having been appointed Minister, resigned from the House Committee.

(iv) The Parliamentary Gender Caucus

The Committee of Selection has also on 16 March 2017, pursuant to Standing Order 69(6)(b), nominated 15 Members to serve the Parliamentary Gender Caucus, of which I am the Chairperson and the hon. Deputy Speaker is the Deputy Chairperson.

The Members of the Parliamentary Gender Caucus are as follows-

1. Hon. Mrs Roubina Jadoo-Jaunbocus, PPS;
2. Hon. Mrs Daveena Boygah, PPS;
3. Hon. Toolsyraj Benydin, PPS;
4. Hon. Mrs Marie Claire Jeanne Monty, PPS;
5. Hon Satyaprakashsing Rutnah, Deputy Chief Government Whip;
6. Hon. S. Muhammad Aadil Ameer Meea, MP;
7. Hon. Vedasingam V. Baloomoody, MP;
8. Hon. Jean Claude Barbier, MP;
9. Hon. Joseph Buisson Leopold, MP;

10. Hon. Georges Pierre Lesjongard, MP;
11. Dr. the Hon Mohamud Raffick Sorefan, MP;
12. Hon. M. Osman Mahomed, MP;
13. Hon. Mrs Marie Aurore Perraud, MP;
14. Hon. Mrs Marie Danielle Selvon, MP, and
15. Hon. Mrs Malini Sewocksingh, MP.

Thank you for your attention.

PAPERS LAID

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, the Papers have been laid on the Table -

A. Prime Minister's Office

- (a) Certificate of Urgency in respect of the Land Drainage Authority Bill (No. 1 of 2017). (In Original)
- (b) The Rodrigues Regional Assembly Elections (Amendment) Regulations 2017. (Government Notice No. 1 of 2017)
- (c) The Limited Liability Partnerships (Fees) Regulations 2017. (Government Notice No. 4 of 2017)
- (d) The Public Procurement (Amendment) Regulations 2017. (Government Notice No. 8 of 2017)
- (e) The Rodrigues Regional Assembly Elections (Polling Stations) Order 2017. (Government Notice No. 10 of 2017)
- (f) The Double Taxation Convention (Republic of Botswana) (Amendment) Regulations 2017. (Government Notice No. 12 of 2017)
- (g) The Customs Tariff (Amendment of Schedule) (No. 3) Regulations 2016. (Government Notice No. 261 of 2016)
- (h) Virement Certificate - Return Quarter 4 (April-June 2016) Vote/Sub-Head
1-4,1-5,1-6,1-9,1-10,1-12,2-3,2-4,3-1,3-3,4-1,6-4,6-7,7-1,9-1,10-1,11-1,12-1,12-2,18-1,22-1,23-1,23-2,24-1,25-1,26-1. (In Original)
- (i) Virement Warrant Nos. 26, 32-55, 57-82, 84-98, 100-121 & 124 – 126; and Retrospective Virement Nos. 127 – 130. (In Original)
- (j) Virement (Contingencies) Warrant Nos. 27 – 43, 45 – 49 and Retrospective Virement (Contingencies) Warrant No. 50. (In Original)
- (k) Carry-Over Warrant No. 1 of 2016. (In Original)

- (l) Reporting of Carry-Over of Capital Expenditure for Financial Year 2015/16 – Votes 1-6, 2-1,6-1,7-1,9-1,10-1,12-2,14-1,16-1,17-1,18-1,22-1,23-1, 24-1,26-1. (In Original)
- (m) The Customs (Amendment No. 2) Regulations 2016. (Government Notice No. 266 of 2016)
- (n) The land (Duties and Taxes) (Amendment of Schedule) (No. 3) Regulations 2016. (Government Notice No. 276 of 2016)
- (o) The Customs Tariff (Amendment of Schedule) (No. 4) Regulations 2016. (Government Notice No. 281 of 2016)
- (p) The Income Tax (Common Reporting Standard) Regulations 2016. (Government Notice No. 282 of 2016)
- (q) The Income Tax (Amendment) Regulations 2017. (Government Notice No. 16 of 2017)
- (r) The Sugar Insurance Fund (Amendment of Schedule) Regulations 2017. (Government Notice No. 24 of 2017)
- (s) Virement (Contingencies) Warrant Nos. 14 & 15 of 2016-2017. (In Original)
- (t) The Public Procurement (Amendment No. 2) Regulations 2017. (Government Notice No. 35 of 2017)
- (u) The Bank of Mauritius (Processing Fee for the Reproduction of Currency Notes and Coins) Regulations 2017. (Government Notice No. 33 of 2017)
- (v) The Annual Report 2015-2016 of the Central Procurement Board.
- (w) The Annual Report of the Procurement Policy Office for the period January 2015 to June 2016.
- (x) Financial Statements of the Mauritius Ex-Services Trust Fund for the year ended 31 December 2015.
- (y) Digest of Industrial Statistics 2015.
- (z) National Accounts of Mauritius 2015.

- (aa) Digest of Crime, Justice and Security Statistics 2015.
- (ab) Digest of Demographic Statistics 2015.
- (ac) The Port (Fees) (Amendment) Regulations 2017. (Government Notice No. 37 of 2017)
- (ad) The Audited Financial Statements of the National Human Rights Commission for the year ended 31 December 2015.
- (ae) Digest of Energy and Water Statistics 2015.
- (af) The Statutory Bodies Pension Funds (Amendment of Schedule) Regulations 2017. (Government Notice No. 45 of 2017)
- (ag) The Income Tax (Amendment of Schedule) Regulations 2017. (Government Notice No. 46 of 2017)
- (ah) Report of the Director of Audit on the Accounts of the Republic of Mauritius for the 18-month period 01 January 2015 to 30 June 2016.
- (ai) Certified Financial Statements of the Republic of Mauritius for the six-month period ended 30 June 2015 and for the year ended 30 June 2016.
- (aj) Report of the Director of Audit on the Accounts of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly for the 18-month period 01 January 2015 to 30 June 2016.
- (ak) Certified Financial Statements of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly for the year ended 31 December 2015 and for the six-month period ended 30 June 2016.
- (al) The Activity and Performance Report for the 18-month period 01 January 2015 to 30 June 2016.
- (am) Performance Audit Report – Computerisation of Patient Health Record.
- (an) Performance Audit Report – Boosting Food Crop Production.
- (ao) Performance Audit Report – Implementation of Sustainable Tourism Strategies.
- (ap) Performance Audit Report - Moving Towards Renewable Energy-Solar Water Heater Grant Scheme.

B. Ministry of Energy and Public Utilities

- (a) The Annual Report 2015 of the Wastewater Management Authority.
- (b) The Energy Efficiency (Labelling of Regulated Machinery) Regulations 2017. (Government Notice No. 11 of 2017)
- (c) The Energy Efficiency (Energy Consumer and Energy Audit) Regulations 2017. (Government Notice No. 23 of 2017)

C. Minister Mentor's Office, Ministry of Defence and Ministry for Rodrigues

- (a) The Police Federation (Revocation) Regulations 2017. (Government Notice No. 5 of 2017)
- (b) Declaration of Restricted Area (SMF Compound at SSR International Airport, Plaisance). (Government Notice No. 20 of 2017)
- (c) The Annual Report of the Probation and Aftercare Service 2015.

D. Ministry of Housing and Lands

The Annual Report of the Town and Country Planning Board for the year ended 31 December 2015.

E. Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade

The Commonwealth Climate Finance Access Hub (Privileges and Immunities) Regulations 2016. (Government Notice No. 275 of 2016)

F. **Ministry of Public Infrastructure and Land Transport**

The Professional Architects' Council (Code of Practice) Regulations 2016. (Government Notice No. 42 of 2017)

G. **Ministry of Education and Human Resources, Tertiary Education and Scientific Research**

- (a) The Annual Reports 2010 and 2013 of the Mauritius Institute of Training and Development (MITD).
- (b) The Annual Report and Financial Statements of the Human Resource Development Council (HRDC) for the year ended 31 December 2015.
- (c) The Annual Report and Financial Statements of the Tertiary Education Commission for the year ended 31 December 2015.
- (d) The Annual Reports of the Rabindranath Tagore Institute for the years 2013, 2014 and 2015.
- (e) The Annual Report 2014 of the Mahatma Gandhi Institute (MGI).

H. **Ministry of Health and Quality of Life**

- (a) The Medical Council (Medical Institutions) (Amendment) Regulations 2017. (Government Notice No. 17 of 2017)

- (b) The Medical Council (Continuing Professional Development) (Amendment) Regulations 2017. (Government Notice No. 25 of 2017)
- (c) The Medical Council (Medical Institutions) (Amendment No. 2) Regulations 2017. (Government Notice No. 36 of 2017)
- (d) The Medical Council (Medical Institutions) (Amendment No. 3) Regulations 2017. (Government Notice No. 38 of 2017)
- (e) The Dental Council (Continuing Professional Development) (Amendment) Regulations 2017. (Government Notice No. 39 of 2017)

I. **Ministry of Arts and Culture**

- (a) The Annual Report 2015 of the Marathi Speaking Union.
- (b) The Annual Report 2015 of the National Library.
- (c) The Annual Report and Financial Statement of the Tamil Speaking Union for the year ending 31 December 2013.
- (d) The Annual Reports of the Bhojpuri Speaking Union for the periods October 2013 to December 2014 and January to December 2015.

J. **Ministry of Social Security, National Solidarity, and Environment and Sustainable Development**

- (a) The Audited Annual Report of the Sugar Industry Labour Welfare Fund (SILWF) for the Financial Year 2015.
- (b) The Report of the Director of Audit of the Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO) Trust Fund for the 18 months period ended 30 June 2016.
- (c) The Environment Protection (Amendment of Schedule) Regulations 2017. (Government Notice No. 40 of 2017)

K. **Ministry of Agro-Industry and Food Security**

- (a) The Animal Welfare (Experiment on Animals) Regulations 2017. (Government Notice No. 18 of 2017)
- (b) The National Agricultural Products (Amendment No. 3) Regulations 2016. (Government Notice No. 21 of 2017)
- (c) The Sugar Industry Efficiency (Reduction Factor) Regulations 2017. (Government Notice No. 34 of 2017)
- (d) The Annual Report and Accounts of the Mauritius Cane Industry Authority for the period 01 January to 31 December 2014.

L. **Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Consumer Protection**

- (a) The Rodrigues Consumer Protection (Control of Price of Taxable and Non-Taxable Goods) (Amendment No. 32) Regulations 2016. (Government Notice No. 3 of 2017)
- (b) The Rodrigues Consumer Protection (Control of Price of Taxable and Non-Taxable Goods) (Amendment No. 33) Regulations 2016. (Government Notice No. 6 of 2017)
- (c) The Consumer Protection (Control of Imports) (Amendment No. 4) Regulations 2016. (Government Notice No. 7 of 2017)
- (d) The Consumer Protection (Safety Requirements) Regulations 2017. (Government Notice No. 9 of 2017)
- (e) The Rodrigues Consumer Protection (Control of Price of Taxable and Non-Taxable Goods) (Amendment) Regulations 2017. (Government Notice No. 14 of 2017)

- (f) The Rodrigues Consumer Protection (Control of Price of Taxable and Non-Taxable Goods) (Amendment No. 30) Regulations 2016. (Government Notice No. 278 of 2016)
- (g) The Rodrigues Consumer Protection (Control of Price of Taxable and Non-Taxable Goods) (Amendment No. 31) Regulations 2016. (Government Notice No. 279 of 2016)
- (h) The Annual Report 2015 of the Mauritius Standards Bureau (MSB).
- (i) The Mauritius Standards Bureau (National Management Systems Certification Scheme) (Amendment) Regulations 2017. (Government Notice No. 22 of 2017)
- (j) The Consumer Protection (Control of Price of Petroleum Products) (Amendment) Regulations 2017. (Government Notice No. 26 of 2017)
- (k) The Rodrigues Consumer Protection (Control of Price of Taxable and Non-Taxable Goods) (Amendment No. 2) Regulations 2017. (Government Notice No. 27 of 2017)
- (l) The Rodrigues Consumer Protection (Control of Price of Taxable and Non-Taxable Goods) (Amendment No. 3) Regulations 2017. (Government Notice No. 28 of 2017)
- (m) The Rodrigues Consumer Protection (Control of Price of Taxable and Non-Taxable Goods) (Amendment No. 4) Regulations 2017. (Government Notice No. 29 of 2017)
- (n) The Consumer Protection (Control of Price of Taxable and Non-Taxable Goods) (Amendment) Regulations 2017. (Government Notice No. 30 of 2017)
- (o) The Rodrigues Consumer Protection (Control of Price of Taxable and Non-Taxable Goods) (Amendment No. 5) Regulations 2017. (Government Notice No. 31 of 2017)
- (p) The Rodrigues Consumer Protection (Control of Price of Taxable and Non-Taxable Goods) (Amendment No. 6) Regulations 2017. (Government Notice No. 32 of 2017)

- (q) The Mauritius Standards Bureau (Certification Mark) (Amendment) Regulations 2017. (Government Notice No. 41 of 2017)
- (r) The Annual Report of the State Trading Corporation (STC) for the Financial Year 2014.

M. **Attorney General's Office**

The Revision of Laws (Revised Laws of Mauritius) (Supplement – Issue 7) Regulations 2017. (Government Notice No. 13 of 2017)

N. **Ministry of Business, Enterprise and Cooperatives**

The Annual Report 2015 of the St Antoine Planters Co-operative Trust.

O. **Ministry of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare**

The Annual Reports of the National Women's Council for the years 2011, 2012/2013 and 2014.

P. **Ministry of Ocean Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping**

The Annual Report of the Fishermen Welfare Fund for the Year ended 31 December 2015.

Q. **Ministry of Labour, Industrial Relations, Employment and Training**

- (a) The Cinema Employees (Remuneration Order) (Amendment No. 2) Regulations 2016. (Government Notice No. 267 of 2016)
- (b) The Domestic Workers (Remuneration) (Amendment No. 2) Regulations 2016. (Government Notice No. 268 of 2016)
- (c) The Factory Employees (Remuneration Order) (Amendment No. 2) Regulations 2016. (Government Notice No. 269 of 2016)
- (d) The Light Metal and Wooden Furniture Workshops (Remuneration Order) (Amendment No. 2) Regulations 2016. (Government Notice No. 270 of 2016)
- (e) The Nursing Homes (Remuneration Order) (Amendment No. 2) Regulations 2016. (Government Notice No. 271 of 2016)
- (f) The Pre-Primary School Employees (Remuneration Order) (Amendment No. 2) Regulations 2016. (Government Notice No. 272 of 2016)
- (g) The Salt-Manufacturing Industry (Remuneration Order) (Amendment No. 2) Regulations 2016. (Government Notice No. 273 of 2016)
- (h) The Tea Industry Workers (Remuneration Order) (Amendment No. 2) Regulations 2016. (Government Notice No. 274 of 2016)
- (i) The Occupational Safety and Health (Employees' Lodging Accommodation) (Amendment) Regulations 2017. (Government Notice No. 19 of 2017)

R. **Ministry of Local Government and Outer Islands**

- (a) The Municipal Council of Curepipe (Markets) Regulations 2016. (Government Notice No. 2 of 2017)
- (b) The Municipal Council of Vacoas Phoenix (Fees, Dues and other charges for classified trades) (Amendment) Regulation 2016. (Government Notice No. 262 of 2016)
- (c) The District Council of Grand Port (Fees for Classified Trades) Amendment Regulations 2016. (Government Notice No. 263 of 2016)
- (d) The Municipal Town Council of Beau Bassin Rose Hill (Fees, Dues and other charges for Classified Trades), (Amendment) Regulations 2016. (Government Notice No. 264 of 2016)
- (e) The District Council of Moka (Fees, Dues and other Charges for Classified Trades) (Amendment No. 8) Regulations 2016. (Government Notice No. 265 of 2016)
- (f) The District Council of Grand Port (Fees for Classified Trades) Amendment Regulations 2016. (Government Notice No. 280 of 2016)
- (g) The District Council of Pamplemousses (Fees for Classified Trades) (Amendment) Regulations 2016. (Government Notice No. 283 of 2016)
- (h) The District Council of Curepipe (Fees for Classified Trades) Amended Regulations 2015. (Government Notice No. 284 of 2016)
- (i) The District Council of Riviere Du Rempart (Traffic Centre) (Amendment) Regulations 2017. (Government Notice No. 43 of 2017)
- (j) The City Council of Port Louis (Streets and Squares) (Amendment) Regulations 2016. (Government Notice No. 44 of 2017)
- (k) The City Council of Port Louis (Streets and Squares) (Amendment) Regulations 2016. (Government Notice No. 47 of 2017)
- (l) The Municipal Town Council of Quatre Bornes (Naming of Public places) amendment Regulations 2017. (Government Notice No. 48 of 2017)

S. Ministry of Financial Services, Good Governance and Institutional Reforms

- (a) The Financial Services (Exemption from Approval of Controllers and Beneficial Owners) Rules 2017. (Government Notice No. 15 of 2017)
- (b) The Financial Services (Investment Banking) Rules 2016. (Government Notice No. 277 of 2016)
- (c) The Annual Report 2015 of the Financial Reporting Council.
- (d) The Annual Report 2015 of the Financial Services Commission.

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

METRO EXPRESS PROJECT

The Leader of the Opposition (Mr X. L. Duval) (*by Private Notice*) asked the hon. Minister of Public Infrastructure and Land Transport whether, in regard to the Metro Express Project, he will –

- (a) state the estimated cost thereof, indicating the estimates of –
 - (i) ridership, and
 - (ii) fares per passenger;
- (b) state how same will be funded, indicating the annual State subsidies required therefor;
- (c) state the travel time between Curepipe and the Immigration Square;
- (d) state why it is being exempted from the requirement of an Environment Impact Assessment licence;
- (e) state how the employment of existing transport workers will be guaranteed;
- (f) state the public amenities which will be destroyed/relocated, and
- (g) guarantee that no fiscal measures will be imposed to discourage car ridership.

The Minister of Public Infrastructure and Land Transport (Mr Bodha): Madam Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. Leader of the Opposition for asking this question because there has been a lot of commentaries about this project. We had said that we would give all the figures and all the details once the contract has been awarded, but as the question has been put by hon. Leader of the Opposition, I will do my best to answer to the different parts of the question.

Madam Speaker, the Metro Express project has been revived by this Government on the basis of a review exercise that has been conducted by the Singapore Cooperation Enterprise at the request of Government to cost optimise the project that was approved by the previous Labour/PMSD Government for a total cost of 850 m. US Dollar which converted in Mauritian Rupees represent as at now about Rs31 billion.

In 2014, in fact, the consultants had concluded that the project could be implemented for a capital cost of 850 m. US Dollar broken down as follows -

- Domestic loans - 250 million USD;
- Foreign loans - 400 million USD, and
- Equity - 200 million USD.

Madam Speaker, I wish to stress that at that cost of 850 m. USD, the then Government found that the project was economically, technically and financially viable, as indicated by the reply of the then Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping, hon. Anil Bachoo to a PNQ of the then Leader of Opposition, hon. Paul Bérenger.

When this Government assumed office, Madam Speaker, it decided that the project as approved by the previous Government was not affordable for the country. However, taking into consideration certain elements of this project, Government decided to request the Singapore Cooperation Enterprise (SCE) to review the whole project with a view to making it more realistic and with an affordable budget.

Madam Speaker, thus, at the request of the Government, the Singapore Cooperation Enterprise submitted a cost optimised report with a new reference design on 26 October 2016. On the basis of that report, Government decided to move ahead with the project.

Madam Speaker, in regard to part (a) of the question, the estimated project cost is Rs17.7 billion. The final cost will, of course, be announced at the end of the current RFP exercise.

The financial model for this project is based on an average daily ridership of 80,000 passengers in each direction.

According to the feasibility study, the proposed fares will be aligned on the prevailing bus fares.

Madam Speaker, it has already been decided by the Government that the train fare will be the same as that of the prevailing bus fare.

Concerning part (b) of the question, the House is aware that the Government of India has provided a grant of 275 m. USD which if converted to Mauritian rupees stands at Rs9.9 billion.

For the remaining part of the funding, Government is in the presence of several options, including amongst others -

- (i) a loan from a consortium of local commercial banks;
- (ii) a line of credit from the Government of India;
- (iii) loans from international and financial institutions, and

(iv) a combination of these three options or other financing options.

Madam Speaker, I would like here to stress that it is totally false to say that local banks which have been contacted, have refused to finance the implementation of this project. On the contrary, they are eagerly awaiting for Government proposal once the contract has been awarded.

As regards the subsidy, it will, therefore, be premature to talk about subsidy at this point in time because the outcome of the current bidding exercise for the selection of a Design and Construct Contractor is not yet known.

However, Madam Speaker, the Price Waterhouse study which was commissioned by the NTA on the Public Transport System will submit its report in the coming weeks. In its Terms of Reference, one of the main issues is the reengineering of the travel system where Government has already earmarked a subsidy of Rs2 billion for free travel.

The recommendations of this report will help us provide a more integrated cost effective national transport system with the bus and Metro Express services

Madam Speaker, regarding part (c) of the question, the estimated travel time is 43 minutes, assuming that the train stops at each of the 19 stations. Express services linking the main terminals will also be offered reducing the standard journey.

In regard to part (d) of the question, the hon. Leader of Opposition is surely aware that the former Mauritius Light Rail Transit project was also exempted from the EIA.

The project has been delisted from the requirements of an EIA licence for reasons of celerity and effectiveness. However, Madam Speaker, I would like to reassure the House that all the standards, criteria and provisions of the law relating to the environment shall be adhered to. With the exception of the procedures, all other EIA requirements will be followed as the project will need to be environmentally friendly. In this context, the Design and Construct Contractor will be required to submit an Environmental Management Plan which will be monitored closely by the Authorities. Such procedures were followed for the Airports of Mauritius project, for the Bagatelle Dam, the Terre Rouge-Verdun project and some other projects.

In reply to part (e) of the question, with the exception of the United Bus Service (UBS), the National Transport Corporation (NTC) and the Rose Hill Transport, no other bus

companies will be concerned with the introduction of the Metro Express. In fact, all of these companies are modernising their bus fleet and will be perfectly integrated in the new transport network, meaning that the transport workers of these bus operators will not be adversely affected and their employment will not be at stake.

As regards part (f) of the question, public amenities to be affected are as follows -

- Part of the taxi stand in Vacoas;
- Parking space opposite Vacoas market;

I will explain later how we are going to find solutions for that.

- Promenade Gerard Bruneau at Quatre Bornes
- Boulodrome, Avenue Victoria, Quatre Bornes
- Market Fair at Ave Ollier, Quatre Bornes
- Arab Town at Rose Hill
- Promenade Roland Armand (Vandermeersh), Beau Bassin
- Jardin Bijoux, Beau Bassin
- Basket Ball /Volley Ball pitch at Barkly

Measures will be taken to provide alternative facilities and appropriate sites are being identified. Later, I will give some details about this.

Madam Speaker, I would like to conclude by saying very firmly that this Government is totally committed to implement this project and no undue pressure will deter us in this endeavour.

This Government is giving the same comfort to the employees of the transport sector.

As regards part (g) of the question, Government does not envisage to impose any fiscal measure to discourage car ridership.

Mr X. L. Duval: Thank you. My first question, Madam Speaker, regards Parliamentary scrutiny. This project is going to be implemented by a private limited company called Metro Express Limited of which there are various Governments mandating on the Board. Will the hon. Minister commit himself to responding to every question in Parliament regarding this limited company and will he also state why this limited company is not being included under the Public Procurement Act?

Mr Bodha: We know, Madam Speaker, why we revived this project. The project was revived on three bases. First of all, a project which was costing Rs31 billion was brought in to around Rs18 billion.

(Interruptions)

Secondly, yes, we have the line of credit, the grant from the Government of India and thirdly, we firmly believe in this project. As regards the Metro Express Limited...

(Interruptions)

Yes, I am going to reply! We will give all the information that is to be needed. Let me explain something. The subsidy that we have already, we have already spent Rs2 billion. And when it comes as to why it is a private company and not listed, but it is still a private company.

(Interruptions)

Mr X. L. Duval: Madam Speaker, I don't want biscuit business to become Metro business! What we are saying here is whether, firstly, the hon. Minister will answer Parliamentary questions? The question is very specific. Will he commit to respond to PQs although this is a limited company? Secondly, I didn't talk about listed companies. The hon. Minister should be aware that companies that are private do not come under the Public Procurement Act unless they are specifically included under the Public Procurement Act. There is a question just after the PNQ on this. I am asking both questions to the hon. Minister. Firstly, is he going to respond to PQs on all matters relating to Metro Express and secondly, is it going to be included under the Public Procurement Act because tens of billions of rupees of public money belonging to the Indian taxpayers and to the Mauritian taxpayers are going to be spent on that project?

Mr Bodha: As regards the implementation of the project, yes it is ...

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Order, please!

(Interruptions)

Order!

(Interruptions)

Mr Bodha: Yes.

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Order, please!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Leader of the Opposition, you have already asked your question! Allow the hon. Minister to reply!

Mr Bodha: I am giving the solemn undertaking of this Government to make everything transparent and to answer to all questions here.

(Interruptions)

Mr X. L. Duval: Will the hon. Minister now commit to put in Metro Express Limited under the Public Procurement Act?

Mr Bodha: The implementation of the project itself, everything is going to be decided now.

(Interruptions)

Later....

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Order!

(Interruptions)

Order, please!

Mr Bodha: We have almost...

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Order, please!

(Interruptions)

Order!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Leader of the Opposition, once you have asked your question, from a sitting position, you should not continue to ask questions! Allow the hon. Minister to reply! Please, proceed hon. Minister!

Mr Bodha: So, I said I have given my solemn undertaking.

(Interruptions)

Mr X. L. Duval: There must be a problem of English, Madam Speaker, because I am asking whether it is going to be put under part IV of the Public Procurement Act so that everything that is done, is done with good governance. I repeat, we are talking about money that is being spent on behalf of the Indian taxpayers - and God knows that they need money – and on behalf of the Mauritian taxpayers - and God knows that we need that money - and we want transparency all the way.

Mr Bodha: You will have transparency all the way, Madam Speaker.

Mr X. L. Duval: There has been no commitment to put on...

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Hon. Rutnah!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Rutnah, please!

Mr X. L. Duval: Madam, I am going to ask...

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Order, please! We won't be able to listen to the question!

Mr X. L. Duval: We are going to, I understand, have also Metro business now that we have biscuit business. Madam Speaker, I would like to ask the hon. Minister whether he has not accepted to release any documents yet regarding the tender that is happening at the moment. Firstly, is he willing to table the request for proposal that has been issued? Surely, there cannot be any issue now. Secondly, since I do not have it, can he tell me whether this is going to be a fixed price contract or a variable price contract?

Mr Bodha: Madam Speaker, the project had been estimated at Rs31 billion. The Singaporean Corporation Enterprise came with a project with a tight budget of around...

(Interruptions)

No, listen!

(Interruptions)

Let me answer!

Madam Speaker: Order, please!

(Interruptions)

Order!

(Interruptions)

Order!

Mr Bodha: What we did is that we requested them to see whether this project could be implemented at a certain level of budget funding. When the Singaporeans told us that this can be done technically and financially and the grant came from India, we launched the request for proposal which is a very tight jacket within the technical specifications and within the financial specifications. So, when the request for proposal was made, the question was put to the two companies, Larsen & Toubro and Afcons whether the project could be implemented within that tight jacket. This is what has been requested from the two companies. Now, the companies have been working on the request for proposal. They came here, they had the clarifications and then on 14 April, they will come forward with their proposal within that tight jacket.

Mr X. L. Duval: Madam Speaker, we are on live television. Everybody will understand that the Minister is running away from the question.

(Interruptions)

I have asked a simple question.

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker, if I wanted to be nasty I would say that the Minister is urinating on public opinion, but I will not say that. Madam Speaker, what I am saying is this: I am asking the Minister for a specific reason whether this is going to be a fixed price contract or a variable

price contract. I understand from his answer that it is going to be a variable price contract. This is what I have understood from the answer. I am going to table, Madam Speaker, a study by Aalborg University which shows quite clearly the tremendous amount of cost overrun that exists in virtually all projects of urban rail and that is my question: whether we know where we are going or we don't know where we are going. We are being promised a dream, we don't want it to turn into a *cauchemar*.

Mr Bodha: Madam Speaker, let me say that it is going to be a fixed price contract because the hon. Leader of the Opposition is saying that we are irresponsible and I would like to say that he was Minister of Finance. When the Terre Rouge-Verdun at 2 billion started at 4 billion, where was he?

(Interruptions)

Where was he? Now, he is asking for accountability!

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Order, please!

(Interruptions)

He is asking for accountability!

(Interruptions)

I have said order!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Members, I have said order in the House! Hon. Leader of the Opposition, please sit down! Hon. Members, I wish to draw your attention to the fact that when I am on my feet and I am calling for order, there should be silence in the House, otherwise you are obstructing the business of the House. So, I am giving a warning to both sides of the House, please be silent when I am on my feet and I am calling for order. Thank you.

Mr X. L. Duval: Madam Speaker, for 12 years I have answered questions, now it is my turn to ask questions and the questions are not due to me, Xavier Duval, it is due to the people of Mauritius and I am not going to be brought into other debates. What I want to know is how this Minister who does not seem to understand the difference between good governance and not good governance, is going to make sure that this project does not bear the

same type of cost overrun that is indicated here, in this Aalborg University Study, and whether he is aware of the study and if he is not aware, I am tabling it for him?

Mr Bodha: Madam Speaker, I have been the Minister of Public Infrastructure for two and a half years, there has been not one cent of overrun in all the projects.

(Interruptions)

Listen!

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Order again! Order, please!

(Interruptions)

Order!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Baloomoody!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Baloomoody, please! Please! Order, I said. Hon. Members, do you realise that you are losing the time of the House because time is running? Hon. Leader of the Opposition, please!

Mr X. L. Duval: Madam...

Madam Speaker: The Minister has not finished. Please, allow the Minister to answer!

Mr Bodha: The Terre Rouge/Verdun on the other side cost 880 million.

(Interruptions)

But I implemented the project.

(Interruptions)

I implemented the project at no further cost, Madam Speaker.

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Order, please! Hon. Shakeel Mohamed, order!

(Interruptions)

We cannot even hear what the hon. Minister is saying!

(Interruptions)

Allow him to reply! He was quiet when the hon. Leader of the Opposition was asking his questions. So, Members have to be quiet when he is replying!

Mr Bodha: Yes, Madam. The project in Omnicane is costing 600 million and it is implemented. There is no cost overrun. Madam Speaker, I have said it many times in this House, there are three things that we want to do...

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Hon. Bhagwan!

Mr Bodha: ...no cost overrun...

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Hon. Bhagwan, sorry!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Bhagwan, I am addressing myself to you! Please, allow the Minister, he is replying. From a sitting position, you can't make comments. Please!

Mr Bodha: We are committed to three things, Madam: no cost overrun, quality of works and we meet the deadlines.

Mr X. L. Duval: I am such a happy man! We have achieved consensus in the Opposition as regards the fact that this Minister has done nothing for two years. Madam Speaker, let me ask the hon. Minister who has not answered so far hardly any of my questions and I hope I will get some satisfaction this time. Surely, he must know what is the estimated amount of subsidy that is planned; surely, he does not go in a project knowing that the price is going to be the same, the fare is going to be the same as the bus fare, knowing the cost, although it can be highly underestimated, without the subsidy element or is he hiding it from the House and from the people of Mauritius?

Mr Bodha: The final subsidy element will be re-engineered when we take into account how we are spending the 2 billion now. The 2 billion which are being spent now on free travel has been a question on the table for long and we have been asking ourselves whether this money was accountably spent the way it has to be spent. So, the amount of subsidy will be added on that 2 billion, but once we know how to engineer the 2 billion, we

will engineer a bigger sum. What we are saying is that the fare is going to be what it is today as regards the bus fare.

Mr X. L. Duval: Madam, I put it to the Minister that he is running away again from the question. It is inconceivable that Government does not know what is the subsidy, but the issue, of course, is that he has promised to extend the Metro to all the rural areas - God knows when - whereas the subsidy will have to be paid by all Mauritians right now when it starts. Is that the reason why he does not want to give the amount of estimated subsidy?

Mr Bodha: Madam Speaker, in 2006, when the free travel was launched...

(Interruptions)

... did they mention the subsidy?

(Interruptions)

Did they mention the subsidy then?

(Interruptions)

When they said they were going to implement the free travel, did they say it was going to cost Rs600 m. or Rs800 m., and there was no accountability as regards how it was spent? They never said so!

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker, we are saying that we have Rs2 billion already. We are going to reengineer the Rs2 billion, and then, if there are additional costs, we will add onto it. We are taking the undertaking that the fare is going to be what it is today.

(Interruptions)

Mr X. L. Duval: Can you believe this, Madam Speaker? If there are going to be additional costs! The hon. Minister lives in a cloud cuckoo land! If there is going to be additional cost, a project that is going to cost billions additionally will have to be financed somehow. My hon. friend should know! Madam Speaker, the hon. Prime Minister himself, and I presume the hon. Minister himself, has also said previously that this is the best option for Mauritius - that the *métro léger* is the best option - and when he replied to my predecessor, the hon. Minister mentioned the Halcrow Report. He failed though to mention

that, after the Halcrow Report, there was a World Bank consultant who came and virtually destroyed the arguments of Halcrow and instead of the *métro léger* was opting for the Bus Rapid Transit. My first question is: why did he omit that second report from the PNQ of December?

Mr Bodha: Madam Speaker, do you know what the hon. Minister of Finance said in the Budget in 2013? I am reading his Budget –

“Under a Government to Government arrangement (...)”

The hon. Leader of the Opposition said so! He read it here in Parliament –

“Under a Government to Government arrangement, the Singapore Cooperation Enterprise is providing advisory services to prepare the project. An Expression of Interest exercise has already been carried out. Out of 11 proponents, 6 have been pre-selected and will be invited to submit their detailed proposals.”

He read this here in his Budget Speech!

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Order!

(Interruptions)

Order, please!

(Interruptions)

Order!

(Interruptions)

I have said order!

(Interruptions)

No crosstalking, I said!

(Interruptions)

No crosstalking and no talking from a sitting position!

(Interruptions)

Mr X. L. Duval: Madam Speaker, I am so happy that this is being televised because the Minister is mistaken. He is not answering to Xavier Duval. He is answering to the people of Mauritius and it is his duty to reveal, when he is answering, all the facts to this House. And he is withholding from the House the fact that there was a subsequent report to the Halcrow Report. Whatever else this explanation unless, as I mentioned - I will not repeat the word, that he is doing to the public opinion - 'urinating', I repeated it; he has to provide the information.

(Interruptions)

Mr Bodha: Madam Speaker, on 14 April, the two companies are going to submit their offer. It may happen that we will give them a few weeks of extension. Once the contract is...

(Interruptions)

Extension! It's because they have requested about four weeks of extension to submit their offer.

(Interruptions)

Once the contract has been awarded...

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Hon. Bhagwan!

Mr Bodha: Once the contract has been awarded...

(Interruptions)

... and we know exactly how the project is going to be implemented - and this is a question of weeks - I will come here to give, together with the hon. Prime Minister, all the details that have to be given. This project, Madam Speaker...

(Interruptions)

... they were building...

(Interruptions)

We will come to explain why this project is a paradigm shift for three reasons. First of all, the budget has been brought in to an affordable amount. Second, we have had the extraordinary generous offer of India. Third, we have the two most important building companies of India, *Larsen & Toubro* and Afcons, coming to Mauritius. Fourth, the trains which are going to be offered, either the Bombardier or the...

(Interruptions)

The hon. Member wants to know?

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Order, please! Order!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Shakeel Mohamed...

(Interruptions)

...please! Hon. Henry, please! I have said that you should not interrupt when the Minister is talking!

Mr Bodha: Madam Speaker, it is not what was approved by the Government formerly, that is, a railway with a number of stations. We are changing the whole face of Mauritius, Madam Speaker. We are going to have six urban terminals to address all the issues which have been...

(Interruptions)

That is what I am saying...

Mr X. L. Duval: On a point of order! This Minister is wasting time! It is evident to everyone that nobody asked him about the urban terminals. Why is he going on about the urban terminals? Everybody knows about it.

Mr Bodha: Madam Speaker, the question is very simple. Once the contract has been awarded, we will come with all the figures and lay on the Table of the National Assembly all documents which are needed.

Mr X. L. Duval: Madam Speaker, the contract has not been awarded, we agree on that. The design phase will take eight months to a year, we agree on that, I am sure. Madam Speaker, the launch ceremony cost, I think, Rs7 m., and that is also a fact. It is probably a waste of money. Now, Madam Speaker, I am going to ask the hon. Minister. This is going to take so much time. Then, why have eviction notices been sent to the poor people of Mauritius - this is La Butte - asking them to move out of their houses, Madam Speaker? “You are given one month delay as from date of this letter to quit, leave and vacate the premises.” One month delay! He does not even know what is the cost, what is the subsidy. Someone here, and I can table it, a Senior Adviser to his own Ministry...

(Interruptions)

The Senior Adviser to his own Ministry said only this morning that if the cost is too high, they will not go ahead with it. Yet, in the meantime, Madam, tens of Mauritian families are having to vacate! In Rose Hill, they are thinking of moving the stadium. There is a whole brouhaha everywhere and the whole thing, Madam Speaker, smacks of incompetence!

Mr Bodha: Madam Speaker, the notice that the land has been acquired dates back to 2014. So, all these people were aware. But I agree with the hon. Leader of the Opposition on this point: that we should not have given this letter to quit, leave and vacate within a month. And I am correcting it. With the hon. Vice-Prime Minister, myself, Valuation...

(Interruptions)

I totally agree with the hon. Leader of the Opposition on this point. So, what we are doing is - in fact, we are meeting on Thursday - we are setting up a unit with the Valuation Office, the Finance Ministry, the Prime Minister's Office, Social Security, Social Integration, Housing and myself. We will sit down to view the case on a case to case basis.

Madam Speaker, out of about 90 plots, there are only 20 plots where the compensation has not been paid, for several reasons. Sometimes, they don't agree with it; sometimes they don't want to leave, and other people are saying that they will leave when they know that the project is going to be implemented. I totally agree about this human side of it. I am going to take care of it with the hon. Vice-Prime Minister. We are going to have a case to case basis and see for each family because when you disrupt the life of a family, it is also children going to school, going to the workplace, commuting, and all these factors become very important in the life of everybody. So, we are going to address this.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Leader of the Opposition, I think we have run out of time already, but I will allow you your last question.

Mr X. L. Duval: Yes, Madam Speaker. We will no doubt be coming back with more questions, and I hope the Minister will be better prepared next time.

(Interruptions)

What I want to...

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Hon. Members!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Members, no interruptions! We have already run out of time, and I have allowed additional time for this last question. So, please don't waste time again!

(Interruptions)

Mr X. L. Duval: God bless you, Madam Speaker. Now, I want to ask the hon. Minister, given all the uncertainty, given this is not a fixed price contract, given also the problems of defining properly ridership because also, Madam Speaker, there has been a lot of experience as to ridership being overestimated, given that there is a probability - I don't say possibility, I say probability - that this project becomes a burden on the taxpayers in Mauritius with little benefit except for the people who actually want to use that, and we are not sure who and we have not been able to go to all the other questions, I would like to ask the...

Madam Speaker: Hon. Leader of the Opposition, please don't be long, ask your question!

(Interruptions)

Mr X. L. Duval: Madam Speaker, I would like to ask the hon. Minister whether, to put light onto this whole project, he will not ask assistance from the World Bank or the African Development Bank who have consultants and who can assist us in case we are just going into a pitfall. So, I will ask the hon. Minister to consider - it is going to be a little bit of additional costs - to have help from these institutions.

Madam Speaker: We have understood your question.

Mr Bodha: Cela a été un plaisir, Madame la présidente, de répondre à cette question parce qu'il a parlé de R 7 millions. Le 'C' est un plaisir' c'était R 25 millions!

Madam Speaker, I would like to give the assurance that we want every cent to be spent the way it has to be spent. At the same time, we have respected what has been requested by the Prime Minister of India and the Government of India because we are implementing the project together. We want to get the best and, if need be, we need to have an international verifier. For every claim, we will do that. I can give this assurance to the House, Madam Speaker. This is going to be the most important project which will change the whole face of Mauritius for the third millenium, Madam Speaker. Thank you.

Madam Speaker: Time is over! Hon. Members, the Table has been advised that PQ B/10 in regard to the number and rate of unemployed as at December 2016 will be replied by the hon. Minister of Labour, Industrial Relations, Employment and Training. PQ B/11 in regard to Stock Markets will be replied by the hon. Minister of Financial Services, Good Governance and Institutional Reforms. PQ B/60 in regard to the covering of sidewalks and drains at Bonnefin Road, Pailles and PQ B/62 in regard to Ms N.H., Chief Executive Officer of Landscape (Mauritius) Ltd. will be replied by the hon. Prime Minister, time permitting. PQ B/26 which was addressed to the Rt. hon. Minister Mentor, Minister of Defence, Minister for Rodrigues and which would have been replied by the hon. Prime Minister, time permitting, has been withdrawn. Hon. Rughoobur!

STATE OWNED ENTERPRISES – PROCUREMENT PROCEEDINGS - EXEMPTION

(No. B/1) Mr S. Rughoobur (Second Member for Grand' Baie & Poudre d'Or) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Home Affairs, External Communications and National Development Unit, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to the State owned enterprises, he will state if consideration is being given for a review of the list thereof which are exempt bodies for procurement purposes and, if so, give the list thereof, indicating the reasons therefor in each case.

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, the exempt organisations are listed in the First Schedule to the Public Procurement Regulations 2008. These exempt organisations are the -

1. Agricultural Marketing Board;

2. Central Electricity Board;
3. Outer Islands Development Corporation;
4. State Informatics Limited;
5. State Trading Corporation;
6. Independent Commission Against Corruption;
7. Mauritius Examination Syndicate;
8. Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation;
9. Competition Commission of Mauritius, and
10. National Assembly

These organisations are exempted from the Public Procurement Act for specific types of contracts while the Independent Commission against Corruption is exempted for all types of contracts.

In addition, exemptions from the Public Procurement Act is also granted to any public body carrying out procurement of goods, works, consultancy services or other services which are financed by a foreign State for an amount of at least 50 per cent through a grant or concessional financing, as the Minister of Finance may approve, and where that foreign State has imposed a condition for the goods, works, consultancy services or other services to be procured from that State.

Madam Speaker, the types of contract which are exempted, other than the National Assembly in respect of catering services relate to -

- (i) goods purchased for resale;
- (ii) goods purchased for the purpose of holding of examinations;
- (iii) acquisition of transmission rights for broadcasting, and
- (iv) procurement of forensic services for searches and seizures.

It should, however, be noted that exempt organisations have to establish their own procurement rules for such types of contracts.

Madam Speaker, the Procurement Policy Office constantly reviews the list of exempt organisations and makes appropriate recommendations thereon.

Mr Rughoobur: I thank the hon. Prime Minister for his reply. Let me refer to the OECD Guidelines 2015, where it is stated, and I quote –

“When SOEs engage in public procurement, whether as bidder or procurer, the procedures involved should be competitive, non-discriminatory and safeguarded by appropriate standards of transparency.”

May I kindly request the hon. Prime Minister, for better transparency, if he could consider that there is a mechanism in place to ensure that there is better oversight by Parliament on these procurement systems in these SOEs in Mauritius?

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, in relation to exempt bodies for certain types of contracts, the questions can always be asked in Parliament, and, of course, as far as I can, I will try to answer, but there are already guidelines and policy. In fact, there have been recommendations made by the PPO with regard to how the procurement should be done for these organisations when they so request for any advice. So, that is already prescribed. It is there for their guidance.

Mr Rughoobur: There was a similar question last year where the former Prime Minister replied, and I quote –

“The Ministry of Financial Services and Good Governance which has the responsibility for good governance portfolio is already working on a methodology to look into the recommendations of audit reports of State-owned companies.”

May I know if such a report has been prepared by the former Minister or the Ministry and if it has been submitted to the Government? Can the hon. Prime Minister enlighten us on this?

The Prime Minister: Well, I am not aware of this report. There might be, but if a specific question would have been asked, I would have certainly looked into that matter. In the light of the question that has been asked, I will now go and try to see whether there has been any report and then circulate in Parliament.

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Hon. Bhagwan, I have said several times, do not make remarks from a sitting position. And on this side, I am asking that Members should not provoke. Hon. Osman Mahomed!

Mr Osman Mahomed: Thank you, Madam Speaker. We have understood from the reply of the hon. Prime Minister that these exempt bodies are supposed to have their own procurement rules. Can the hon. Prime Minister inform the House whether these bodies have within their midst procurement specialists to ensure that good governance is being adhered to or it is left to normal officers?

The Prime Minister: Well, they have, in fact, guidelines which are issued by the Public Procurement Office and whenever there is such a case that arises they also seek any advice from the PPO. But they are not left, as the hon. Member is saying, to any officer within the organisation. There is a dedicated and specific officer and, as I say, should the need arise, they will, of course, request for any advice so that they can stand guided on how to carry out the procurement.

Madam Speaker: Last question, hon. Rughoobur!

Mr Rughoobur: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I wanted to raise the issue of challenge because we have seen in the case of public and parastatal bodies how challenge is important. May I request the hon. Prime Minister until there is a mechanism that we have proposed is in place for oversight by Government on these procurement practices in the SOEs, will he consider a mechanism for challenge which is non-existent today in these SOEs; a mechanism for challenge when contracts are awarded in these SOEs?

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, maybe I don't understand what the hon. Member is referring exactly to, but the law prescribes for any enterprise or anybody who is aggrieved by a decision with regard to procurement; there is already prescribed for any contest; it can go to the IRP, for example, for the IRP to...

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Hon. Baloomoody!

The Prime Minister: So, according to the law, there is already prescribed. Now, if there is any other issue with regard to specific cases, maybe the hon. Member can just let me know, then we will see and we will make the request to the PPO to issue any other guidelines.

Madam Speaker: Next question, hon. Rughoobur!

PROCUREMENT POLICY OFFICE – DIRECTOR & INDEPENDENT PERSONS - APPOINTMENT

(No. B/2) Mr S. Rughoobur (Second Member for Grand' Baie & Poudre d'Or) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Home Affairs, External Communications and National Development Unit, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to the Procurement Policy Office, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain therefrom, information as to the –

- (a) names of the Director and of the two persons appointed for the administration thereof, indicating in each case, the duration of the contract of appointment thereof, and
- (b) number of potential bidders or suppliers that the Policy Office has suspended or debarred from participation in public procurement over the past two years, indicating in each case, the grounds on which the suspension or debarment, as the case may be, has been effected.

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker...

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Please!

(Interruptions)

The Prime Minister: I am not addressing anything to the hon. Member; I am answering the question.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Prime Minister...

(Interruptions)

The Prime Minister: Is there any problem?

Madam Speaker: Hon. Prime Minister, please!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Prime Minister, please sit down! I have said several times that there should be no interruptions and I will not allow Members from a sitting position to talk to other Members across the floor. I hope that this is understood by both sides of the House. Hon. Prime Minister!

(Interruptions)

The Prime Minister: Section 4(1) of the Public Procurement Act provides for the appointment of a Director and two other independent persons for the administration of the Procurement Policy Office. These persons are appointed by the President of the Republic, acting in accordance with the advice of the Prime Minister tendered after the Prime Minister has consulted the Leader of the Opposition, on such terms and conditions as may be determined by the Prime Minister.

With respect to part (a) of the question, the Director is Mr M. Dhoorundhur and the two other independent persons are Mr P. Goburdhun and Mr S. Tahalooa. All of them were appointed with effect from 21 May 2014 for a period of three years.

Regarding part (b) of the question, five suppliers have been disqualified from the public procurement during the last two years. The names of the suppliers and the grounds of their disqualifications are –

First, SNB Construction Ltd for having refused to accept an award and to enter into contract with the Municipal Council of Quatre Bornes;

Second, Drishti Eyes Mauritius Trading Ltd which had defaulted in the execution of two contracts awarded by the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life;

Third, Tianli Construction Company Ltd for delays in the completion of a contract of the Ministry of Education, Human Resources, Tertiary Education and Scientific Research;

Fourth, Iswurlall Beehary Construction Ltd for extreme delays in the completion of a contract of the Ministry of Education, Human Resources, Tertiary Education and Scientific Research, and

Fifth, FTM (Mauritius) Ltd for poor performance and non-delivery of Medical Supplies to the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life.

The names of the disqualified suppliers are posted on the website of the Policy Office during the period of disqualification and they remain disqualified from bidding for public contracts during their disqualification period.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Rughoobur!

Mr Rughoobur: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Coming to the second part of my question, is the hon. Prime Minister aware that only last year there was a contract awarded to a company – well, I am going to table a copy of this award as evidence – which was previously severely sanctioned because of poor performance at the level of the NDU, and even in my Constituency several sites were abandoned?

Madam Speaker: Hon. Rughoobur, please ask your question! Don't make a statement before you ask your question, please!

Mr Rughoobur: Thank you, Madam Speaker. So, my question is whether the hon. Prime Minister will investigate on this particular issue and see to it that there are sanctions against those who are responsible for such state of affairs at the level of the PPO?

The Prime Minister: Well, Madam Speaker, I have given the list of the companies which have been disqualified as the hon. Member has requested. Now, the hon. Member is saying that there is another company that should have been disqualified and he is tabling a copy of whatever it is award, or maybe any document that will tend to show that it should have been disqualified. I don't know, first of all, the name of the company. I need to look at the document and, of course, I will transmit it to the relevant authority so that they can look into the matter.

Madam Speaker: Yes, hon. Rughoobur!

Mr Rughoobur: Will the hon. Prime Minister enlighten the House as to the reason for which the Annual Report of the PPO has not been tabled, and has not been prepared yet and submitted to the Government? Because this is from where we get an idea of how the PPO has been performing.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Rughoobur, I am going to draw your attention once more to the fact that you should ask your question and not make a statement before you ask your question.

Mr Rughoobur: Right! So, may I please ask the hon. Prime Minister to enlighten the House as to the reasons for which the Annual Report of the PPO has not been laid as yet? Thank you.

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: No, please don't make comments! Hon. Bérenger, please! I will request Members not to make such comments especially on the Prime Minister, please.

(Interruptions)

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker...

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Hon. Bhagwan!

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, this is all the *bla-bla-bla!* They don't have even the courage to go before the Supreme Court.

(Interruptions)

What are they talking about!

(Interruptions)

What are they talking about! *Bla-bla-bla!*

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Order, please!

(Interruptions)

The Prime Minister: *Bla-bla-bla!*

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Order!

The Prime Minister: *Bla-bla-bla!* All those lawyers there....

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Order, please! Order!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Bérenger, please! I ask you to calm down. I am asking both sides of the House not to make provocations.

(Interruptions)

If you make provocations, then you are disrupting the House and we are losing time. I have said that time and again, that we should not waste the time of the House. Hon. Prime Minister, please!

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, in fact, the law provides for the Policy Office to lay before the National Assembly a copy of the report. In fact, it has to be communicated to the Minister, but again, I will request the hon. Member to put a specific question and then I will check whether this report had been handed over and whether it had been laid before the House.

Madam Speaker: Next question, hon. Rughoobur!

PUBLIC & PARASTATAL BODIES**- PROCUREMENT CONTRACTS**

(No. B/3) Mr S. Rughoobur (Second Member for Grand'Baie & Poudre d'Or) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Home Affairs, External Communications and National Development Unit, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to the procurement contracts awarded by the public and by the parastatal bodies respectively, since 31 December 2015 to date, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Independent Review Panel, a list thereof in respect of which unsatisfied bidders have asked for a review of the procurement proceedings, indicating the outcome thereof in each case.

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, section 45(1) of the Public Procurement Act provides for a bidder, who is not satisfied with the decision of a public body, to file a case at the Independent Review Panel. The Independent Review Panel will consider the application for review provided the case is filed within seven days of receipt of the decision of the public body. The IRP has to determine the case within 30 days of the application failing which the public body shall proceed with the award of the contract and the IRP continues with the determination.

With regard to the list of cases filed for review of the procurement proceedings, I am informed that the Independent Review Panel has received 40 cases for review for the period 31 December 2015 to 20 March 2017.

Out of the 40 cases, 10 cases have been withdrawn by the applicants and 11 cases have been found to have no merit. Twelve cases were found to have merit and the Panel has requested an annulment of the procurement proceedings or a re-evaluation of the bids. The remaining seven cases are being reviewed by the Panel for which a decision is pending.

The list of unsatisfied bidders who have filed cases at the IRP for review and their outcome is being tabled. The list also includes the seven applications which are still under process.

I would, however, wish to highlight, just to give a few examples of the cases as well as the outcome thereof -

1. **Keep Clean Ltd** - the Panel found that there was merit in the application and had ordered an annulment of the decision to award a contract.

2. **Fresh Noor Vegetables Ltd** - the Panel found that there was merit in the application and ordered a re-evaluation of the bids and a review of the decision for award.
3. **AVIC/CCCE/ETERN Consortium** - the Panel found no merit in this application.
4. **Defence Hitech Security Services Ltd** – where it also withdrew its application.
5. **Glitteratti Ltd** – where the Panel did not entertain the application as it was lodged outside the prescribed delay.
6. **Atics Ltd** - the Panel found the application was made on frivolous grounds.
7. **Aqua Science and Technology Ltd and Aqualia DPI Ltd** - where the Panel found merit in the Application, and, in fact, had ordered the annulment of the decision to award to the successful bidder and ordered the annulment of the Procurement exercise, and finally
8. **Safety Construction Co. Ltd** - the Panel ordered annulment of decision and to make fresh evaluation of bids.

Mr Rughoobur: The threshold for challenge today stands at Rs15 m. May I ask the hon. Prime Minister if he is prepared to review this threshold from Rs15 m. to Rs5 m. to enable more aggrieved contractors to go for challenge?

The Prime Minister: Well, I will leave it to the Policy office to make recommendations if the amount of money that has to be deposited is considered to be too high. Probably, there could be representations from the different applicants and it will be for the Policy office to make recommendations and then Government can see whether, in the light of that, we will amend or we will change that amount.

Mr Jhuboo: Madam Speaker, in the recent past, the IRP ruled against the CPB in 45% of all the cases, *presque un cas sur deux*. Now, there has been a case in Rodrigues concerning a desalination plant where the IRP *déplore le clumsiness du* Central Procurement Board. My question to the hon. Prime Minister, Madam Speaker, is what is being done to increase, to gain efficiency at the level of the procurement?

The Prime Minister: Well, first of all, I must check with regard to the number of cases that the hon. Member is saying that the IRP has ruled against. I do not have these

figures right now. I will look into the figures. Of course, we always wish that any institution for that matter, not only the CPB, to be as efficient as possible in their delivery.

Mr Rughoobur: The hon. Prime Minister will excuse me, I was not referring to the deposits of Rs15 m., but to the threshold; the value of contracts should be more than Rs15 m. to go for challenge. I was requesting the hon. Prime Minister if he could look into this threshold for the value of contracts worth even Rs5 m. or more, so that aggrieved bidders can be allowed to go for challenge.

The Prime Minister: With regard to the threshold, I believe there needs to be a limit; otherwise, what will happen is that there is going to be a floodgate probably of a number of aggrieved parties who will contest these decisions. So, I suppose they look at the conditions prevailing, that is, the ceiling that they have put.

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Hon. Members, please!

The Prime Minister: Well...

Madam Speaker: Don't interrupt! The hon. Prime Minister is giving his reply to a question which has been asked please, don't interrupt!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Bhagwan!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Baloomoody! Yes, hon. Prime Minister!

The Prime Minister: I was saying, Madam Speaker, if there is any issue with regard to the threshold, there can be representations made and again, I will request the Policy office to then look into it and make recommendations.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Rughoobur, next question!

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Hon. Bhagwan, I have drawn your attention several times! Please allow the proceedings of the House to go smoothly!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Bhagwan, I am drawing your attention to the fact that you should not interrupt the business of the House. Yes, hon. Rughoobur!

CENTRAL PROCUREMENT BOARD - COMPOSITION

(No. B/4) Mr S. Rughoobur (Second Member for Grand’Baie & Poudre d’Or) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Home Affairs, External Communications and National Development Unit, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to the Central Procurement Board, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain therefrom, information as to –

- (a) if there has been any change in the composition thereof and, if so, indicate the new composition thereof and indicating in each case, the –
 - (i) qualifications held, and
 - (ii) terms and conditions of appointment thereof, including the benefits accruing thereto and duration of contract, and
- (b) criteria used for the choice of the members of the different Bid Evaluation Committees thereof.

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, the Chairperson and members of the Central Procurement Board are appointed in accordance with section 8 of the Public Procurement Act. They are appointed by the President of the Republic, acting in accordance with the advice of the Prime Minister tendered after the Prime Minister has consulted the Leader of the Opposition, and on such terms and conditions as may be determined by the Prime Minister.

The composition of the Board is as follows -

(a) **Chairperson**

Mr Madhukarlall Baguant, C.S.K., former Secretary to Cabinet; he holds a BA (Hons) Economics and Statistics. He was appointed on 23 January 2015 for a period of three years.

(b) **Vice-Chairpersons**

The two vice-chairpersons are Mr Hirendranath Rambhojun and Mr Krishna Menon Mauremootoo.

- Mr Rambhojun, former Chief Architect at the Ministry of Public Infrastructure, is the holder of a degree in Architecture. He was appointed on 21 May 2014 for a period of three years.
- Mr Mauremootoo holds a Master's degree in Business Administration and was appointed on 19 March 2015 for a period of three years.

(c) **Members**

The other members are -

- Mr Dawood Ally Mamode Zmanay. He is a Chartered Statistician of the Royal Statistical Society.
- Mr Kirsley Errol Bagwan.

(Interruptions)

He holds a '*certificat de stage-Superviseur, Chambre de Commerce et d'Industrie de Paris*'.

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Order, please!

The Prime Minister: He is an approved mediator of the '*Centre de Médiation et d'Arbitrage Chambre de Commerce et d'Industrie de Paris*'.

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Please, hon. Prime Minister, can I just intervene? I have several times since this morning drawn the attention of hon. Members that there should be discipline, decorum and dignity in this House. Can I request all of you to see to it that these three Ds are applied in this House?

The Prime Minister: So, with regard to Mr Bagwan, he is an approved mediator of the '*Centre de Médiation et d'Arbitrage Chambre de Commerce et d'Industrie de Paris*'.

- Mrs Sharda Devi Dindoyal. She holds a BSc Honours in Economics.

The members were appointed on 19 March 2015 for a period of three years.

The terms and conditions of appointment of the Chairperson and members of the Board are as follows -

(a) **Chairperson**

The Chairperson draws a monthly salary of Rs152,000 and benefits from an official car, along with driver's allowance of Rs8,400 monthly for the employment of a personal driver.

A monthly petrol allowance at the rate applicable in the public service is also allocated.

He is also eligible for sick leave, casual/annual/vacation leave and passage benefits as per the existing rules in the Civil Service for contract officers and gratuity worth two months' salary on completion of 12 months' satisfactory service.

(b) Vice-Chairpersons

The Vice-chairpersons draw a monthly salary of Rs128,000 and benefit from an official car, along with the driver's allowance of Rs8,400 monthly and petrol allowance as applicable in the public service.

He is eligible for sick leave, casual/annual/vacation leave, and passage benefits as per existing rules in the Civil Service for contract officers and gratuity worth two months' salary on completion of 12 months' satisfactory service.

(c) Members

Members are paid a monthly salary of Rs80,000 and benefit from 100% duty and loan facilities for the purchase of a car or a ...

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Order, please! Order!

(Interruptions)

Order, please! The question has been asked and the hon. Prime Minister is giving his reply. I have the impression that there are some Members of this House who are having fun instead of listening to the reply.

(Interruptions)

Can I ask once again? I just spoke about the 3 Ds of this House: Discipline, Decorum and Dignity. Yes, hon. Prime Minister!

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, I was saying that members are paid a monthly salary of Rs80,000 and benefit from 100% duty and loan facilities for the purchase of a car or

a car allowance in lieu thereof, along with a monthly travelling allowance at the rate applicable in the public service.

They are eligible for sick leave, casual/annual/vacation leave, and passage benefits as per existing rules in the Civil Service for contract officers and gratuity worth two months' salary on completion of 12 months' satisfactory service.

Madam Speaker, as regards part (b) of the question, I am informed that the Central Procurement Board maintains a list of evaluators from which members are chosen for the constitution of Bid Evaluation Committees. Members of Bid Evaluation Committees are selected on the basis of the skills and expertise required for the bids being evaluated.

Madam Speaker: I will allow the hon. Member only one question because we have run out of time!

(Interruptions)

Mr Rughoobur: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Can I have some order, please?

Mr Rughoobur: I have got a supplementary question on the technical section of the CPB. Referring to the annual report which has just been published, it appears that the vacant posts at the level of technical department...

Madam Speaker: Hon. Rughoobur, you don't seem to understand when I asked you not to make any statement, but to come straight to your question.

Mr Rughoobur: Thank you, Madam Speaker. May I ask the hon. Prime Minister to confirm that the posts of Mechanical Engineer, Civil Engineer and Head of IT which are important posts at the level of the CPB have been filled because this institution is dealing with millions and billions worth of contracts on behalf of the Government?

The Prime Minister: Well, I am not aware whether there is any vacancy with regard to these posts. I will check. I don't know if the hon. Member is referring to the good running of this institution. But I will check about these posts and let him know.

Madam Speaker: The Table has been advised that Parliamentary Questions Nos. B/8, B/12, B/14, B/15, B/16 have been withdrawn. Time is over! I suspend the sitting for one and a half hours.

PITON & RIVIERE DU REMPART – NDU PROJECTS – IMPLEMENTATION

(No. B/8) Mr S. Rutnah (Third Member for Piton & Rivière du Rempart) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Home Affairs, External Communications and National Development Unit, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to Constituency No. 7, Piton and Rivière du Rempart, he will give a list of the projects which the National Development Unit has –

- (a) implemented thereat since January to December 2016, and
- (b) earmarked for implementation thereat in 2017, indicating the amount budgeted therefor in each case.

(Withdrawn)

PLAISANCE CITY PROJECT – IMPLEMENTATION

(No. B/12) Mr Osman Mahomed (Third Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Home Affairs, External Communications and National Development Unit, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to the Plaisance City Project, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Board of Investment, information as to if the implementation thereof is progressing according to schedule and, if not, indicate the reasons therefor.

(Withdrawn)

SERVICE TO MAURITIUS PROGRAMME – MS A. B. – APPLICATION

(No. B/14 Mr S. Mohamed (First Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Home Affairs, External Communications and National Development Unit, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to Ms A. B., a visually impaired LLB holder, he will state the reasons why her application to be considered anew for the 2016 intake under the Service to Mauritius Programme was not retained.

(Withdrawn)

CLARISSE HOUSE – GATHERING – 23 DECEMBER 2016

(No. B/15) Mr S. Mohamed (First Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Home Affairs, External Communications and National Development Unit, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to the gathering held at Clarisse House on or about 23 December 2016, he will state who organised same and under whose instructions, indicating the –

- (a) cost thereof, and
- (b) name of the catering service provider therefor.

(Withdrawn)

PRIME MINISTER (FORMER) – RESIGNATION

(No. B/16) Mr S. Mohamed (First Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Home Affairs, External Communications and National Development Unit, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to the resignation of the former Prime Minister and the appointment of his good self as Prime Minister on 23 January 2017, he will state if legal advice was sought and obtained in respect thereof and, if so, indicate from whom and give details thereof.

(Withdrawn)

At 12.54 the sitting was suspended.

On resuming at 2.33 p.m. with Madam Speaker in the Chair

Madam Speaker: Hon. Members, the Table has been advised that PQ B/47 in regard to the proposed implementation of aqua farming projects will be replied by the hon. Minister of Ocean Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping. PQ B/64 in regard to the Oil Refinery Project will be replied by the hon. Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Housing and Lands. Hon. Ameer Meea!

PORT LOUIS - POLICE OFFICERS/HAWKERS – INCIDENT

(No. B/24) Mr A. Ameer Meea (Second Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Rt. hon. Minister Mentor, Minister of Defence, Minister for Rodrigues whether, in regard to the incident in which Police Officers and traders were involved in Port Louis, on or about Friday 23 December 2016, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain

from the Commissioner of Police, information as to if an inquiry has been carried out thereinto and, if so, indicate the outcome thereof.

Sir Anerood Jugnauth: Madam Speaker, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that on 23 December 2016, the Municipal Council of Port Louis requested for Police assistance for a joint operation in connection with illegal street hawking and obstructions on pavements at different locations in Port Louis.

During these operations, Inspectors from the Municipal Council seized several articles from hawkers operating illegally.

No incident was reported to the Police on that day. However, on 29 December 2016, two cases were reported at the Pope Hennessy Police station, alleging that on 23 December 2016, two persons were assaulted by the Police during the crackdown operations.

Subsequently, on 04 January 2017, in virtue of the Police Complaints Act 2012, the two cases were referred to the Police Complaints Division of the National Human Rights Commission for investigation.

The Commissioner of Police has subsequently produced all relevant documents relating to these cases to the Police Complaints Division. The enquiry is still ongoing.

Mr Ameer Meea: The unit which carried out this operation is commonly known as a 'tornado unit'. I must say with regret that this unit is reputed for its abuse of power, being brutal and violent.

So, therefore, can I ask the hon. Minister Mentor, if he is aware that Mr J. N. was, in fact, not a hawker, but a trader? He was being arrested, detained at the police station till evening, until the case went on air, on Facebook and then he was released without being charged, without being taken any statement or any enquiry when being asked his name.

So, I am asking the Minister Mentor, whether he is aware of what I am saying, and if not, if he would get this information from the Commissioner of Police.

Sir Anerood Jugnauth: Well, the name is 'tornado'!

(Interruptions)

Worthy of this name!

(Interruptions)

Or it is the Police unit that is called 'tornado'. Well, I am not aware of all this. If the hon. Member will come with a specific question, I will get the answer because you asked what happened and I have told you that the enquiry is ongoing.

Mr Ameer Meea: Madam Speaker, also on the same occasion, that is, on 23 December when Mr J. N. was arrested, his articles - I said earlier that he was not a hawker, but he was a trader, he has his shop on Queen Street - were seized by this team. An amount of Rs75,000 - which until now as I have said there hasn't been any statement or any enquiry ...

Madam Speaker: Ask your question!

Mr Ameer Meea: ...and his articles have not been returned to him. So, may I ask the Rt. hon. Minister Mentor if he can look into the matter so as his articles could be returned to him as soon as possible.

Sir Anerood Jugnauth: I'll pass it on to the Commissioner of Police. But if articles have been seized they must have been on the pavement.

Mr S. Mohamed: Could I ask the Rt. hon. Minister Mentor the following - in this particular instance, since the question is quite specific, it goes about a specific time, a specific date when someone very specific was arrested. In this case has the Rt. hon. Minister Mentor found out - since there is a recording of those Police Officers assaulting a trader - why is it that we have to wait for an investigation at the Police Complaints Bureau and why not based oneself immediately upon what can be seen on a video of Police assaulting citizens and why is it that they cannot be suspended from duty on the spot pending the determination of the enquiry. Why?

Sir Anerood Jugnauth: I think if the hon. Member becomes the Commissioner of Police perhaps this can take place. But I cannot see how on the spot there, the Police should have been stopped and dismissed. I can't follow that.

Mr Rutnah: In relation to seized articles, is the Rt. hon. Minister Mentor aware that since the inception of the Police Act back in the year 1836 then, there are set procedures that should be followed in order to get back those seized articles and it is not at the discretion of the Commissioner of Police?

Sir Anerood Jugnauth: I think that's how it is. I do not think the Commissioner of Police seized the articles that were there. It is the members from the Municipality, those who are responsible for law and order who, in fact, seized the articles.

Madam Speaker: Next question hon. Ameer Meea!

SAUDI ARABIA - EMBASSY – SETTING UP

(No. B/25) Mr A. Ameer Meea (Second Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade whether, in regard to the proposed setting up of an Embassy in Saudi Arabia, he will state where matters stand.

Mr Lutchmeenaraidoo: Madam Speaker, the Embassy of the Republic of Mauritius in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia has already been set up. A Second Secretary was posted to the Embassy on 29 December 2016. He is acting as *Chargé D’Affaires* and is supported by three locally-recruited staff of the grade of Administrative Assistant, Interpreter and Confidential Secretary.

The Ambassador-designate obtained his Agrément from the Saudi Authorities on 11 February 2017 and he is expected to assume his functions as Ambassador to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in April.

I wish to inform the House that the Embassy has been technically operational since the end of December 2016 from an office space that was rented until 28 February 2017.

So, as from 01 March of this year, the Chancery has moved into the permanent premises offered by the Saudi authorities in the Diplomatic Quarters in Riyadh.

The information, in fact, Madam Speaker, appears on the website of the Ministry and a press communiqué has been issued to inform the public of the new address.

Mr Ameer Meea: Madam Speaker, it is very strange. Today, this question is on the agenda and today itself, in a newspaper, a communiqué was issued about the address of the Saudi Embassy and its telephone number. Therefore, can I ask the hon. Minister whether the Ambassador *en fonction* is based there or he is still in Mauritius and also whether the embassy is properly staffed?

Mr Lutchmeenaraidoo: The new Ambassador is leaving to assume duty in April, and he is waiting for his premises, for his apartment to be finalised. This is number one. Secondly, we must say one thing. We promised that, by the end of December, the Embassy will be operational. It was since 29 December. So, there was a *chargé d’affaires* there who has been settling all the questions relating to visas, to visits of missions from Mauritius to there. So, they have fulfilled the duty. I must say also one thing. The process of an

application by Saudi Arabia is quite lengthy at times, which I respect. So, we fortunately managed to open the Embassy through, in fact, the personal involvement of the hon. Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Housing and Lands. If not, I would have doubted that decisions would have moved that fast.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Reza Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Thank you, Madam Speaker. In September, last year, it was reported in the Press that the hon. Vice-Prime Minister stated, and I quote-

“L’Arabie Saoudite prendra à sa charge la construction d’un bâtiment qui abritera l’ambassade à Riyad.”

So, may I know from the hon. Minister whether the Government of Saudi Arabia is constructing the premises and will give that to Mauritius, and whether Mauritius will have to pay any rent or what are the contractual terms for the High Commission to be based there?

Mr Lutchmeenaraidoo: Well, the promise has been respected in the sense that the permanent offices have been offered by the Saudi authorities in the diplomatic quarters of Riyadh. And I have no doubt that, as from this moment, procedures will follow for the construction by Riyadh, by Saudi Arabia, of the Embassy.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Dr. Joomaye!

(Interruptions)

Dr. Joomaye: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I would like to know whether the Government of Saudi Arabia has been proposed to reciprocate and open a mission in Mauritius in order to facilitate the delivery of visas to hajjees and those who are going to perform Umrah.

Mr Lutchmeenaraidoo: Well, Madam Speaker, we have a *Consul général* of Saudi Arabia in Mauritius, and we are not in presence of an application to open a Saudi Embassy in Mauritius. Not yet!

Madam Speaker: Hon. Osman Mahomed!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Osman Mahomed first, and then I will give the floor!

Mr Osman Mahomed: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Given the problems that pilgrims, hajjees faced last year, and we have just heard from the hon. Minister that at the

moment there is a skeletal staff there, would the hon. Minister be able to inform the House whether, before the forthcoming Hajj, the Embassy will be fully staffed to cater for problems that we had faced last year, how many people and when would they be posted there?

Mr Lutchmeenaraidoo: Well, there is no doubt that the Embassy is already fully operational since 01 March. So, the question of whether the Embassy would be in position to provide all services to Hajj pilgrims, yes. Now, as to the question of the staffing, there have been three recruitments already; local recruits plus the *chargé d'affaires*, and now the Ambassador will go and will recruit any further staff. I can give the hon. Member the assurance that, for the Hajj pilgrims, the Embassy will be there.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Ameer Meea!

Mr Ameer Meea: The hon. Minister just stated that Saudi Arabia has a *Consulat général* in Mauritius. I don't think this information is correct because there is no *Consulat général* in Mauritius here for Saudi Arabia. Also, coming back to the same issue, has there been any formal preliminary discussion with the Saudi to have a full-fledged Embassy here in Mauritius? Have discussions already started?

Mr Lutchmeenaraidoo: As far as I know, I wish to inform the hon. Member that there has been request for a plot of land in Mauritius for the construction of the Saudi Chancery, and we are dealing with it now.

Madam Speaker: Next question, hon. Bhagwan!

SBM - MR V. L – EURO LOAN

(No. B/26) Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Rt. hon. Minister Mentor, Minister of Defence, Minister for Rodrigues whether, in regard to the inquiry initiated against Mr V. L., into the Euro loan contracted with the State Bank of Mauritius Ltd., he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Independent Commission against Corruption, information as to where matters stand.

(Withdrawn)

INTEGRITY REPORTING SERVICES AGENCY – REPORTED CASES & BOARD COMPOSITION

(No. B/27) Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Financial Services, Good Governance and Institutional Reforms

whether, in regard to the Integrity Reporting Agency, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain therefrom, information as to the-

- (a) number of cases reported thereto, indicating the number thereof reported to the Integrity Reporting Board and where matters stand in each case, and
- (b) names of the Chairperson and of the two other members of the Integrity Reporting Board, indicating in each case, the-
 - (i) qualifications held, and
 - (ii) terms and conditions of appointment thereof.

Mr Sesungkur: Madam Speaker, with regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed that, since the start of its operation in May 2016, the Integrity Reporting Services Agency has received 33 cases, of which seven cases have been investigated into and no further action was required, five cases are under investigation, and 21 cases are awaiting the respondents' replies to enquiries.

Matters are reported to the Board only after examining replies from respondents. Up to now, the delay to reply has not lapsed. The number of cases reported to the Board is nil. The Board has met on two occasions, namely on 22 and 23 February 2017, and on video conferencing on 16 March 2017 to take stock of the status report of cases and to look at certain legal aspects of the Good Governance and Integrity Reporting Act.

The Board has agreed to meet at least once every month and has already booked its agenda up to July 2017.

As regards status of each case, I am informed that, under section 21 of the Good Governance and Integrity Reporting Act, no information is to be disclosed either by the Director or any staff of the Agency.

With regard to part (b) of the question, the Board is composed of -

Lord Phillips	Chairperson
Dr. Satyabhooshan Domah	Member
Mr Jugdish Dev Phokeer	Member

Their remunerations are as follows –

- the Chairperson draws an annual fee of 50,000 pound sterling;
- the member, Dr. Domah, is paid a monthly salary of Rs90,000, and
- Mr Phokeer, a package of Rs90,000 monthly.

As regards their CVs and qualifications, I am going to table it to the House.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Jhuboo!

Mr Jhuboo: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Concerning the number of cases reported to the Agency or the Board, can we know from the hon. Minister whether there are any cases in relation to Super Cash Back Gold policyholders, and if yes, how many?

Mr Sesungkur: I don't have this information, but I can check and get back if we have a specific question.

Madam Speaker: Hon Bhadain!

(Interruptions)

Mr Bhadain: In relation to the seven cases which have been decided as 'no further action', can the hon. Minister inform the House as to whether these seven cases have gone to the Integrity Reporting Board and it is the Board which has decided to set aside those cases, and also whether these cases include, amongst the Super Cash Back Gold cases, one case where there was an amount of Rs110 m. involved regarding a Senior Minister at the Prime Minister's Office?

Madam Speaker: Sorry! Hon. Bhadain, did you say a 'Senior Minister'?

(Interruptions)

Mr Bhadain: Senior Adviser!

Madam Speaker: Senior Adviser.

Mr Sesungkur: Madam Speaker, as I explained, the first stage is to go through the Integrity Reporting Agency. It is only the agency which decides on the basis of each case whether to refer the case to the Board.

With regard to the specific case mentioned by the hon. Member, I do not have the information with me, but if he comes with a specific question, I will certainly give the answer.

Mr A. Duval: Can the hon. Minister tell us how many of these 33 cases are drug-related cases, suspected drug dealers or suspected to be in the drug ring?

Mr Sesungkur: Madam Speaker, I just explained that the Integrity Reporting Agency and the Board operate independently. So, we do not have details of cases which are referred to the Agency and less the nature of the cases. So, I don't have the information with me.

Mr Bhagwan: Being given that one of the cases, the case of Rs110 m. concerns the brother of a Senior Adviser, Mr P.M, who is an habitual criminal in all these things, who is on bail...

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: No! Hon. Bhagwan! Please! You are talking of somebody who is not present in the House and it is not the practice to make allegations against somebody who is not present in the House. So, please, refrain from doing this.

(Interruptions)

Mr Bhagwan: He is somebody who has a very good record, but who is on bail and he is a Senior Adviser of the Prime Minister. Can the hon. Minister give the assurance to the House, the country and the nation that there won't be any cover-up or interference, be it at the level of his Ministry, at the highest level of Government, to make that gentleman escape from paying all the penalties, even go to jail?

Mr Sesungkur: Madam Speaker, I can give the guarantee only at my Ministry's level but, as I said, the Agency and the Board operate independently and they are free to do their job.

Madam Speaker: Last question, hon. Ganoo!

Mr Ganoo: Can I ask the hon. Minister whether in cases in which the Agency has decided to set aside and not to proceed further with the matter, wouldn't it have been wiser for the Agency, for the sake of transparency, to issue a communiqué or to gazette the name of these cases, as the DPP does very often and he issues a communiqué, decides not to prosecute and he gives reasons why such and such person has not been prosecuted?

Mr Sesungkur: Yes, Madam Speaker, I think it is a very good suggestion. I will convey this to the Board.

Madam Speaker: Next question, hon. Bhagwan!

**TRUST FUND FOR SPECIALISED MEDICAL CARE (CARDIAC CENTRE) –
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR – APPOINTMENT**

(No. B/28) Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether, in regard to Ms V. S., Executive Director of the Trust Fund for Specialised Medical Care (Cardiac Centre), he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain therefrom, information as to -

- (a) her date of appointment;
- (b) her monthly gross pay, and
- (c) if he is aware that she participated in a political gathering on Friday 27 January 2017 at the Town Hall of the Municipal Council of Quatre Bornes and, if so, indicate the actions taken against her on account thereof, if any.

Dr. Husnoo: Madam Speaker, with regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed that following the approval of the Cabinet on 30 January 2015, Ms V.S. assumed duty as Executive Director of the Trust Fund for Specialised Medical Care (Cardiac Centre) on 02 February 2015.

With regard to part (b), I am afraid the answer is long, Madam Speaker, if you would bear with me, please.

- (a) The initial salary of Ms V.S. in March 2015 was Rs200,200. Thereafter, her salary was increased by Rs15,000 after a few months.
- (b) On 18 January 2017, that is, five days before my appointment as Minister of Health and Quality of Life, there was a special Board meeting of the Trust Fund for Specialised Medical Care which was attended by the Senior Chief Executive of my Ministry. According to the Senior Chief Executive, with the resignation of a Cardiac Surgeon employed on contract at the Centre, who was paid a monthly salary of Rs300,000, the Board of the Trust Fund for Specialised Medical Care considered that since saving would be realised, a decision was taken to temporarily pay the Executive Director of the Trust Fund for Specialised Medical Care a further allowance of Rs100,000 monthly pending ...

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Order, please! Order!

Dr. Husnoo:... pending the renewal of her contract. However, as per official note of meeting which I received this morning, it has emerged that a decision was taken to pay an

additional allowance of Rs100,000 exclusive of Pay As You Earn (PAYE) to Ms V.S. to make a total of Rs323,200.

- (c) Prior to Trust Fund Board meeting on 25 January 2017, that is, a week after the first meeting of 18 January, I was consulted and there was a suggestion by the Board to give to Ms V.S. an extra allowance of Rs100,000. I agreed to the extension of the contract of Ms V.S. on the existing term and condition of her initial contract for one year only. I was not agreeable to the allowance of Rs100,000. This was discussed with the hon. Prime Minister and he concurred with me.
- (d) On 02 March 2017, I was again contacted for an allowance of Rs100,000 and again, after discussion with the hon. Prime Minister, the decision was taken to turn down the additional allowance requested. This instruction was conveyed to allow for a contract of one year only on the same term and condition as before.
- (e) Yesterday, that is, 27 March 2017, I was informed that, in fact, a new contract has already been offered to Ms V.S. since 25 January 2017 for a period of two years instead of one year together with the allowance of Rs100,000.
- (f) The increase in allowance was with retrospective effect since 01 December 2016.

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Order! Order, please! Hon. Uteem, please!

Dr. Husnoo:

- (g) The termination of contract clause has also been changed for payment of compensation for the remaining duration of contract should the termination of contract be contemplated.
- (h) Under Section 7 of the Trust Fund for Specialised Medical Care Act, the Board has the power to appoint the Executive Director on such term and condition as it may determine subject to the approval of the Minister. However, I did not give my approval to the alteration on pay package or condition proposed to Ms V.S.

- (i) I intend to consult the Attorney General to see whether a Committee of Enquiry ought to be set up to enquire into the circumstances leading to the extension of the new contract of Ms V.S.

As regards part (c) of the question, I have been made to understand that the Board has never raised any objection to Ms V.S. to take part in political gathering, but I am going to speak to her and to instruct her not to take part in any political activities in the future.

Mr Bhagwan: Very shocking what we have heard, Madam Speaker! It is a hold-up *de l'argent public*. Can the hon. Minister inform the House who chaired that Board, whether, in fact, it is one Mr R. Ramjee of Beau Bassin who is a Municipal Councillor and a member of the ML party, whether he is aware of that and whether he condones what has happened?

Dr. Husnoo: Yes, Mr Ramjee is the Chairman of the Board, you are right. And as I said, I did not approve that. I have mentioned it two or three times; I did not approve that change in condition.

Mr Bhagwan: The hon. Minister has not replied whether he is a Municipal Councillor and a member of the ML party – the hon. Minister's party.

Dr. Husnoo: Yes, Mr Ramjee is a Municipal Councillor of Beau Bassin and he is a member of ML.

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Hon. Dr. Joomaye!

Dr. Joomaye: Thank you, Madam. I would like to ask the hon. Minister in the same register what is the quantum of the monthly gross pay of the Medical Director of the Specialised Medical Care Centre?

Dr. Husnoo: I don't know exactly, but it should be around the same figure.

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Hon. Bhagwan!

Mr Bhagwan: I have another question, Madam Speaker. The Minister has just stated about her participation in political activities, that he will be talking to her. Even yesterday, she participated in one of the political meetings in my Constituency which was a fiasco on the whole.

(Interruptions)

Can the hon. Minister inform the House how does he reconcile - even the Prime Minister and the Mentor Minister - that one lady, Director of the Mauritius Examinations Syndicate, was taken to task by the Minister when she participated in a public gathering in Bois Cheri where the Chief Whip was there with an orange dress?

Dr. Husnoo: As I mentioned, I intend to consult the Attorney General to set up a Committee of Enquiry on this.

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Hon. Baboo!

Mr Baboo: Madam Speaker, ...

(Interruptions)

Having heard all this from the hon. Minister of Health and Quality of Life – wow, it is a jackpot - will the Minister agree to refer this file to ICAC?

Dr. Husnoo: No, as I have said,...

(Interruptions)

As I have said, I am going to consult the Attorney General to set up a Committee of Enquiry on this and then we will decide whatever.

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Hon. Ameer Meea, one question.

(Interruptions)

Dr. Husnoo: I didn't hear you.

Mr Ameer Meea: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Miracles happen for some people only! If I can get my calculations right, there have been Rs200,000 plus Rs15,000, another Rs100,000 plus another Rs100,000 but I don't know whether I am right or not. My question is...

(Interruptions)

My question is: apart from all these thousands, what are the other fringe benefits associated to Ms V. S.? As we are aware, fringe benefits mean car, *per diem*, overseas travelling, petrol allowance and whatever allowance.

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Hon. Bhagwan, please!

Dr. Husnoo: The total sum is Rs323,200. The total includes everything.

(Interruptions)

It includes everything in this.

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: No, don't interrupt, please! Hon. Rutnah and then last question for hon. Bhagwan!

Mr Rutnah: Can the hon. Minister enlighten the House what was the salary - I am not referring to the allowances - of the previous Executive Director?

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Order, please! Order! Order!

(Interruptions)

Dr. Husnoo: The salary of the previous one who started in 2013 was Rs170,000.

(Interruptions)

Mr Bhagwan: Madam Speaker,...

(Interruptions)

...can the Minister...

(Interruptions)

Sirman to al fer test le coeur labas twa! To al tester to le coeur labas, aller touye twa!

Madam Speaker, can the Minister...

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Hon. Shakeel Mohamed, please!

Mr Bhagwan:... inform the House if all these things have happened at the Trust Fund for Specialised Medical Care where poor people go and which is a specialised centre which has a good reputation as far as the medical field is concerned, whether this lady has polluted the atmosphere there because she has obtained and is still obtaining the backing of the previous Minister, hon. Gayan?

(Interruptions)

And he has to resign!

Mr Gayan: On a point of order, Madam Speaker.

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Now, order please!

(Interruptions)

No, it is for me to ask!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Shakeel Mohamed, please!

(Interruptions)

Yes, I give the floor to the hon. Minister for his point of order!

Mr Gayan: The hon. Member is casting aspersions on the integrity of the previous Minister, he has to withdraw!

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: He cannot withdraw!

Mr Gayan: He has to withdraw this!

Madam Speaker: Please!

(Interruptions)

I said last question!

(Interruptions)

Mr Bhagwan: Madam Speaker, everybody knows in Mauritius the relation between hon. Gayan and that lady. Everybody knows that!

Madam Speaker: Hon. Bhagwan, that is enough. Next question, hon. Jahangeer!

CEB - SAINT LOUIS POWER PLANT REDEVELOPMENT PROJECT - IMPLEMENTATION

(No. B/29) Mr B. Jahangeer (Third Member for Rivière des Anguilles & Souillac) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to the Saint Louis Power Plant Redevelopment Project, he will, for the benefit of the

House, obtain from the Central Electricity Board, information as to where matters stand as to the implementation thereof.

Madam Speaker: Yes, hon. Deputy Prime Minister!

The Deputy Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, Saint Louis Power Plant Redevelopment was inaugurated in 1955 with eight Mirrlees engines of 16 MW in total. In 1981, six Pielstick engines of 72 MW were commissioned. In 2006, ...

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Order, please!

The Deputy Prime Minister: ... 32 Wärtsilä engines of 13.8 MW each were installed. They replaced the old Mirrlees engines.

In the year 2012, the Central Electricity Board decided to embark on a redevelopment project to phase out completely the old Pielstick engines and bring modern state-of-the-art technology, which complies with stringent environmental standards. A first bidding exercise was not conclusive and a second bidding exercise was carried out in 2015, after securing the approval of the African Development Bank which is financing the project.

Finally, the project started on 29 March 2016 with a contract period of 18 months, after obtaining the following clearances *inter alia* –

- (i) the EIA licence in August 2013;
- (ii) the approval of the African Development Bank which carried out a thorough due diligence, and
- (iii) approval of the Environmental and Social Management Plan, which is a mandatory requirement of the African Development Bank.

I am informed by the Central Electricity Board that as at date, 70% of the project has been completed.

The engines are expected to be fully operational by the end of October 2017.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Jahangeer!

Mr Jahangeer: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Given the fact that there have been several complaints by the inhabitants in the surroundings of the Saint Louis Power Station against excessive noise, vibration and toxic emission, will the hon. Deputy Prime Minister

make sure that before final taking over of the new power station from the contractor, the sound test is properly implemented with properly calibrated equipment?

The Deputy Prime Minister: The development of Saint Louis is subject to several monitoring and controlling systems.

The first one is the Environment and Social Management Plan of the African Development Bank. Now, this entails continuous monitoring and indeed we had, I believe, in February, the visit of somebody from the Bank to advise on the environmental aspect, that is, environmental management, waste management and disposal, noise abatement measures, maintenance schedules, emergency response planning as well as monitoring and dissemination of information to the enforcement agencies and public on the environmental and safety impacts of the project.

The African Development Bank has made no negative comment at all on the environmental aspects. Furthermore, the African Development Bank (ADB) was in contact with the inhabitants of the vicinity and it considered the concerns and protests made by the inhabitants including a movement called the *Mouvement Civique de Plaine Lauzun*.

The Energy Environment and Climate Change Department of the African Development Bank has not expressed any concern on the environmental issues relating to this project after these consultations with the *forces vives*.

Now, apart from the African Development Bank, we have the procedures under our own law, under the Environment Protection Act. Everything is made public and all consultations were made and the public was invited to lodge their protests, and some of them, in fact, did do this. Apart from these two aspects, there are, of course, the courts of law. There are a number of cases which have been lodged before the Supreme Court. The first one was lodged in 2016, the court did not grant the injunction, but the case is ongoing so far. There are four other cases and, of course, the matter being *sub judice*, I don't think it is opportune that we enter into a discussion on this matter.

Mr Baloomoody: Can I ask the hon. Deputy Prime Minister although there have been several requests by that *Mouvement Civique de Plaine Lauzun* to have meetings with the Ministry, up to now there has been no official meeting of the Association with the Ministry. In fact, they have been with the BDA; they have been with those who are financing that project, but not with the Ministry.

The Deputy Prime Minister: Well, the legal situation is that since this *Mouvement* had entered proceedings before the Supreme Court, it would not have been opportune to enter into direct discussions with this *Mouvement*. But the *Mouvement* has been airing their points of view and opinions in all their affidavits and in the course of the meetings they have had with the African Development Bank. They have also met, I believe, certain officers of the CEB. In so far as, the Ministry is concerned, the Ministry being a direct party to the proceedings, discussions will be held in court in due course.

Mr Osman Mahomed: Hon. Jahangeer has mentioned about noise pollution. Can I ask the hon. Deputy Prime Minister whether he is aware that the inhabitants have another qualm and that is with respect to the emission of sulphur dioxide? Now, basing themselves on the Worley Parsons Report which says that the Wärtsilä engines emit 244 milligrams of sulphur dioxide per metre cube when Mauritians standards limit that same sulphur dioxide emission to 200 milligrams. Is the hon. Deputy Prime Minister aware about this?

The Deputy Prime Minister: We stand guided by the experts of the African Development Bank as well as our own experts of the Ministry of Environment. We also stand guided by the expertise of independent experts hired by the CEB. All of them are unanimous that there is no health hazard with regard to the new machines we are talking about, that is, the Wärtsilä, which have been here since 2006 and the new engines which have just been commissioned. We are not talking of the old Pielstick engines because the Pielstick engines admittedly do cause certain pollution, but they are going to be phased out in a few months or so.

Mr Armance: Madam Speaker, with the installation of two new tanks of 1,000 m³ each and four new engines of 15MW each, can the hon. Deputy Prime Minister confirm how many tonnes of heavy oil will be burnt per day? Will it exceed the 125,000 tonnes that are currently burning nowadays? Can he confirm that this is not going to be a danger for the health of habitants of Camp Chapelon and the surrounding?

The Deputy Prime Minister: Let me check whether I have the quantities of oil which are going to be burnt. I am not so sure that I have this. What I read here is that the EIA of 2013 contained 20 conditions which the CEB is complying with.

As for the quantity of oil, I think I'll better not waste further time, but what I know is that all the reports that we have state that there is no risk of pollution or danger to health.

**UNIVERSITIES (LOCAL) - ENGINEERING PROGRAMMES -
ACCREDITATION**

(No. B/30) **Mr B. Jahangeer (Third Member for Rivière des Anguilles & Souillac)** asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources, Tertiary Education and Scientific Research whether, in regard to the engineers graduating from the local universities, she will state the benchmarking system that exists therefor, if any.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Madam Speaker, I wish to inform the House that all Engineering degree programmes dispensed by the local universities, be it the academic requirements of the Council of Registered Professional Engineers of Mauritius.

With regard to the University of Mauritius, the Engineering programmes are set by external examiners having extensive experience of teaching, research and consultancy in their disciplines. They generally come from UK, France, Germany, South Africa and Australia among others.

Engineering programmes at the University of Mauritius have been formulated to meet the requirements of the Engineering Council of South Africa, one of the signatories of the Washington Accord for accredited B. Engineering Programs. The process of accreditation is still underway.

I am also informed that the Institution of Engineers, Mauritius has since February 2017 taken steps to make Mauritius an eventual signatory of the

Washington Accord which is a constituent forum of global initiative called the International Engineering Alliance. We understand that this alliance has set accreditation standards for engineering at the professional level through the Washington Accord.

I also understand that the Washington Accord Member undertakes to recognise the accredited programmes of other Washington Accord Members as equivalent to its own and this can be only be beneficial for our local universities offering the engineering programmes.

With regard to the accreditation process for private institutions offering engineering programmes, I have been informed by the Tertiary Education Commission that an accreditation panel is appointed for the purpose of examining any programme. Usually, the professional courses are accredited by the professional bodies and, in practice, such accreditation is known jointly by the Tertiary Education Commission and the Professional Organisation. Thus, programmes in engineering must be accredited by TEC with the assistance of the body like the Council of Registered Professional Engineers Mauritius.

The Tertiary Education Commission accredits programmes which are recognised by professional Councils in their respective countries of origin.

Mr Jahangeer: In view of a low practical ability of the fresh engineers, will the hon. Minister consider establishing MoUs with engineering multinational like ABB, Siemens to enhance the transfer of technology.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Madam Speaker, I consider that the University may be advised to do so, but they already have certain linkages with certain international bodies. As I have just mentioned in my answer, we are in the process of becoming a Signatory of the Washington Accord.

Mr Osman Mahomed: In a recent past, it was an issue about the number of years of the course of engineering degrees in Mauritius. The Council of Registered Professional Engineers needs it to be four years for status-wise. Has this been sorted out or is it still an issue?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: This has been sorted out.

STC - PETROLEUM PRODUCTS - CONTRACT

(No. B/31) Mr B. Jahangeer (Third Member for Rivière des Anguilles & Souillac) asked the Minister of Industry, Commerce and Consumer Protection whether, in

regard to petroleum products, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the State Trading Corporation, information as to if any new contract for the supply thereof has been signed and, if so, indicate the –

- (a) name of the supplier thereof;
- (b) contract value thereof, and
- (c) duration of the contract therefor.

Mr Gungah: Madam Speaker, I am advised by the State Trading Corporation (STC) that the last contract with Mangalore Refinery and Petrochemicals Ltd., that is, MRPL has been renewed on 15 June 2016 for a period of 36 months effective as from 01 August 2016 to 31 July 2019. Prior to 2006, STC was launching annual international tenders for the procurement of petroleum products. However, since 2006, following discussions between the Government of India and the Government of Mauritius, STC has been purchasing these products directly from MRPL as the latter can produce and deliver the seven types of products required for the specific needs of Mauritius.

Regarding part (b) of the question, since the contract value of petroleum products is commercially sensitive in nature, any disclosure of its contents may cause serious prejudice to third parties with whom the supplier is engaged.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Reza Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Thank you, Madam Speaker. The hon. Minister just mentioned that it is not possible to disclose the terms of the contract because of prejudice to third party. But if the hon. Minister, the STC does not disclose the terms, how would we, in Mauritius, know that we are getting value for money? How would we be able to assess that we are not overpaying because we are having a monopolistic supplier?

Mr Gungah: Madam Speaker, I can assure the House that being given that it is a Government to Government contract, all the terms and conditions are based on international rates.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Jahangeer!

Mr Jahangeer: Thank you, Madam Speaker. In view of the prevailing crude oil market price worldwide, will the hon. Minister agree with me that it would have been better to have an international bidding?

Mr Gungah: Well, Madam Speaker, I replied that since 2006 we have been having recourse to supply of petroleum products from MRPL, and one of the main reasons why we are still having recourse - and I am sure we will still continue to have recourse - is because of the seven types of different products which we are getting from only one supplier.

Madam Speaker: Next question, hon. Ameer Meea!

**EX-BAI CO (MTIUS) LTD - SUPER CASH BACK GOLD POLICYHOLDERS –
REPAYMENT**

(No. B/32) Mr A. Ameer Meea (Second Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Minister of Financial Services, Good Governance and Institutional Reforms whether, in regard to the Super Cash Back Gold policies of the former BAI Co (Mtius) Ltd., he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the National Property Fund Ltd., information as to the -

- (a) quantum of money recovered as at to date, indicating the forecasted amount to be recovered;
- (b) amount of money that have been disbursed for the repayment thereof, and
- (c) number of policyholders who have not yet been repaid, indicating
 - (i) when they will be repaid, and
 - (ii) the total quantum thereof.

Mr Sesungkur: Madam Speaker, with regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed by the National Property Fund Limited that as at to date the money amount recovered and transferred to NPFL is close to Rs6.6 billion.

Furthermore, immovable properties valued at Rs1.6 billion have been transferred to NPFL.

I am informed by the Special Administrator that it would be premature to put a definite figure on the expected recovery at this stage as the Special Administrator is still in the process of recovering assets of the ex-BAI Group. Additionally, the claims made by the Special Administrator for the Directors' and Officers' liability with the concerned insurers are still in progress.

I am also informed by the NPFL Special Administrator that actions are being taken to trace money and assets of the ex-BAI group locally and abroad and that they intend to hire

the services of a global fraud investigation firm, thereby making funds available to repay the Super Cash Back Gold policyholders.

With regard to part (i) of the question, officials of my Ministry and the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development are looking into the exit strategy which Government will adopt with regard to the NIC Ltd, and also possibly MauBank Holdings Ltd with a view to meeting the future commitments for the payment of the Super Cash Back Gold policyholders.

With regard to part (b) of the question, as at date, NPFL has repaid a total of Rs8.7 billion to Super Cash Back Gold policyholders as follows –

- 11,535 policyholders who had invested less than Rs1 m. have been repaid their initial investments in full without any deduction, representing an amount of Rs4.2 billion, and
- additionally about 5,000 policyholders have been paid an amount of Rs4.5 billion.

With regard to part (c) of the question, I am informed that approximately 5,000 policyholders have not yet been repaid, representing approximately Rs7.6 billion and not Rs5.5 billion as previously stated by my predecessor in this House in an answer to PQ B/31 of 29 March 2016. If we add the Bramer Asset Management Ltd investors, this makes the situation slightly more complex, as the unpaid amount goes further up to Rs9 billion.

Madam Speaker, BAI was a big tragedy for our country which resulted in thousands of victims of this fraud. It is a problem of national interest and Government is compassionate to the sufferings of the Super Cash Back Gold and Bramer Asset Management Ltd policyholders and investors.

The Special Administrator and NPFL are coordinating their actions so that the rest of the policyholders and investors are substantially repaid as and when funds would be available.

However, as a responsible Government and as clearly stated by my predecessor to the PNQ dated 03 May 2016, and I quote -

“We will not take public funds”

Thank you.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Ameer Meea!

Mr Ameer Meea: Yes, Madam Speaker, since, as stated by the hon. Minister, it is a question of national interest, I will have a few supplementary questions. To start with where the hon. Minister has just finished that they will not use public funds, what about the Rs3.5 billion that was given by the Bank of Mauritius - which is public fund to my opinion, I don't know whether you will agree with me - but what has happened to this Rs3.5 billion? Has this already been repaid to the Bank of Mauritius?

Mr Sesungkur: As per the information available at my Ministry, this has not yet been paid.

Mr Ameer Meea: At a point in time, it was a question of realising the assets of BAI Kenya which at that time was supposed to be valued at Rs4.5 billion. May we have some light on how much these assets have been sold and how much has been received in relation to BAI Kenya?

Mr Sesungkur: Madam Speaker, it is a fact and the hon. Member is right that there are certain disturbing elements in the dossier and it is the firm conviction of the Government that a Commission of Enquiry will clarify all the doubts.

Mr Ameer Meea: Again, to come back to this issue, since we are shocked to hear that there are some disturbing elements, may we, at least, know how much money has been received from the sale of BAI Kenya? As it was discussed earlier, it was said to fetch an amount of Rs4.5 billion. How much was it eventually sold?

Mr Sesungkur: From memory I think we have received only Rs2.4 billion.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Ramful!

Mr Ramful: Thank you, Madam Speaker. According to the certificate that has been issued by NPFL, those who have opted for the Category A are supposed to obtain their 20% investment by the end of June this year. Can the hon. Minister give an undertaking that this is going to be complied with?

Mr Sesungkur: Madam Speaker, I mentioned in my answer that my Ministry and the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development have set up a joint working group to find a solution to this problem.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Reza Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Thank you, Madam Speaker. The hon. Minister just mentioned that there will be a Commission of Enquiry. May I know from the hon. Minister whether he has consulted the hon. Prime Minister, whether the terms of reference have already been drafted and when the Government is going ahead with this Commission of Enquiry?

Mr Sesungkur: As this question requires a specific answer, I do not have all the elements.

(Interruptions)

The question is asking about the specification. Yes, we have decided to set up the Commission of Enquiry, but I do not have the details of all....

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Hon. Bhadain!

Mr Bhadain: Madam Speaker, can I ask the hon. Minister whether he has consulted the Cabinet decisions before he states figures before this House? The Cabinet decision of 28 October 2016 which gives all the details as to where matters had reached in relation to Super Cash Back Gold and the other figures which have been provided and I quote what the Cabinet decision says -

“Appropriate arrangements are being made to payments being effected to the remaining policyholders of the Super Cash Back Gold.”

Madam Speaker: Hon. Bhadain!

Mr Bhadain: Now, can the hon. Minister...

Madam Speaker: Hon. Bhadain, sorry! Cabinet decisions are not meant to be stated in Parliament. This is

(Interruptions)

Mr Bhadain: It is on record, it is public document. Now, can the hon. Minister confirm to this House that coming 30 June 2016, there is an amount of Rs1.6 billion which has to be repaid to the Super Cash Back Gold policyholders at the Bramer Asset people and that this will be repaid because appropriate arrangements were being made since 28 October 2016.

Mr Sesungkur: I have already answered, Madam Speaker.

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Hon. Rutnah!

(Interruptions)

Don't make comment!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Bhadain!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Bhadain, I am addressing myself to you.

(Interruptions)

Hon. Bhadain, this is the second time I am calling your name! Don't make provocative remarks, please! Hon. Rutnah!

Mr Rutnah: Madam Speaker, in relation to the proceed of sale from BAI Kenya, can I ascertain from the hon. Minister whether the proceed of sale of BAI Kenya has been vested into the National Property Fund Limited and is inclusive of the Rs6.6 billion that he referred to or not?

Mr Sesungkur: Yes, it is included.

Madam Speaker: Last question, hon. Ameer Meea!

Mr Ameer Meea: Madam Speaker, in an answer by the previous Minister, he stated in the House, I quote from Hansard –

“There are cases of suspected money laundering, drug related trafficking use of *prête-noms* and unexplained wealth.”

And also, he stated that these cases have been handed over to competent authorities like the Police for further investigation. There was a number at start of 536 suspicious cases and then it was brought down to 176 cases after investigation by the FIU. So, my question to the hon. Minister is: what is the number of cases pending in relation to what has been said earlier?

Mr Sesungkur: I do not have the exact figure, but what I can say is that the number of cases which were referred to the FIU has substantially reduced because certain of the cases, the FIU decided not to pursue any further investigations. So, it was returned back to NPFL.

Madam Speaker: Next question, hon. Ameer Meea!

SOLAR WATER HEATER SCHEME – APPLICATIONS

(No. B/33) Mr A. Ameer Meea (Second Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Minister of Social Security, National Solidarity, and Environment and Sustainable Development whether, in regard to the Solar Water Heater Scheme, he will state the number of applications received and approved during the last registration exercise, indicating –

- (a) when the next registration exercise will be carried out to benefit thereunder, and
- (b) the budget earmarked therefor.

Mr Sinatambou: Madam Speaker, I am informed that an amount of Rs175 m. was earmarked in Financial Year 2015-2016 for the last registration exercise of the Solar Water Heater Scheme of my Ministry.

A total number of 27,750 applications were received during the registration exercise carried out during the same financial year. Out of those 27,750 applications, 14,606 applicants received their grant during the last financial year while 112 applicants were found not to be eligible. Rs90 m. have been earmarked in Financial Year 2016-2017 to cater for the remaining 13,144 applications. During the current year, 4,813 applicants out of those remaining 13,144 applicants have already benefited from grants totalling Rs35,701,400 The remaining 8,331 applications are still being processed.

With regard to parts (a) and (b) of the question, budget consultations will soon be underway and I will then be in a position to give the relevant information to the hon. Member.

Mr Ameer Meea: Madam Speaker, can I ask the hon. Minister when is the next exercise scheduled and also, is he aware of the long queues and long delays in the process of these dossiers of these people who have applied for?

Mr Sinatambou: As I just explained, Madam Speaker, the registration exercise which was carried out in the Financial Year 2015-2016 brought about 27,750 applicants. Now, out of those applications, there are still 8,331 applications which are being processed. So, at this stage, it is difficult for me to say when the next registration exercise is going to take place since we still have more than 8,000 applications being processed. Now, those

applications are actually processed by the Development Bank of Mauritius. What I am doing is trying to see from my Ministry how to help to make things happen quicker.

Mr Armance: Can the hon. Minister state what are the criteria for the eligibility to apply to the scheme and what will happen to the 10,950 persons who have applied in the last scheme and who have not yet received? Will they be on the priority list?

Mr Sinatambou: The criteria are as follows, Madam Speaker, households earning less than Rs25,000 per month are eligible...

(Interruptions)

Rs25,000, yes. I repeat households earning less than Rs25,000 per month are eligible for a grant of Rs10,000 whereas households earning more than Rs25,000 per month are eligible for a grant of Rs5,000. Now, since we have more than 8,000 applications which are still being processed, there is already money to actually grant them the money to which they are entitled.

Mr Rutnah: Can the hon. Minister give the breakdown of the 27,750 applications received during the last registration exercise and how many households have benefited from the Solar Water Heater Scheme since its inception?

Mr Sinatambou: Madam Speaker, out of the 27,750 applications received in Financial Year 2015-2016 which are still benefiting to this day, 19,628 households earning less than Rs25,000 per month qualified for the grant of Rs10,000 and 8,122 households earning more than Rs25,000 per month qualified for the grant of Rs5,000. As for the total number of households which have benefited from the grant from inception, I would respectfully request the hon. Member to come with a substantive question.

Madam Speaker: Next question hon. Quirin!

PRIMARY SCHOOLS – STUDENTS - SWIMMING COURSES

(No. B/34) Mr F. Quirin (Fourth Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources, Tertiary Education and Scientific Research whether, in regard to the launching of swimming courses for primary school students, she will state the expected starting date thereof, giving details as regards the coaches involved therein.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Madam Speaker, in the context of the implementation of the Nine Year Continuous Basic Education (NYCBE) reforms, a holistic education

programme has been introduced in the primary school curriculum. This programme includes an important component, namely the Swimming and Water Environment Awareness project (also called '*Natation Scolaire*'). It was officially launched on Monday 13 February 2017 and aims at promoting the practice of sports activities among pupils at a very young age.

The '*Natation Scolaire*' project is being implemented in collaboration with the Ministry of Youth and Sports and the Mauritius Sports Council as from 23 January 2017 for some 1,100 pupils of Grade 4 on a pilot basis in 30 primary schools found in the vicinity of the five swimming pools managed by the Mauritius Sports Council.

The swimming classes are of 10 weeks' duration and pupils will be provided with a certificate of participation at the end of this period.

Madam Speaker, the Ministry of Youth and Sports is supporting this project through the provision of lifeguards, and the Mauritius Sports Council is providing qualified swimming coaches having necessary qualifications and competencies to ensure safety and security of swimmers.

I am given to understand that the Mauritius Sports Council has a database of registered coaches in respect of several disciplines, including swimming, and the Mauritius Sports Council has availed of the services of these registered swimming coaches for the '*Natation Scolaire*' Programme. The Mauritius Sports Council ensures that each coach has the required qualifications to run these sessions.

I wish to add that there are approximately four to six coaches responsible to deliver the swimming classes in each of the five swimming pools to approximately 40 pupils at a time.

Mr Quirin: Merci, Madame la présidente. Peut-on savoir de l'honorable ministre quelles sont les écoles qui participent actuellement à ce projet, et aussi de bien vouloir nous indiquer le nombre d'élèves par école et de nous expliquer aussi comment se fait le choix de ces élèves ? Est-ce qu'ils sont tous aptes à participer ou il y a un choix qui est fait ?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Madame la présidente, je vais soumettre au parlement la liste des écoles. Mais tous les élèves de la quatrième sont impliqués. On ne fait pas de sélection à moins que les parents viennent nous dire que l'enfant n'arrivera pas à suivre les cours pour une raison quelconque.

Mr Quirin: Est-ce que l'honorable ministre est en train de confirmer que toutes les écoles primaires sont concernées actuellement?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Dans ma réponse, Madame la présidente, je viens de dire que c'est sur une base pilote, et nous n'avons que 30 écoles qui ont débuté le programme.

Mr Quirin: D'accord. Peut-on savoir qui est le responsable technique de ce projet et d'où proviennent les 46 entraîneurs dont nous a affirmé l'honorable ministre; de quels clubs proviennent-ils ?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Je n'ai pas mentionné 46. J'ai mentionné qu'il y avait six *coaches* par classe et que c'est le DTN, le Directeur Technique du ministère de la Jeunesse et des Sports qui est en charge du programme.

Mr Ramful: Since we are dealing with very young children, Grade IV, can the hon. Minister give her assurance that all safety measures have been taken whilst the children are participating?

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Madam Speaker, I must reassure the hon. Member and the House that all safety measures have been taken and even insurance policies have also been taken just to reassure the parents and to make them feel at ease with the programme. The programme is being held in such a way that children will be at safety. We have lifeguards and there are about six coaches for each class. So, we have taken all the measures required.

Madam Speaker: Next question, hon. Quirin!

**MAURITIUS FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION & MONTPELLIER HÉRAULT
SPORT CLUB - MoU**

(No. B/35) Mr F. Quirin (Fourth Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked Minister of Youth and Sports whether, in regard to the Memorandum of Understanding signed between the Mauritius Football Association and the Montpellier Hérault Sport Club, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain and give details thereof, indicating the involvement of his Ministry in relation thereto.

Mr Toussaint: Madam Speaker, in line with the measure announced in the Government Programme 2015-2019 regarding the setting up of a high level football academy, my Ministry embarked on consultations with several well-known European football

clubs, amongst others, West Ham Football Club, Celtic Football Club, Feyenoord Rotterdam, Bastia S.C and Montpellier Hérault Sport Club.

After a series of discussions with the management of Montpellier Hérault Sport Club, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed between the Mauritius Football Association and the Club in the presence of my predecessor in November 2016.

The Memorandum of Understanding specifies the object of the partnership, the obligations of the different parties and financial implications among others.

The Mauritius Football Association would be responsible for the management of the programme. Montpellier Hérault Sport Club would provide technical support for the implementation of the programme. My Ministry would be responsible to upgrade the centre at Réduit to accommodate players and coaches for training purposes.

Following site visits effected by officers of my Ministry and the officers of the technical cadre of the Ministry of Public Infrastructure at the centre at Réduit, an area has been identified within the premises of the centre to construct a new dormitory block with all amenities to accommodate about 60 persons. The Ministry of Public Infrastructure is presently working on the concept design of the proposed building.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Quirin!

Mr Quirin: Madame la présidente, peut-on savoir de l'honorable ministre ce qu'implique financièrement un tel projet ? Qu'est-ce que le ministère aura à déboursier pour implémenter ce projet ?

Mr Toussaint: Madam Speaker, *je relis ma réponse.*

(Interruptions)

The Memorandum of Understanding...

Madam Speaker: Hon. Minister, please don't read out the whole reply and just reply to that question again.

Mr Toussaint: Mon ministère, Madame la présidente, sera responsable de l'infrastructure. Donc, comme on a dit, actuellement il y a le ministère des Infrastructures publiques qui travaille sur la rénovation et la préparation du *new dormitory block with amenities to accommodate about 60 persons.*

Madam Speaker: Hon. Quirin!

Mr Quirin: Je suis désolé, Madame la présidente, l'honorable ministre, malgré toute son arrogance, n'a pas répondu...

(Interruptions)

... n'a pas répondu...

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Hon. Quirin, please! Hon. Quirin, sit down!

(Interruptions)

Sit down, please! Sit down!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Quirin!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Quirin, I am calling your name three times!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Quirin!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Quirin!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Quirin, I have called out your name four times! At least, you look at me when I call your name!

(Interruptions)

Because it seems that when you are in the heat of the debate, you don't take any heed as to whether the Speaker is on her feet or not, I said this morning. I am giving a warning, and this warning, I have said, does not apply only to one side of the House. It applies to both sides of the House. If there are provocative remarks, I will have to take action. Now, those words that you said were unwarranted in your question. So, ask your question once more!

Mr Quirin: Oui. J'aimerais savoir du ministre, Madame la présidente, quelle est l'estimation financière. Est-ce qu'il y a un budget qui a été préparé par rapport à ce projet ? C'est ça ma question. Est-ce qu'il y a un chiffre, ou bien le ministère travaille simplement au

petit bonheur, sur les belles paroles? J'aimerais savoir s'il y a un budget qui est prévu, et je dois vous dire, si vous me permettez, Madame la présidente, d'après certaines informations qui circulent, rien que pour utiliser le nom de Montpellier Hérault, le ministère aura à déboursé une forte somme. Est-ce que le ministre confirme ce que je suis en train de dire?

Mr Toussaint: Madame la présidente...

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Again, hon. Quirin, please!

(Interruptions)

Wait! Let me...

(Interruptions)

Let me...

(Interruptions)

Hon. Baloomoody, just wait! Now, is...

(Interruptions)

Don't argue with me, hon. Baloomoody! Please, don't argue with me!

(Interruptions)

Don't argue with me!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Quirin sits on my side over here. And when he interrupts me, I can't hear what is being said on the other side.

(Interruptions)

This is what I said. Don't interrupt me! I am making an appeal to this House not to interrupt the workings of this august Assembly. I am making an appeal since this morning that there should be no provocative remarks. I have said that I have heard provocative remarks not only from this side, but from the other side as well, and since this morning, I am making this appeal. I am making this appeal once more.

Mr Toussaint: Madame la présidente, je suis tout à fait disposé à donner des renseignements. Donc, je demanderai à l'honorable Quirin de venir avec une question et on va donner tous les renseignements nécessaires.

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Hon. Lepoigneur!

Mr Lepoigneur: As per the Speech of His Excellency the President of the Republic on 27 January 2015, it was mentioned that Government will endeavour to increase the level and standard of sports activities and that professional football will be promoted with an English Premier League Soccer Club. It was supposed to be West Ham and now we are talking about Montpellier. I would like to know from the hon. Minister what happened to the first one? Why, after two and half years, we are changing and going back to Montpellier now?

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Hon. Member, now you see those sorts of remarks!

(Interruptions)

No! Now, let's be fair! We can't accept. Let's be fair! I have just made an appeal to the hon. Member not to make provocative remarks. Now, you have just made a provocative remark. This is not acceptable. Moreover, it is from someone who is not in this House and who cannot defend herself.

(Interruptions)

Hon. Bhagwan, allow the Minister to reply! Yes, there was a question from hon. Lepoigneur. Allow the Minister to reply!

Mr Toussaint: Madam Speaker, as I have said, we are embarked in consultations with several European Football Clubs, including West Ham. Actually, we are in contact with West Ham and we are awaiting their propositions.

Mr Quirin: Est-ce que l'honorable ministre est disposé à déposer une copie de ce fameux document, c'est-à-dire, cette Convention qui a été signée par son prédécesseur en novembre de l'année dernière ?

Mr Toussaint: I'll table, Madam Speaker.

Mr Quirin: Une dernière question, Madame la présidente, avec votre permission. Peut-on savoir ce qui a été fait de concret à ce jour par rapport à ce projet? Convention signée en novembre 2016 et on est fin mars 2017 ! Peut-on savoir s'il y a eu une évolution par rapport à ce projet ?

Mr Toussaint: Concrètement, Madame la présidente, ce qui nous revient comme responsabilité, c'est l'infrastructure. Et comme j'ai dit dans ma réponse, nous attendons le *survey* du *Ministry of Public Infrastructure*.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Quirin, next question!

INDIAN OCEAN ISLAND GAMES 2019 - DISCIPLINES

(No. B/36) **Mr F. Quirin (Fourth Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière)** asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether, in regard to the 10th Edition of the Indian Ocean Island Games to be held in Mauritius, in 2019, he will state if the disciplines that will form part thereof have been finalised and, if so, give the list thereof.

Mr Toussaint: Madam Speaker, I wish to inform the House that the list of disciplines that will form part of the 10th Edition of the Indian Ocean Islands Games has not yet been finalised.

As a matter of fact, a meeting of the *Conseil International des Jeux (CIJ)* is being held in Mauritius as from yesterday.

One of the items on the agenda of the meeting is the finalisation of the list of disciplines for the 2019 Games.

Mr Quirin: Madame la présidente, peut-on savoir de l'honorable ministre depuis qu'il a pris ses fonctions s'il a rencontré certaines fédérations, telles que le tennis, le cyclisme féminin, le *handball* entre autres, afin que ces disciplines soient incluses dans le programme des jeux ? Peut-on savoir s'il a reçu les dirigeants de ces fédérations? Est-ce que le ministre a considéré favorablement leurs représentations pour leur inclusion dans le programme des jeux de 2019 ?

Mr Toussaint: Madame la présidente, il y a eu déjà des consultations l'année dernière et je reçois toutes les fédérations qui veulent bien venir vers moi. Mais comme nous le savons très bien, c'est au niveau du CIJ que les décisions seront prises.

Mr Quirin: Madame la présidente, il est clair que le mot final revient au gouvernement, au ministère des Sports en ce qu'il s'agit du choix des disciplines. Donc, peut-

on savoir si le cyclisme féminin, qui tout récemment a brillé au dernier championnat d'Afrique, sera inclus dans le programme des jeux?

Mr Toussaint: Madame la présidente, je redis, c'est au niveau du CIJ qu'il y aura une décision qui va être prise. La demande au niveau du cyclisme féminin a été faite et si le cyclisme féminin est accepté ce sera un réel plaisir pour nous.

Madam Speaker: Next question, hon. Uteem!

RING ROAD PROJECT - BOULEVARD VICTORIA - VIADUCT

(No. B/37) Mr R. Uteem (First Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central) asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure and Land Transport whether, in regard to the Ring Road Project, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Road Development Authority, information as to if the alignment thereof has been finalised and if any decision has been taken as regards the construction of a viaduct along Boulevard Victoria in Vallée Pitot and, if so, indicate the estimated cost thereof.

Mr Bodha: Madam Speaker, the renewal project is one the major components of the Road Decongestion Programme. It comprises the following three phases as initially proposed by J. Maynard, Transaction Advisor for the Road Decongestion Project, in May 2015 -

- Phase 1 - from Montebello to Guibies over an approximate length of 5 kms;
- Phase 2 - from Guibies to Champ de Mars over 3.9 Kms through a tunnel of approximate length of 1.2 kms across the Quoin Bluff Mountain, and
- Phase 3 - from junction at Boulevard Victoria parallel to Military Road up to the Container Park at Mer Rouge which also at that time involved the construction of a viaduct along Boulevard Victoria in Vallée Pitot.

The Ring Road Phase I is already operational up to the Swami Vivekananda. The segment where the cracks and deficiencies were observed in 2014 is being rehabilitated. In fact, the works are expected to be completed by end of April 2017.

As mentioned in my reply to PQ No. B/1080 on 29 November 2016, the rehabilitated segment will be used only after implementation of Phase 2 and Phase 3 of the project which will be undertaken after completion of the roundabout of Phoenix and the A1-M1 Link Road from Coromandel to Sorèze.

As you are aware, Madam Speaker, I wish to remind the House that the consultancy services of Korea Expressway Corporation (KEC) have been hired under a G2G agreement for the design engineering and as part of this consultancy, the KEC has proposed an alternative alignment avoiding the construction of the viaduct and the severe technical, social and environmental constraints associated with it. So, it proposes a second tunnel at the level of Colline Monneron. We are working on that alignment.

Mr Uteem: With respect to this new alignment, can I know from the hon. Minister –

- (i) whether this is now finalised and there would not be another viaduct or anything like this, and
- (ii) when does he expect the work to start and to be completed.

Mr Bodha: Technically, I think this is the best alignment because it goes above the residential areas. The priorities are as follows –

- We are launching the tender documents for the Phoenix Roundabout on A1-M1.
- We will take care of the ring-road Phase II, that is, the tunnel.
- Then, we will come to the phase of the RDP.

Mr Uteem: The hon. Minister does not want to give a date but, at least, can he give a figure as to the amount that this new alignment is going to cost the people of Mauritius and how he proposes that new alignment to be financed?

Mr Bodha: The budget for this year is Rs5 billion for the Phoenix Roundabout and the A1-M1 bridge. In fact, what the Korea Expressway proposed was a tunnel through Signal Mountain, a bridge and then the tunnel through Colline Monneron. So, we are trying to find out what would be the cost element of this second part of it because the most important thing today is, once we have done the Phoenix Roundabout and the A1-M1 bridge at Sorèze, is to have the tunnel to be able to enter Port Louis.

Mr Osman Mahomed: Madam Speaker, that elevated viaduct that the hon. Minister is saying that we are no longer going to have, to my estimate, is about half a kilometre long. Right! Can the hon. Minister confirm to the House whether we are going to have a tunnel that is half a kilometre long underneath the mountain?

Mr Bodha: The first tunnel is a tunnel along Signal Mountain. This is 1.2 kilometres. Then, you have the bridge. The other one is a lot shorter.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Bhagwan!

Mr Bhagwan: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Pending the implementation of this tunnel project, can the hon. Minister inform the House, especially for the people of the region there, regarding the first part of the Ring Road, what control the Ministry has on the existing part which has been completed? It seems that there is a *laissez aller? C'est l'anarchie!* So, when you go around the Pailles region, you will see this first part of the Ring Road where there is no management at all. Can the hon. Minister inform the House what RDA has planned as far as management of this part is concerned?

Mr Bodha: Madam Speaker, the road is used up to the Convention Centre. We are repairing the cracks where the works are going to be over in about a month, and then we will make all the arrangements for the use of that segment.

Madam Speaker: Next question, hon. Uteem!

NATIONAL INSURANCE CO. LTD – AUDITED ACCOUNTS

(No. B/38) Mr R. Uteem (First Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central) asked the Minister of Financial Services, Good Governance and Institutional Reforms whether, in regard to the National Insurance Co. Ltd., he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain therefrom, information as to –

- (a) the financial situation thereof, and
- (b) if it has filed its audited accounts.

Mr Sesungkur: Madam Speaker, with regard to part (a) of the question, I wish to inform the House that pursuant to section 110B of the Insurance Act, the appointed Special Administrator has transferred the long term insurance business of BAI Company (Mtius) Ltd. to the National Insurance Co. Ltd. (NIC). Since then, the operations of NIC have been stabilised with around 97% of the clients retained.

The business portfolio is now on its growth path with some 18,000 new policies sold to date. Furthermore, I am informed, NIC has met with all its obligations to date including payment of the maturing policies amounting to Rs1.1 billion. For the period ended 30 June 2016, the draft accounts of NIC showed profits of Rs58.4 m..

With regard to part (b) of the question, I wish to inform the House that Ernst & Young was appointed as the statutory auditors of NIC in April 2016. The financial statements for the year ended 30 June 2016 has been audited, but not yet finalised as there are certain pending audit issues. One of the main issues concerns the valuation of the assets of the company.

In this context, management is working hard to resolve the pending issues. I wish to reassure the House that this matter is receiving the required attention for prompt resolution after which the accounts will be filed.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Thank you, Madam Speaker. With a new Minister coming in, I was expecting much more transparency. Isn't it the case that this company, National Insurance Company, had to file its accounts in September 2016; it was given an extension till 31 December 2016; we are in March 2017, they still can't file the audited accounts because Ernst & Young has refused to give a clean opinion and according to Ernst & Young this company is not a growing concern?

Mr Sesungkur: This is precisely what I said, Madam Speaker, that there are certain pending issues. Normally, we have three main stages in an audit. We have the planning stage, the execution stage and the finalisation stage. At the finalisation stage, there are divergences of views. The Board of Directors feel that the valuations are correct, while the auditors have a different opinion. So, there are discussions going on and this is being finalised. I have said that it is in the best interest of NIC to have its accounts audited and filed. So, we are doing whatever is possible to resolve this matter as soon as possible.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Ameer Meea!

Mr Ameer Meea: Yes, Madam Speaker. Since we are talking about valuation, in a past PQ by myself on 29 March 2016, the then Minister stated, and I quote –

“NIC's capital is being opened, QED Actuaries have worked on it, independent consultants, financial consultants, BDO have worked on it.”

Therefore, can I ask the hon. Minister if he is ready to table the report of these independent consultants, financial consultants and BDO so that we have an idea of the valuation of NIC?

Mr Sesungkur: Yes, I have no problem in circulating the report.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: The hon. Minister mentioned that this company has made a profit. I asked my question about what is the financial situation today. Isn't it the case that as at October 2016, NIC reported a loss of Rs240 m. and it is further forecasted that the company might report losses above Rs530 m. by end of June 2017? Is he agreeable with these figures?

Mr Sesungkur: Madam Speaker, I don't know where the hon. Member has got the figures. The financial year of the NIC is 30 June 2016 and I am relying on the accounts which have been presented to me for that period. So, if the hon. Member is talking about October 2016, I don't have the figure.

Madam Speaker: Next question, hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: This is a matter of importance. You gave 10 minutes to hon. Rughoobur. I have one last question.

Madam Speaker: Okay, I will give you one last question.

Mr Uteem: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Maybe the hon. Minister has to ask the Board members about the situation. Isn't it the case that as at to date, the situation is so bad because they have illiquid assets that all new money coming in, new premium coming in, is being used by the NIC to pay the running expenses, which is exactly what the BAI got it wrong, which is exactly what a Ponzi is?

Mr Sesungkur: Madam Speaker, if the hon. Member is talking about solvency of the NIC, I have explained in my answer that so far NIC has not defaulted on any of its financial obligations. If we are to forecast what will happen to NIC, I think we can have another debate on how we are going to solve that problem. As at now, NIC has honoured all its financial obligations and I am confident that the solvency of the NIC is not a problem.

Madam Speaker: Next question, hon. Uteem!

UNIVERSAL PENSION – TECHNICAL COMMITTEE – REPORT

(No. B/39) Mr R. Uteem (First Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central) asked the Minister of Social Security, National Solidarity, and Environment and Sustainable Development whether, in regard to the technical committee set up to look into the reform of the universal pension, he will state –

- (a) the composition thereof, indicating the terms and conditions of appointment thereof, including the fees payable thereto, and

- (b) if the committee has submitted any report and made recommendations in relation thereto.

Mr Sinatambou: Madam Speaker, a technical committee on pension reforms has been set up under the Chairpersonship of the Permanent Secretary of my Ministry since the 28 October 2016.

The technical committee is composed of two representatives from the Ministry of Social Security, National Solidarity, and Environment and Sustainable Development, two representatives from the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development; a representative from the Ministry of Civil Service and Administrative Reforms; a representative from the State Law Office; a representative from Statistics Mauritius; two experienced Economists; two persons with professional qualifications and proven experience in the field of Pension, Actuarial Science and/or Fund Management; two representatives of Business Mauritius knowledgeable on pension and financial matters, and two representatives of trade unions knowledgeable on pension and financial matters.

With your permission, Madam Speaker, I am tabling the names and job titles, where applicable, of the members of the technical committee.

With regard to part (b) of the question, I am advised that the members of the technical committee were nominated on the basis of the expertise in relevant fields such as Actuarial Science, Statistics, Economics, Finance and other fields which would allow them to contribute to a thorough analysis of the public pension system and to the formulation of workable pension reform options. No fee has been paid to the members to date.

With regard to part (c) of the question, I wish to state that the technical committee has met on a number of occasions and its deliberations are ongoing.

Accordingly, and as at now, it has not submitted any report nor made any recommendation to the high level committee on pension reforms.

Mr Uteem: May I know from the hon. Minister what are the exact terms of reference of that committee and whether there is a deadline for it to submit its recommendations to the Government?

Mr Sinatambou: The terms of reference of the Technical Committee are to focus first on matters that are having significant impact on the retirement benefits of Mauritians and on public finances, namely –

Firstly, the contributory pension system under the National Pensions Fund, especially as regards the remuneration ceiling currently applicable, and

Secondly, the issues related to universal old age pension.

The committee, according to its terms of reference, will thereafter look into medium-term issues related to the NPF system such as its legislative and operational framework, and also other components of the pension system such as pension of statutory bodies and private pensions. As to the time element, I must say that, at the outset, it was expected that the Committee would come up with a report within two months. But I have been questioned actually about this on the media, it is impossible when you look at the terms of reference to come up with a report as quickly as that. So, the time element will, indeed, have to be extended.

Mr Rutnah: Can the hon. Minister inform the House how many times and on which dates this Technical Committee has met?

Mr Sinatambou: The committee has met on five occasions up to now, respectively on 25 November and 09 December 2016 and on 13 January, 27 July and 17 March 2017. It is expected to meet again in April this year.

(Interruptions)

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

Madam Speaker: Hon. Rutnah!

Mr Ganoo: I listened to his answer very carefully, Madam Speaker. The question of the ageing of our population and the new demographic outlook, of course, threatens our finances today and does the hon. Minister agree with me that the faster we implement the changes, lesser will be the need for drastic changes or drastic reforms? Since the hon. Minister has said there are two officers of the Ministry of Social Security who are in this committee, can he tell us whether the Ministry, itself, has a position; whether the Ministry, itself, has decided upon any option reforms which it is proposing to the committee to prevent the drastic and radical future measures in the context of the reforms?

Mr Sinatambou: In fact, Madam Speaker, I would disagree with the hon. Member. I do not think that we can come up with a fast decision on that one. I believe that this is a problem which demands thorough analysis, especially in the light of the quantum which is actually concerned. As at now, what I have seen from the workings of the committee is that a

lot of options, as mentioned by the hon. Member, have tended to concentrate on cuts, whether in terms of beneficiaries or in terms of quantum being given, but nothing has been looked at from, let's say, the perspective of growth in GDP, what are the consequences and impact thereof. So, this is a 25-year old problem which has been plaguing us and I would respectfully suggest that this is something which will take far more time than one would expect to solve.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Rutnah!

GRAND'BAIE - ANTI-DRUG AND SMUGGLING UNIT - OFFICERS

(No. B/40) **Mr S. Rutnah (Third Member for Piton & Rivière du Rempart)** asked the Rt. hon. Minister Mentor, Minister of Defence, Minister for Rodrigues whether, in regard to the office of the Anti-Drug and Smuggling Unit of Grand' Baie, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to –

- (a) the number of officers attached thereto on a yearly basis since -
 - (i) 1985 to 1995, and
 - (ii) 2005 to 2014, and
- (b) if consideration will be given for additional officers to be attached thereto to better cope with combatting illicit drugs in the northern part of the island.

Sir Anerood Jugnauth: Madam Speaker, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that the Anti-Drug Smuggling Unit (ADSU) was set up in 1986 with a strength of 127 Police Officers. It was based at Line Barracks, Port Louis and the officers posted thereto were deployed islandwide.

In 1995, with a view to better combating illicit drugs in the island, 32 personnel from the ADSU team of Port Louis were moved to Grand' Baie where a sub-office was set up.

Madam Speaker, as regards part (a) (i) and (ii) of the question, with your permission, I am tabling the information asked for.

Concerning part (b) of the question, I am informed that arrangements are being made for the posting of additional personnel at the Grand' Baie ADSU Office.

I wish to add that, for targeted operations, ADSU is supported amongst others, by a personnel of local Police, *Groupement d'intervention de la Police Mauricienne* (GIPM), the Special Support Unit (SSU), the National Coast Guard (NCG), the Emergency Response Service (ERS) and the Police Dog Unit.

Mr Rutnah: Madam Speaker, can I have a look at the document which has been tabled so that I can formulate an additional question in relation to the number of officers.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Baloomoody, in the meantime!

Mr Baloomoody: In the meantime, can I ask the Rt. hon. Mentor Minister - he has just informed us that ADSU officers have been transferred from Port Louis to Grand'Baie – so, may we know how many officers we have in the Port Louis ADSU because we know that in Port Louis there is a very, very serious drug problem?

Sir Anerood Jugnauth: Well, they have to manage with what they have. We will have to recruit other Police Officers in the future.

Mr Ganoo: Can I ask the former Prime Minister and Mentor Minister whether he agrees that there are presently only 350 ADSU officers for the whole of the island which represent about 1% or 2% out of the total force of 13,000 Police Officers? And in view, unfortunately, of what damage drugs are doing to our country today, can he impress upon the Commissioner of Police so that the labour force of the ADSU Unit, which although supported by other units, but actually working on the terrain every day, be increased, Madam Speaker?

Sir Anerood Jugnauth: I think I have already answered it.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Rutnah, yes!

Mr Rutnah: I am grateful, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, from the document that has been tabled, it transpires that, as of 2005 onwards, the number of officers, in particular at Grand'Baie has decreased from 32 in 2005 and by 2014: 22, while there are some variance in between. Is this not consistent with the neglect of dealing with drug problems consistently since 2005 to 2014, and that the hon. Minister Mentor will, as at now, consider increasing the number of officers at Grand'Baie given the fact that drug problem islandwide has become a big problem and this Government is going to do everything possible to catch the big...

Madam Speaker: Too many questions in one question, hon. Rutnah!

Mr Rutnah: That is my question.

Madam Speaker: Ask one question at a time!

Mr Rutnah: So, at the end of the day, will the Rt. hon. Minister Mentor consider increasing the number of officers, not only in the North but island wide, because from 32 in 1995 to only 22 in 2014 is not indicative of good governance?

Madam Speaker: The hon. Member has already stated that.

Sir Anerood Jugnauth: I think I have already answered that. I agree with the hon. Member but, for the time being, we don't have that number. We will have to recruit more. We will have to train them so that we can meet the demand.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Rughoobur, last question on this issue!

Mr Rughoobur: From the reply of the Rt. hon. Minister Mentor it is clear that the number of Police officers at the ADSU will increase. May I request the Rt. hon. Minister Mentor apart from the increasing of Police officers to please also look into the logistics because as per complaints that were filed there is also a shortage of vehicles at the Police Station of Grand' Baie?

Sir Anerood Jugnauth: Well, we take note of it.

Madam Speaker: Next question, hon. Rutnah!

PUBLIC HEALTH SECTOR - HEALTH SERVICE COMMISSIONER

(No. B/41) **Mr S. Rutnah (Third Member for Piton & Rivière du Rempart)** asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether, in regard to the health sector, he will state if consideration will be given for the creation and filling of a post of Health Service Commissioner to work on the reform thereof.

Dr. Husnoo: Madam Speaker, the reform of the public health sector is an ongoing process. In this context, my Ministry will continue to further develop the public health system in order to meet the increasing demand for healthcare services including specialised care and treatment. Major infrastructural works are being undertaken at both the primary and hospital care levels. We are also investing in the recruitment of additional health manpower and advanced medical technology for the modernisation of the health sector.

I wish to assure the House and the population at large that the Government will sustain the provision of health care services from primary care to hospital and specialised care free of any user cost to the entire population.

In the context of the Vision 2030, my Ministry will finalise the Health Sector Strategy 2017-2021. I have recently had discussions with the WHO Regional Director who is prepared to extend assistance to fine-tune the Health Sector Strategy.

Health Sector Strategy is an all-encompassing comprehensive exercise involving upliftment of the health service, equity in service, optimization of service and ensuring that treatment is aligned with development in medicine.

Compared to certain countries such as Uganda which have had recourse to service of a Health Sector Commissioner, an in-depth analysis is required to attend to health sector reform. As soon as the Health Sector Strategy will be formulated a high-level steering committee will be set up to look into the main recommendations for the upgrading of the health service.

Madam Speaker: Yes, hon. Rutnah!

Mr Rutnah: Madam Speaker, my question is in relation to the establishment of a Health Service Commissioner. But, how the ongoing process of reforming the health sector and the Health Sector Strategy will be managed? Is there going to be a body that is going to be appointed in order to look at all the aspects, all the failures that are happening since a very long time in the health sector, that all those failures will be taken into account and a new dimension will be given to reflect Mauritius in this century insofar as the health sector is concerned?

Dr. Husnoo: Yes, Madam Speaker, that is exactly what we are going to do with the health strategy reform. Thank you.

Madam Speaker: Next question, hon. Osman Mahomed!

WATER SECTOR REFORM - WORLD BANK - RECOMMENDATIONS

(No. B/42) Mr Osman Mahomed (Third Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to the Water Sector Reform, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Central Water Authority, information as to the course of action being undertaken for the short, medium and long terms respectively, following the recent government decision to implement the recommendations of the World Bank in relation thereto.

The Deputy Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, the hon. Member may wish to refer to my reply to Parliamentary Question No. B/29 of 29 March 2016, on the situation within the CWA.

I informed the House of the failed attempts in the past to bring reform. I also informed the House of the decision of this Government to seek the assistance of the World Bank to advise on a reform of the water supply and distribution system.

The World Bank has made recommendations for an affermage contract to a private operator to operate and maintain the potable water distribution system with the CWA to continue to own the water distribution and supply assets.

Government has sought the assistance of the International Finance Corporation to act as transaction advisor. The World Bank will continue to provide advisory assistance to the Government on the reform. The World Bank has also agreed to mobilise grant funding to finance the services of IFC and the advisory service of the Bank.

Given the national importance and public interest in this water reform project, I intend to make a detailed statement to the House at the appropriate time, that is, in the near future.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Osman Mahomed!

Mr Osman Mahomed: The recommendation of a private operator to maintain the distribution system, the private operator will be called upon to operate the distribution system, which distribution system we know is faulty because there are a lot of leakages – 50 per cent of non-revenue water. Now, given that we have the funds and the expertise to do piping in Mauritius in what way will a private operator do better than Mauritians or the CWA in that field?

The Deputy Prime Minister: Of course, if we reduce the issue of distribution to a mere matter of piping then there is no need, not even for the CWA. We just need to have some pipe laying operators and the matter will be solved. But surely, the hon. Member knows better than this. It is more complicated. Take Roches Brunes for example, it is a spaghetti piping system. One pipe leads to one house and there is another pipe going to the next one. Take Bramsthan, what has happened recently? Half of Bramsthan gets water 24/7 and the other half does not. It is not a question of piping. The pipes are okay in Bramsthan. It is the question of the management of that system.

Thorough analysis has been done. Now, let us not open this debate again because then we are going back to 1997. This debate has been held many times since 1997 and we know that now the question is that we have got to take the bull by the horns and we have got to come over. Let us not be complacent and say we can do it, we have done it in the past and pretend that we know how to do it.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Bhagwan!

Mr Bhagwan: In the context of the water sector reform, the General Manager of the CWA has made some announcements about the increase of water tariff of up to 200 per cent. Can the hon. Deputy Prime Minister give some details to the population about the statement which the General Manager made very recently and which has been largely advertised?

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Prime Minister: First of all, let us not mix two issues. Tariff is one thing and water sector reform is a completely different thing. On an appropriate question, I will answer on tariffs and very soon we shall come with a proposal on tariffs.

Now, I don't think the General Manager made any statement on 200 per cent. What I know is that I have read in a newspaper, a morning paper, that apparently the CWA is proposing about 200 per cent increase. I am not aware of this but we will see in due course.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Baloomoody!

Mr Baloomoody: Can I ask the hon. Deputy Prime Minister whether prior to that project of having private sector coming to operate or manage the CWA there has been any consultation with the unions of the CWA?

The Deputy Prime Minister: No, there has not been any consultation with any stakeholder for the moment. These consultations will take place after I have apprised the House of the matter. My priority is to come to this House with a paper and then to start discussions. But, as we are on this subject which is a very important subject, let me say four lines on employees.

There is likely to be a need for an additional 400 employees to achieve the service delivery improvements bringing the total number of employees from 1400 to 1800. The point being that contrary to popular belief, CWA is understaffed and not overstaffed. So, with that new system, we shall require 400 highly skilled people, young Engineers, young HSC holders, brainy people to come and work.

The second statement I wish to make. Employees will be offered the opportunity to join the private sector operator with additional incentives. There will be no compulsory termination of employment or redundancy. This is the statement which I make. In fact, I have already prepared my paper, but I need to process it through various other people within my *encadrement* before I rend it public.

With these two statements, I can make it very clear so that there is no debate or misunderstanding on that matter.

Mr Osman Mahomed: Some countries which have, in the past, resorted to private operators have had to go back to the previous system, like we have right now. Will the hon. Deputy Prime Minister assure the House that the contract linking the CWA to the private operator will have strict key performance indicators because should they not perform tomorrow, we can easily exit out of this contract without having to pay hefty compensation?

The Deputy Prime Minister: Regarding the first part, I am not aware - I read a few things, of course, on this matter - of any country that has gone back on this. There have been variations on several themes, but if there is an example of this, the hon. Member can privately let me have it because I would be most interested for my personal benefit to go through that experience as well.

The second issue was payment of the operator....

Mr Osman Mahomed: The key performance.

The Deputy Prime Minister: The key performance, if I may. I am giving an advance of what is going to be ultimately my statement. The operator would be - if that reform succeeds - paid an operated fee, first of all, to cover costs associated with these operations. Then there would be a fee based on key performance targets such as improved surface quality and reduction of water losses. In addition, one essential condition, which I myself imposed, in this water sector reform is that the operator would have to incur a penalty fee in the event that the targets are not achieved so that there is not only a reward for doing well, but a punishment for not doing well. This is, I hope, will give the proper incentive to the operator, but, of course, we will have the occasion to debate it further and more fully.

Madam Speaker: Last question on this issue, hon. Ganoo!

Mr Ganoo: Although the hon. Deputy Prime Minister said that water sector reforms and the increase in the water rates are two different matters, they are, of course, linked. The Minister, himself, last week, in a press interview said that it is the CWA which will decide on the increase for the rate of water. May I ask the hon. Deputy Prime Minister – since we have now a Utility Regulatory Authority (URA) which has been set up, what would be the role of the URA in the process of this proposed increase in the context of the water sector reform?

The Deputy Prime Minister: My hon. friend surprises me. He wrote the URA. He knows that the URA does not apply to the water sector, at least, for the moment...

(Interruptions)

Yes, at least for the moment. It is not even operational for electricity. Let us not go into water now. To answer fully to your question, I insist, these two matters are not linked; water tariffs and operators. We shall seek about the way in which we formulate it in our paper when it will come to the House later. But for the moment everybody agrees that tariffs must be reviewed.

(Interruptions)

Everybody agrees and that review must, of course, be on the increase. The CWA has prepared a paper. I must say it has gone back and forth. I have sent them back to the drawing boards once or twice. I expect them to follow the policy which I have told them to follow and to come with exact figures before I can approve the regulations for the tariffs.

Madam Speaker: The Table has been advised that the following PQs have been withdrawn B/50, B/51, B/52, B/53, B/71, B/72, B/74, B/75, B/76, B/77, B/81, B/82, B/83. Time is over!

MOTION

SUSPENSION OF S.O. 10(2)

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, Sir, I 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 BILL

First Reading

On motion made and seconded, the Land Drainage Authority Bill (No. 1 of 2017) was read a first time.

Second Reading

THE LAND DRAINAGE AUTHORITY BILL

(NO. 1 OF 2017)

Order for Second Reading read.

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, I move that the Land Drainage Authority Bill (No. 1 of 2017) be read a second time.

The object of this Bill, as the House will note, is to establish a Land Drainage Authority with such responsibilities as those specified in the Explanatory Memorandum, inclusive of the development and implementation of a land drainage master plan.

Madam Speaker, certain critical facts need to be highlighted -

- (i) climate change is one of the most daunting challenges the world has been facing, and will continue to face. The Fifth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change that was released in 2014, assessed that extreme climatic events and risks will continue to increase and that the three main challenges of serious concern with regard to flooding in Small Island Developing States are -
 - risk of death, injury, ill-health or disrupted livelihoods in low-lying coastal zones due to coastal flooding;
 - systematic risks due to extreme weather events leading to breakdown of infrastructure networks and critical services such as electricity, water supply and health and emergency services, and
 - risk of food insecurity and the breakdown of food systems that are linked to flooding and precipitation variability and extremes, particularly for poorer populations in urban and rural settings.
- (ii) the world's climate is unequivocally heading on a dangerous pathway causing irreversible adverse impacts on the economy, and also on ecosystems, lives and livelihoods of people. In fact, impacts of disasters on economies and societies have become major obstacles that are seriously impeding our efforts to achieve sustainable socio-economic development;
- (iii) According to the World Meteorological Organisation, more than 200 million people are badly affected in almost all countries in the world every year. Disaster losses continue to rise with grave consequences

for the survival, livelihood and dignity of people, especially the poor;
and

- (iv) Floods have the greatest damage potential of all natural disasters worldwide and affect the greatest number of people.

Madam Speaker, Mauritius is no exception, and is highly vulnerable to the adverse impacts of climate change. In fact, according to the World Risk Report that was released in 2016, Mauritius is ranked as the 13th country with the highest disaster risk and ranked 7th on the list of countries most exposed to natural hazards.

Although we have observed an 8% decline in average annual rainfall over the period 1950-2016, the occurrence of high intensity rainfall over a very short span of time resulting in flash floods in the past years is on the rise. We have already witnessed a number of such extreme climatic events throughout the country with disastrous and pervasive consequences. The flash flood experienced in Port Louis on 30 March 2013 is a stark reality which is still haunting many distressed families. Besides 11 fatalities, there were considerable damages to infrastructure and property. According to projections made in the Indian Ocean Commission 'Disaster Risk Profile Mauritius (2016)' Report, an average annual direct loss of up to USD 22 million is anticipated as a result of flooding.

It is, therefore, critical that we move from the current paradigm of post disaster response to adopt holistic approaches for flood disaster management.

Madam Speaker, at present, there are different authorities such as the National Development Unit, the local authorities and the Road Development Authority, which are responsible for the implementation, improvement and maintenance of drains across the island. However, the role, duties and responsibilities of these authorities do not allow clear and structured coordination to fully address land drainage issues. Besides these organisations, there are several other concerned stakeholders that are carrying out measures which are contributing to a varied extent to flood control and mitigation, but with limited synergy. It is, therefore, imperative to have an institutional setup for better coordination to ensure integrated, proactive and concerted efforts in the implementation and management of drain projects throughout the island. This is precisely what is being proposed in the draft Bill.

Madam Speaker, we have invested massively in the construction and upgrading of drains across the island. In fact, to give an idea, from January 2015 to June 2016, some

Rs520 m. have been disbursed. An additional amount of Rs1.2 billion has been allocated to meet expenditure on drainage structures for the financial year ending 30 June 2017.

Madam Speaker, the Authority being set up shall have, as specified in section 5 of Part II of the Bill, a wide range of functions to enable it to attain its objectives effectively, including carrying out an inventory and mapping of all the existing natural and manmade drainage infrastructure; and undertaking a study based on a hydro-meteorological and hydrographic survey and produce and keep under review a flood risk map and a National Land Drainage Plan.

Madam Speaker, addressing issues pertaining to flood prevention, management and mitigation necessitate a wide range of expertise and knowhow as well as long term data and information. Various institutions, in fact, have expertise and important data at their level, which may be very useful in the execution of timely measures. This is precisely why provision has been made in the Bill for the Authority to be managed by a Board, which shall consist of a Chairperson having wide experience in an administrative or managerial position and representatives of all Ministries and Authorities. Provision has also been made for the Board to co-opt any person or representative from any other organisation who may be of any assistance to the Board.

Madam Speaker, to enable the Authority to discharge its functions most effectively, it will be empowered to -

- (a) issue guidelines to relevant stakeholders with a view to preventing unauthorised activities and developments on drains, canals and other watercourses, or the illegal dumping and discharge of effluents in drains, canals and other watercourses, and
- (b) direct the relevant stakeholders to upgrade or maintain their drainage infrastructure where same is not upgraded or maintained.

Madam Speaker, we have witnessed on various occasions that citizens act irresponsibly by damaging or changing the course of any drainage infrastructure, leading to disastrous consequences during heavy rainfall. This Bill, therefore, provides that any person involved in such activities shall commit an offence and will be liable to a fine of not less than Rs10,000 and not exceeding Rs20,000 and to imprisonment for a term not exceeding 12 months. Furthermore, with a view to optimising resources, every Police officer and every other officer under the Building Control Act, the Environment Protection Act, the Local

Government Act, the Rivers and Canals Act and the Road Development Authority Act shall have the power and the duty to assist in enforcing the provisions of this Act.

Madam Speaker, to ensure that the objects of the Act are being met, provisions have been made in this Bill to empower the Minister to -

- (a) give such written directions of a general nature to the Authority, not inconsistent with this Act, as he considers necessary in the public interest, and the Authority, of course, shall comply with such directions, and
- (b) make regulations as and when required.

Madam Speaker, the House will recall that, last year, Government came up with a Bill to provide for a legal framework for disaster risk reduction. As a responsible Government, we are now going to address problems associated with a major disaster that is flooding. In fact, implementation of the provisions of the Land Drainage Authority Bill will go a long way towards -

- strengthening of the institutional framework for flood management in Mauritius;
- enhancing protection of critical public infrastructure and ecosystem, and
- enhancing the protection of life and property in cases of severe flooding.

Madam Speaker, this Bill is yet another concrete example of Government non-stop caring and concern for the protection of life and property of our citizens, as well as of Government's unflinching determination to ensure preventive measures in a methodological and cohesive manner to minimise to the greatest possible extent the havoc and sufferings caused by acts of Nature.

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

The Deputy Prime Minister rose and seconded.

Madam Speaker: I suspend the sitting for half an hour.

At 4.53 p.m., the sitting was suspended.

On resuming at 5.24 p.m. with the Deputy Speaker in the Chair.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Armance!

Mr P. Armance (First Member for GRNW & Port Louis West): First, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, let me take some minutes to congratulate you and I hope you would deliver to the most of your ability.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity today to give my views on the very important Bill that the hon. Prime Minister brings to this House. I have listened carefully to the Hon. Prime Minister. I will come back later on with some points which he mentioned in his speech.

Mr Deputy Speaker, a few years ago, in year 2008, we had a very bad experience at Mont Goût in the district of Pamplemousses where people died because of flooding. In 2013, further to a Fact-Finding Committee set up by ex-Judge Domah and under the Emergency Rehabilitation Programme, Rivière Citron situated at Mont Goût has been enlarged with the collaboration of the NDU and MPI, even a retaining wall has been built to prevent risk of flooding again. At the same time, the riverbed has been embellished with the same authority.

Let me give you some dates, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. 30 March 2013, on that day, Canal Dayot which is found in my Constituency, Constituency No. 1, one person died at Canal Dayot as the result of sudden raise of the level of water in the river and this put the life of hundreds of inhabitants in danger. And yet, Mr Deputy Speaker, today, we are in 2017, and despite the fact that the river has been enlarged, we note that the river is not maintained properly and the inhabitants of Canal Dayot are still suffering and their life is again in danger during heavy rains.

Another date I want to point out is 23 December 2014. Another region in my Constituency is Sable Noir. This is a very exposed area. I do remember the former Minister of Environment, hon. Raj Dayal, who came to my constituency. He promised to the inhabitants of Sable Noir that a small bridge would be demolished within two hours on the same day. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it was on 23 December 2014 and today, we are in 2017, the small bridge is still there. The danger is still there. We had several meetings with the NDU, RDA, and Local Government, but nothing has been done so far, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. Nothing has been done by this Government with regard to this problem which the inhabitants of Sable Noir have to face. The life of these people is at stake. If tomorrow there is heavy rainfall again, people's life is going to be in danger.

Mr Deputy Speaker, today, we are talking about putting a Land Drainage Authority.

(Interruptions)

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we can't just sit and wait now. We need action. We need the Government to take action.

(Interruptions)

I will tell you now, please listen!

(Interruptions)

We need action from the Government. I have been a Member of Parliament sitting on the opposite side...

(Interruptions)

I have been a Member of Parliament, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, sitting there. I waited for two years. Two years I had been promised that several projects in my constituency would be taken into consideration to save the life of the people. More than two years is more than 800 days. 800 days is a big exposure, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

We have experienced more flash floods again in Mauritius. Let me take the example of Fond du Sac. Yes, there has been some remedial action. They have built three absorption pits but no one has taken care that the major flow of water from Piton and Mapou can still affect the inhabitants of Fond du Sac. Where is the NDU? Where are the RDA and the Local Government? Where are all the authorities that work supposedly to preserve the life of the people who are at stake when there is a flood? Where are all the authorities? Now, we are going to create another authority! You want another one to come on the top of the other people! To do what, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir? To duplicate the work and then give higher salary to these people? I think this is a joke!

Let me go back to what was said by the former Finance Minister, hon. Duval. In his Budget in 2014,...

(Interruptions)

...he came up...

(Interruptions)

...he came up with some solutions. On that day, we were already discussing about the Land Drainage Agency. The Agency was supposed to take care of the construction of drains. I repeat - the construction of drains and their maintenance. There have been lots of measures. Let me quote some of them. Let me say what hon. Duval came up with as measures –

- Rs35 m. were earmarked for fully staffed National Risk Reduction and Management Centre and IT-Based Early Warning Emergency Alert;
- a Land Drainage Agency was set up to cater for construction, cleaning and maintenance of the drainage system across the country;
- an allocation of Rs1.3 billion to the MPI. He sought the help of the Government of Japan and we had the Doppler Radar facility for the forecast and monitoring of cloud and this is a very effective radar;
- 100 additional firefighters were to be recruited;
- provision for additional investment of Rs30 m. for landslide work in Chitrakoot and Vallée Pitot.

But, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it is unfortunate that this Government is still hiding; they have been hiding behind debts and excuses. There has been a budget of about Rs400 m. that was earmarked for drainage works. Only Rs40 m. has been used! Why? Why is the Government not taking care of the drains now? Why after two years now they come with such a Bill saying now they have suddenly realised that there is a problem? They suddenly now realised that there is a problem and that we need to maintain the drains.

(Interruptions)

For many years, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the NDU, the RDA, the Local Government have been responsible for that. They were also responsible and accountable for when people died in Caudan in the tunnel, at Canal Dayot, at Mont Gout and so on and so forth. I can keep giving examples of this.

(Interruptions)

Ine travail piti la li.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Silence, please!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Abbas Mamode, silence please!

Mr Armance: Does the Government think that having a barking dog without teeth can now solve the problem of drainage? We need, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, a full-fledged authority with power to undertake, design and implement the Master Plan including the construction and maintenance of our drainage system. An agency that will bring solution to

our major drainage system as we all know that as at now we have many issues that require urgent attention.

Let me refer to the Land Drainage Act of 1908 in UK and let us see what they say in section 17 - to construct and maintain drains and watercourses. I repeat - to construct and maintain drains and watercourses. Subsection (a) says –

“cleanse, repair, or otherwise maintain in a due state of efficiency any existing watercourse or outfall for water, either within or beyond the district (...).”

This is an example of what is being done internationally, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. Why now do we think that we are cleverer than them, that we come with an authority with no power? This authority cannot build anything. It is just here to supervise or advise the Minister! I think we just need to look into the problem deeply. We need a one stop shop. We need an agency to fully commit itself to sort out all the problems of drains in the whole of Mauritius. We don't need someone to come and overlook again and then advise the Minister and then the Minister will choose.

(Interruptions)

The Minister will choose the project. He is not going to bind himself to do all the projects and other recommendation of the authority. It is in the Bill! The Minister has a choice. Why do you choose? What is your choice? Are you going to choose to play with the life of people? This is very serious, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. This is a question where we are dealing with death problem.

Let me come to the Bill. On page 14 of the said Bill, the objective again is as follows and I quote –

“to construct...”

Sorry, it is the wrong section. I will take a look at the Cabinet Decision of 30 January 2015. Cabinet Decision No. 1 section (a) –

“urgently put in place a Land Drainage Authority to, amongst others, plan, design, supervise the construction of drains, and prepare and implement emergency projects and programmes for the disposal of surface water;”

A few days after this Cabinet Memo, hon. Dayal, former...

(Interruptions)

He is my learned friend. Let us see what he said in his interview in “*Le Mauricien*”, and I quote –

“Le Cabinet, sous la présidence du Premier ministre, Sir Anerood Jugnauth, a approuvé l’institution prochaine du National Drainage Agency. »

Je répète –

« (...) l’institution prochaine du National Drainage Agency. »

Let us go further down.

« Ce sera une institution qui s’occupera de la construction... »

(Interruptions)

« (...) et de la gestion des drains à travers le pays. »

C’est ce qu’avait laissé entendre l’honorable Raj Dayal !

What has changed since then? Okay, there has been one Minister, another Minister and now another Minister, but the priority of the island remains the same! Why now are we moving to a barking dog? But Raj Dayal said...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Some order, please!

(Interruptions)

Mr Armance: Hon. Dayal also stated, and I quote –

« Pour mettre sur pied cette agence, nous allons bénéficier du soutien technique de la firme Deltares des Pays-Bas. Une firme de réputation mondiale spécialisée dans la recherche de solutions à des problèmes de débordements et d’inondations. »

Mr Deputy Speaker, I would like to know now from the hon. Prime Minister whether we still have the expertise and advice of these people from Netherlands. I did not hear anything in his speech. Are we still looking for international expertise? Let’s take a look at section 7.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Henry!

Mr Armance: In section 7, there will be several stakeholders that are going to form part of the Board to set up the Authority. This is fair enough! We have representatives from the Ministry of Local Government, from the National Disaster, from the Environment and so on. But what I fail to understand, Mr Deputy Speaker, is section (3) subsections (a) and (b), engineers are not allowed to be part of the Board. Let me remind the House the engineers of professional and technicians. Why is it that an engineer is not allowed to sit on the Board? They are here to bring their experience and to propose solutions. We are allowing three persons to be...

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Armance! You are misreading section 7 (3) of the Bill. It reads –

- “(3) (a) no person who has any interest in any civil engineering and undertaking or consultancy (...)”
- (b) any member who acquired an interest (...).”

This is about conflict of interest. I would expect Members of this House to come with constructive debates in the nature of *travaux préparatoires* because eventually these Bills will become law and will be subject matter of interpretation before the courts of law. Thank you.

Mr Armance: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, what I wanted to show when I mentioned the civil engineer in that we need to professionalise this Board. We just can't have people from the kitchen to come as cook on it.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Rutnah!

Mr Armance: Can I continue, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir?

The Deputy Speaker: Yes!

Mr Armance: Thank you. I strongly advise that the civil engineer be from the Civil Engineer Association or Institute of the Civil Engineer, a representative from the Professional Architect Council (PAC) to be part of the Board. I am dead sure they will bring more solution. We are learned people. They are Ministers. They are Parliamentarians. We are not specialists in dealing with drainage problems. Let the specialists deal with it. Let them bring the solution to us.

To conclude, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I want to highlight that the need to set up a one-stop shop for land drainage problems is now a matter of national interest, but we need a one-stop shop. We just can't have an Authority that is going to overview the activity of again NDU, again MPI, or again Local Government which somewhere have failed in their duty unfortunately. Let us deal with the matter as a matter of national interest and propose sustainable solutions to prevent more flooding and death in Mauritius.

Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you hon. Armance. Hon. Benydin please!

Mr Benydin: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I will be very brief. First of all, I would like to congratulate you for your election as Deputy Speaker and I wish you well in your new function.

Second, I move that the debate be now adjourned.

Mrs Monty rose and seconded.

Question put and agreed to.

Debate adjourned accordingly.

ADJOURNMENT

The Prime Minister: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that this Assembly do now adjourn to Tuesday 04 April 2017 at 11.30 a.m.

The Deputy Prime Minister rose and seconded.

Question put and agreed to.

The Deputy Speaker: The House stands adjourned.

MATTERS RAISED

(5.43 p.m.)

WRITTEN QUESTIONS - ANSWERS

Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would like to raise an issue and draw the attention of the hon. Prime Minister.

We are at the first sitting of this year's session. Going through the report this morning we have started the issue of Question Time. Going through the records, as for today, for year 2016, nearly 80 PQs have not been replied or placed in the Library.

So, I am pressing upon the hon. Prime Minister and the Ministers, the Ministry of Health is on the top of the list - the previous one. I am circulating one copy, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, so that, during the course of the week, we can, at least, receive a reply. These were the replies scheduled to be placed in the Library of the National Assembly. I think there are a lot of questions concerning transparency, good governance and appointments. So, we leave it to your good office to see with the Prime Minister that these questions be replied and circulated.

The Prime Minister: Of course, I can reassure the hon. Member that, following the list that he is tabling, I will impress on my colleagues Ministers wherever there was a need to file written answers to see to it that these answers are tabled so that they will be to the knowledge of all Members.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Uteem!

VALLÉE PITOT - SYNTHETIC DRUG

Mr R. Uteem (First Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central): Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. I would like to raise an issue addressed to the Rt. hon. Minister Mentor, Minister of Defence, Minister for Rodrigues.

It concerns the issue of synthetic drugs in my Constituency. A few days ago, I attended a funeral in my Constituency, a boy of 21 years old. He died. During the autopsy, they saw that his brain was swollen and he had consumed synthetic drug. This new drug is called 'Rambo' and it is not a drug, but it is poison. It is killing people in my Constituency. You can see in the morning - when you go next to the place where they give methadone, opposite of the Police station of Vallée Pitot - youngsters shooting themselves. The police, the people, there, know who are the suppliers. They know the places where you can get these synthetic drugs. Yet, there seems to be *un laisser-aller*, unfortunately as far as synthetic drug is concerned.

So, I will impress on the Rt. hon. Minister Mentor, if he can take up the matter with the Commissioner of Police and make it one of the priorities of this Government to eradicate not only the traditional drugs, but also the synthetics drugs.

The Rt. Hon. Minister Mentor, Minister of Defence, Minister for Rodrigues (Sir A. Jugnauth): Well, I am sorry to hear that. I'll certainly speak to the Commissioner of Police. This matter, I have been discussing almost every day with the Commissioner of Police. What are steps we must take? What we must do? How to go about it? I will not say

that we are going to get rid completely of the drug problem, but, at least, minimise it. But from what the hon. Member said, it is as if he witnessed Police not taking actions. He should have reported that to the Police Station and mentioned the names of the Police officers so that action can be taken. I recommend this to all the hon. Members.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you, Rt. hon. Minister Mentor. Hon. Baloomoody!

SSS - MR R. B. - TRANSFER

Mr V. Baloomoody (Third Member for GRNW & Port Louis West): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I will invite the hon. Minister of Education and Human Resources, Tertiary Education and Scientific Research to look into the case of a Trade Unionist of the Secondary Private School, Mr R. B..

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, Mr R. B. has worked in the State college for more than 28 years teaching accounts. Actually, he is suffering from a serious disease, a throat cancer. He is a Trade Unionist. He has, last year, during the debate on the nine-year schooling, expressed his *désaccord* on certain points.

Following that, he had to travel to India and when he came back this year, he received a letter informing him that he is transferred from Floréal SSS with immediate effect to St Aubin knowing fully well that this gentleman needs his treatment. He does not live far from Floréal. He lives in Eau Coulée. It is difficult for him to travel long distances and he believes that it is a punitive transfer. I do not want to enter into a debate whether it is a punitive transfer or not.

I am making an appeal to the hon. Minister, on humanitarian ground, to reconsider - he has made several representations - the possibility of returning him back to Floréal SSS where he was.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you, hon. Baloomoody! Any remark, hon. Minister of Education and Human Resources, Tertiary Education and Scientific Research!

The Minister of Education and Human Resources, Tertiary Education and Scientific Research (Mrs L. D. Dookun-Luchoomun): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the transfer of Educators is done through the administrative arm of my Ministry. Obviously, if a teacher is transferred, he has to abide by the transfer he has been asked to make.

However, in case of disease or any other matter, we can sometimes review. Now, in the case of that person, I have received his letter, but he has been submitting medical

certificates dated four years back. So, we have asked him to submit a fresh one. And anyway, in case there has been a transfer, we can review the transfer, but it does not mean that he will be sent back to the same college he was.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you, hon. Minister of Education and Human Resources, Tertiary Education and Scientific Research. Hon. Ameer Meea!

(5.50 p.m.)

BIGARA CEMETERY – MUSLIM SECTION

Mr A. Ameer Meea (Second Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East): Merci, M. le président. Ce soir, je vais soulever un problème urgent, mais un peu délicat. Cela concerne le cimetière de Bigara à Curepipe qui est géré par la Municipalité de Curepipe. Donc, je m'adresse à l'honorable ministre des collectivités locales.

Ce qui se passe c'est que la section musulmane du cimetière Bigara est complètement remplie. Il n'y a pas de place pour enterrer les morts de foi musulmane et le gouvernement, en 2014, avait alloué une portion de terrain. Mais à ce jour rien n'a été fait pour emménager le cimetière. Et le précédent ministre des collectivités locales a fait un *site visit* dans le passé par rapport à cela. Il y a environ sept mosquées à Curepipe qui se sont fédérées pour que ce projet se réalise mais ils ont l'impression qu'ils sont *taken for a ride* par la Municipalité de Curepipe.

Donc, je vous adresse ce problème de façon urgente pour que *needful can be done so that this matter can be settled quickly*.

Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker : Thank you, hon. Ameer Meea. Hon. Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands.

The Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands (Mr P. Jhugroo): Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. After having listened to my hon. friend, I will take this matter with the Municipal Council of Curepipe.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Quirin!

RESIDENCE BARKLY – METRO EXPRESS - ROUTE

Mr F. Quirin (Fourth Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière): Merci, M. le président. Ma requête ce soir s'adresse à l'honorable Bodha, Ministre des infrastructures publiques, et concerne le tracé du *Metro Express* à Résidence Barkly.

Donc, depuis que le tracé a été rendu public, il y a une certaine inquiétude. Les habitants de Barkly sont très préoccupés, et je dirais même perturbés par le tracé du prochain *Metro Express* qui va certainement chambouler leurs habitudes, qui va modifier tout le paysage de la région et certaines infrastructures vont certainement disparaître.

L'honorable ministre Bodha, ce matin, en réponse à la PNQ du *leader* de l'opposition, a fait mention du complexe sportif, *volleyball and basketball pitch* qui allaient disparaître très bientôt. Est-ce que ce sera uniquement cette infrastructure ou bien la station de police, le boudrome, le jardin d'enfants, les espaces verts ? Est-ce que toutes ces infrastructures seront concernées et vont disparaître par la suite? C'est cela qui préoccupe les résidents de la région et je pense qu'il serait bon dans un proche avenir que l'honorable ministre organise une rencontre avec les habitants de la région pour les rassurer. Est-ce que le gouvernement prévoit de remplacer sur un autre site dans la région, ...

The Deputy Speaker: Vous avez fait le point, l'honorable Quirin!

Mr Quirin: ...avoir d'autres infrastructures pour remplacer celles qui vont disparaître?

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Honorable Quirin! Vous avez fait le point!

(Interruptions)

Mr Quirin: J'attends la réponse de l'honorable ministre.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Minister of Public Infrastructure and Land Transport!

The Minister of Public Infrastructure and Land Transport (Mr N. Bodha): Merci, M. le président. C'est clair, s'il y a des infrastructures qui seront concernées, il faut absolument qu'on arrive à trouver d'autres sites, faire peut-être même des complexes avec des nouvelles infrastructures. Alors on va le faire. On va le faire avec vous et il faudra que tous les députés de l'endroit, la mairie et la NDU, tout le monde ensemble, dans un esprit de concertation, trouvent une solution pour que le métro ne sera pas perçu comme quelque chose

qui vient déranger les gens, mais au contraire comme un atout. Et nous allons le faire ensemble en concertation avec les députés.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Osman Mahomed!

CHAMP DE MARS – PARKING - LEASE

Mr Osman Mahomed (Third Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central): Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. I have an issue that concerns the hon. Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands and it pertains to Champ de Mars.

Now, the Municipal Council of Port Louis has requested for proposals for a lease of 30 years' period for an extent of 36,000 m² for a parking for about purportedly a thousand cars.

Now, besides the environmental, traffic, visual, leisure, and social impacts, there will be a definite impact on land drainage as well which I wanted to address this afternoon, but time has not permitted. I have with me a petition signed by 1,600 people living in the vicinity of Champ de Mars. So, I am going to table this petition. And my humble request to the hon. Minister is to relook at this project because it is certainly going to impact adversely on the lives of people for this national *patrimoine* which is Champ de Mars, a green spot that is going to become a dark spot for parking purposes because the green space is going to be covered with tarmac. So, this is the petition and I humbly request the hon. Minister to revisit this project.

Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you, hon. Osman Mahomed! Hon. Prime Minister!

The Prime Minister: I will look into the matter and from what I can recall, Government has already approved the decision for this project. I doubt if we will be going back on this. Anyway, I will have a look at the petition and I will meet the people concerned and discuss and explain to them the reason behind this project.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you, hon. Prime Minister! Hon. Adrien Duval!

PULTOO, MR ROSHAN – DEATH AT SEA

Mr A. Duval (First Member for Curepipe & Midlands): Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. My question is to the Rt. hon. Minister Mentor. Not question, but my address! There is a very serious allegation of one of my mandates in Curepipe against the Coast Guard

of Flic en Flac. As you will recall, there was a drowning on 08 April whereby one, Roshan Pultoo died. The allegation is being made now by the family.

There has been a case at the Human Rights Commission that has been lodged by one Mr Jason Kalachand, who is a witness to the whole matter, says that the Coast Guard has been criminally negligent in handling the matter in that there was a person in difficulty on a kayak, the Coast Guard was called and there was Mr Pultoo swimming in the designated area in about one metre of water and he was not in difficulty at all. The Coast Guard mistakenly thought that he was the person being in difficulty, forced him on to the craft. When they realised that, in fact, the person in difficulty was by the reefs, they, together with Mr Pultoo without giving him a life jacket or safety equipment, they went on to rescue the person on the reef. They were just about one minute to the shore and they apparently sailed 10 minutes to the reef and the boat capsized and Mr Roshan Pultoo died. And this is a very serious allegation. We have heard it in the news. I went to see the family yesterday, there were, as I said, complaints made to the Human Rights Commission by one witness. I would appeal to the hon. Minister Mentor that he directs the Commissioner of Police to open an enquiry at his level because I am afraid that the Coast Guard will not handle the matter in a professional and independent way and this again is a very serious issue. Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you, hon. Duval. You will appreciate that there will be a judicial enquiry in cases of drowning. Rt. hon. Minister Mentor, please!

The Rt. Hon. Minister Mentor and Minister of Defence, Minister for Rodrigues (Sir Anerood Jugnauth): Mr Deputy Speaker, since there has been death in this case, I am certain that there must be an enquiry and it will end up at least with a judicial enquiry. Therefore, I don't think we should have any worry about it.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you, Rt. hon. Minister Mentor. Hon. Ramful, please!

JAWAHARLAL NEHRU HOSPITAL – DIALYSIS MACHINES

Mr D. Ramful (Third Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien): Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have an issue with regard to the dialysis machines at the Nehru Hospital. I have received complaints from the patients who normally attend the Nehru Hospital for treatment. Apparently, there are repeated breakdowns and on certain occasions those patients have to be returned back home without the proper treatment or they have to wait for a long time to receive the proper treatment. May I request the hon. Minister to kindly look into the matter.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you, hon. Ramful. Hon. Minister of Health and Quality of Life!

The Minister of Health and Quality of Life (Dr. A. Husnoo): Yes, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I will definitely look into the matter. It is very serious, I will look into it. Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you, Minister of Health and Quality of Life! Hon. Armance!

HOUSE ALLOCATION - MRS RAJALOO

Mr P. Armance (First Member for GRNW & Port Louis West): My address is for the Minister of Social Integration. It is regarding Mrs Rajaloo who lives in our constituency. She lost her house a couple of weeks ago and she is now living in a woman centre and she is desperately looking for a house. I understand that she visited already the Minister of Social Integration and I will appeal to him to look into the matter so that Mrs Rajaloo can have a house to get her stuff inside.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you, hon. Armance. Hon. Minister of Social Integration and Economic Empowerment.

The Minister of Social Integration and Economic Empowerment (Mr. A. Wong Yen Cheong): Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. In fact, there is an enquiry which is being carrying out and we are looking forward so that we can allocate something to the person. Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Henry!

PUBLIC BEACHES - ACCESS

Mr T. Henry (Fourth Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien): Merci, M. le président. Ce problème concerne peut-être le ministre de l'Environnement ou le ministre des Terres et de Logement. C'est un problème qui perdure dans la circonscription sur la plage publique, publique ou pas on ne sait pas mais il y a beaucoup de problèmes. Mes collègues aussi sont au courant qu'il y a même eu des agressions sur les plages où ils lâchent de gros chiens sur les gens qui viennent pique-niquer, à Pointe d'Esny, à Blue Bay et pas plus tard que dans le week-end, j'ai entendu dire que dans le nord aussi, on a le même problème, c'est un peu partout. A Tamarin aussi, j'ai entendu dire qu'il y a ce problème. Donc, je fais un

appel au gouvernement de revoir la loi pour permettre aux Mauriciens d'avoir accès à nos plages.

(Interruptions)

A Grand Gaube aussi, oui. Le problème c'est que cela s'empire. On rigole, mais les Mauriciens sont en train d'être privés d'aller sur les plages. Donc, je fais un appel au gouvernement de revoir la loi parce qu'avec les renseignements que j'ai eus, j'ai entendu dire qu'il y a certains endroits où les plages sont dans leur contrat. Donc, je demande au gouvernement de revoir la façon de faire...

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Henry, vous avez fait votre point!

Mr Henry : Je n'ai pas terminé, s'il vous plaît.

The Deputy Speaker: L'honorable membre a fait le point. Hon. Minister of Environment!

(Interruptions)

Please, do not interrupt the hon. Minister of Environment!

The Minister of Social Security, National Solidarity, and Environment and Sustainable Development (Mr E. Sinatambou): Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. I have taken good note of the problem raised by the hon. Member. I will look into it, Mr Deputy Speaker and I will come back to the Member.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you, hon. Minister of Environment. Hon. Lepoigneur!

RESIDENCE VUILLEMIN – SCAVENGER - ASSAULT

Mr J. C. Lepoigneur (Fifth Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière): Merci, M. le président. Ma requête s'adresse au nouveau ministre des Collectivités locales, l'honorable Purmanund Jhugroo. Suite à un incident qui s'est produit à Résidence Vuillemin le samedi 11 mars où un éboueur de la municipalité de Bassin Bassin-Rose Hill a agressé un habitant de Vuillemin à coup de pierres. Le cas a été rapporté à la municipalité et aussi à la police. Le *OB No.* est 511/17. Je sais qu'aucune sanction n'a été prise au niveau de la municipalité. L'habitant en question a voulu avoir un rendez-vous avec le maire mais il n'a pas eu de rendez-vous concernant ce sujet. Je voudrais savoir s'il y aura enquête et si des sanctions vont être prises contre le l'éboueur en question, s'il y a eu suspension ou un comité disciplinaire.

The Deputy Speaker: Merci l'honorable Lepoigneur. Hon. Minister of Local Government...

The Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands (Mr P. Jhugroo): I think that this issue should be taken by the Police and I will speak to the Mayor and the Chief Executive of the Municipality to look into the matter.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you hon. Minister of Local Government. Hon. Barbier!

CAMP CHAPELON - METRO EXPRESS PROJECT – FOOTBALL GROUND

Mr J. C. Barbier (Fifth Member for GRNW & Port Louis West): Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. My plea is addressed to the Minister of Education and it concerns the football teams of Camp Chapelon and Plaine Lauzun.

In fact, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with regard to the project of Metro Express, I am surprised that this morning the Minister did not mention the football ground of Camp Chapelon. In fact, we are informed that this football ground is going to be destroyed to make room for the project of Metro Express. This is what we understand and which has been communicated to us in our constituency. So, with regard to that, the football teams in Camp Chapelon and Plaine Lauzun are requesting the Ministry of Education to put at their disposal the football pitch of SSS James Burty David nearby at Bell Village so that they can use it for continued practising their football.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you, hon. Barbier! Hon. Minister of Public Infrastructure and Land Transport.

The Minister of Public Infrastructure and Land Transport (Mr Bodha): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, from what I have learned, the alignment does not go through the football pitch, it will pass by. So, the football pitch is not going to be removed. On the contrary, I think you could ask for the facility of the schools. So, you can have the football and the facility for the school as well.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you, hon. Minister. Hon. Abbas Mamode. I hope you have reported what you have seen. Anyway!

PLAINE VERTE POLICE STATION – POLICE OFFICERS

Mr S. Abbas Mamode (Fourth Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as my colleague, hon. Uteem, we have the same problem in Constituency No. 3 concerning drugs and the latest drug is called Rambo.

(Interruptions)

Rambo, unfortunately! I would like to raise this issue with the Minister Mentor concerning Plaine Verte Police station. This is a Grade A Police station and from the Police station window, you can see illegal illicit activities being carried out in the garden. Unfortunately, the number of policemen posted in Plaine Verte Police Station is insufficient. Many dealings are carried out during day time in the garden. So, my appeal is to you, hon. Minister, to see that we have more Police Officers with different grades attached to Plaine Verte Police Station. Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you, hon. Abbas Mamode!

(Interruptions)

Rt. hon. Minister Mentor!

(Interruptions)

The Rt. hon. Minister Mentor, Minister of Defence, Minister for Rodrigues (Sir Anerood Jugnauth): I think the hon. Member has got the answer. I will pass it on to the Commissioner of Police. But I think what should be done is that the Police should work together with some good citizens of the country and the hon. Member may form part of it.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you, Rt. hon. Minister Mentor.

At 6.08 p.m., the Assembly was, on its rising, adjourned to Tuesday 04 April 2017 at 11.30 a.m.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

ANTI-DEFECTION BILL - INTRODUCTION

(No. B/5) Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Home Affairs, External Communications and National Development Unit, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to the

proposed introduction of an Anti-Defection Bill, as stated at paragraph 256 of the Presidential Address delivered on 27 January 2015, he will state the expected date of introduction and debate thereof in the Assembly.

Reply: Government has pledged to introduce an anti-defection legislation and, as a matter of fact, this issue has been included in the Terms of Reference of the Ministerial Committee which was set up to make recommendations on electoral reform.

This Ministerial Committee had to be reconstituted, with the Minister Mentor as Chairperson, following the resignation of the former Deputy Prime Minister who was chairing the Committee. Because of this reconstitution, the work of the Committee has been delayed. Information obtained indicates that the Committee will address the issue of anti-defection measures, along with the other issues in its Terms of Reference, bearing in mind that anti-defection measures may give rise to complex issues and the whole matter itself is the subject of debate in other jurisdictions as well.

The Ministerial Committee will certainly examine these issues thoroughly and make appropriate recommendations. Government will thereafter decide on the way forward in the light of these recommendations.

INDEPENDENT REVIEW PANEL – MEMBERS – APPOINTMENT

(No. B/6) Mr B. Jahangeer (Third Member for Rivière des Anguilles & Souillac) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Home Affairs, External Communications and National Development Unit, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to the Independent Review Panel, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain therefrom, information as to the names of the Chairperson, the Vice-Chairperson and of the two other members thereof, indicating in each case, the -

- (a) qualifications held, and
- (b) terms and conditions of appointment thereof, including the benefits accruing thereto.

Reply: In accordance with Section 44 of the Public Procurement Act, the Chairperson and members of the Independent Review Panel are appointed by the President of the Republic, acting in accordance with the advice of the Prime Minister, tendered after the Prime Minister has consulted the Leader of the Opposition, and on such terms and conditions as may be determined by the Prime Minister.

According to the Act, the Chairperson and members of the Panel are chosen from among persons having wide experience in legal, administrative, economic, financial, engineering, scientific or technical matters.

The information sought regarding the Chairperson and the three members of the panel are as follows -

(a) Chairperson

Mr Mohammad Reshad Lalloo is an Engineer. He was appointed on 19 March 2015 for a period of 3 years.

(b) Vice-Chairperson

Mr Arasen Kallee who is a Barrister-at-law was appointed on 19 September 2015 for a period of 3 years.

(c) Members

The four members of the Panel are Mr Virjanan Mulloo, a retired Permanent Secretary, Mr Robin Rajanah has a diploma in International Tax, Royal Society of Fellows, USA and Mr Rajsingh Ragnuth holds a Degree in International Law, University of London and Christelle Sohun holds a Bachelor of Laws with Honours (LLB (Hons)).

All the four members were appointed on 19 March 2015 for a period of 3 years.

The terms and conditions of appointment of the Chairperson and members of the Panel are as follows -

(a) Chairperson

The Chairperson draws an all-inclusive monthly fee of Rs70,000.

(b) Vice-Chairperson

The Vice-Chairperson draws an all-inclusive monthly fee of Rs45,000.

(c) Members

Members are paid an all-inclusive monthly fee of Rs25,000.

ELECTORAL REFORMS

(No. B/7) Mr R. Uteem (First Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Home Affairs, External Communications and National Development Unit, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to the electoral reforms, he will state where matters stand.

Reply: Government is moving ahead with its electoral reform agenda as enunciated in the Government Programme 2015-2019.

In this context, a Ministerial Committee set up in January 2016, but reconstituted following the resignation of the former Deputy Prime Minister who had been chairing it, is operational. This Ministerial Committee is examining the different aspects of our electoral system and will make appropriate recommendations for reform, including -

- (i) the introduction of a dose of proportional representation in the National Assembly, and guarantee better women representation;
- (ii) the mandatory declaration of community;
- (iii) anti-defection measures;
- (iv) the widening of the powers of the Electoral Supervisory Commission;
- (v) the Financing of Political Parties, and
- (vi) amendments to the electoral system in Rodrigues.

The Committee has submitted its proposals on the financing of political parties and the Attorney-General's Office has already been requested to prepare a draft Bill thereon. Advice has been obtained that some new issues in relation to the financing of political parties have cropped up which will be thrashed out by the Ministerial Committee. The issues relate to the following, amongst others -

- (i) the extent and scope of the new powers to be vested in the Electoral Supervisory Commission;
- (ii) the transparency and disclosure rules that will apply;
- (iii) whether certain provisions of the Prevention of Corruption Act and Financial Intelligence and Anti-Money Laundering Act should be amended, and
- (iv) the definition of the term "Mauritian Diaspora".

The Bill will be finalised once these issues are cleared.

MHC - ALLEGED FRAUD & MALPRACTICES

(No. B/9) Mr S. Rutnah (Third Member for Piton & Rivière du Rempart) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Home Affairs, External Communications and National Development Unit, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to the Mauritius Housing Corporation Ltd., he will -

- (a) state if he has received a letter dated 24 January 2017 from Mr R. B., Head Corporate Planning and Development/Money Laundering Reporting Officer thereof reporting alleged massive fraud thereat and, if so, indicate if same is being investigated into, indicating the outcome thereof, and

- (b) for the benefit of the House, obtain therefrom, information as to -
- (i) the number of loans and the quantum thereof granted since January 2015 to December 2016, and
 - (ii) if the Fraud Committee presided by Mr R. B. has been dismantled and, if so, when and by whom.

Reply: In a letter dated 24 January 2017, addressed to me by Mr R. B., I was apprised of alleged fraud and malpractices at the Mauritius Housing Company Ltd.

I am also informed by MHC that ICAC has started investigating into the allegations of fraud at MHC since 19 January 2017. The investigation by ICAC is still ongoing.

Moreover, I have also been informed that a Special Committee at the level of the MHC is also investigating on the matter.

As regards part (b) (i) of the question, I am informed that MHC has granted 2,860 loans for a total amount of around Rs2.2 billion during the period January 2015 to December 2016.

As regards part (b) (ii) of the question, I am informed that the Committee, chaired by Mr R. B., was set up on 25 October 2016 to inquire into suspected cases of fraud/malpractices. Mr R. B. submitted a medical certificate stating that he was suffering from major depressive disorder and went on sick leave. The chairmanship of the Committee was therefore assigned to the HR Manager of MHC. The Committee has, therefore, never been dismantled.

UNEMPLOYMENT

(No. B/10) Mr Osman Mahomed (Third Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central) asked the hon. Prime Minister, Minister of Home Affairs, External Communications and National Development Unit, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to the unemployed, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from Statistics Mauritius, information as to the number and rate thereof as at December 2016.

Reply (The Minister of Labour, Industrial Relations, Employment and Training): I am informed by Statistics Mauritius that the unemployment rate as at December 2016 was 7.3%

This compares favourably with the unemployment rate for December 2014 and December 2015 which stood at 7.8% and 7.9%, respectively.

I wish to draw the attention of the House that, as at December 2016, 42,284 job seekers were registered with the Employment Service of my Ministry. However, it should be underlined that out of the 42,284 job seekers, 21,924 were already in employment. This shows that only 23,360 job seekers were unemployed. Based on these figures, the unemployment rate was 4%.

LANDSCOPE (MAURITIUS) LTD – OPERATION

(No. B/13) Mr E. Jhuboo (Third Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Home Affairs, External Communications and National Development Unit, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to Landscape (Mauritius) Ltd., he will state the future role thereof following the announcement to the effect that public companies from Réunion Island have been consulted for the elaboration of a national Master Plan, indicating if this new entity will become the future authority on planning issues and, if so, indicate the role of the Ministry of Housing and Lands in that respect, if any.

Reply: In the Budget Speech 2016/2017, I announced a series of mergers of public sector institutions as part of a major public sector reform programme.

One of the mergers concerns companies managing and overseeing property development on public sector real estate assets other than State lands. The objective is to bring more coherence in policy formulation for developing these prime assets and improve management efficiency through the pooling of scarce resources, eliminating overlapping of functions, creation of synergies and greater value addition.

As from 01 December 2016, SPDC, BPML, SLDC, the Belle Mare Tourist Village Ltd., and Les Pailles Conference Centre Ltd have accordingly been merged into Landscape (Mauritius) Ltd. Le Val Development Ltd will be integrated at a later stage.

The role of Landscape (Mauritius) Ltd. is to manage its portfolio of real estate assets, engage in property development on land owned by the company and assist Government in specific projects including urban regeneration.

Obviously, Landscape (Mauritius) Ltd is not an authority on national land planning issues and it is not being called upon to elaborate a National Land Master Plan.

All the national land planning functions ranging from the National Development Strategy, planning policy guidance to development plans at local level are governed by the

Planning and Development Act and the Town and Country Planning Act which fall directly under the purview of the Ministry of Housing and Lands.

However, as for any land development project, private or public, it is the responsibility of the landowner or developer to work out a Master Plan in accordance with the planning rules and guidelines set out by the Ministry of Housing and Lands.

Regarding the Master Plan for the plot of land owned by Landscape (Mauritius) Ltd at Highlands, I am informed as follows -

- (a) following a Request for Proposal exercise, Luxconsult (Mauritius) Ltd has been awarded the contract to prepare a Master Plan as well as the infrastructure design for 2,079 *arpents* of prime land at Highlands, and
- (b) a preliminary Master Plan has been issued to Landscape (Mauritius) Ltd on 10 March 2017 and a consultative workshop with all key public and private stakeholders will be held on 06 and 07 April 2017 to discuss the proposed plan. The Master Plan is expected to be finalised by the end of April 2017 and it will be submitted to the Ministry of Housing and Lands and other relevant authorities for approval.

As regards the involvement of public companies from Réunion island, I am informed as follows -

- (a) *L'Agence Française de Développement (AFD)* has earmarked a grant of a maximum of 165,000 euros to assist Mauritius in the development of sustainable projects. In this context, AFD was approached in December 2016 to assist Landscape (Mauritius) Ltd in reviewing the urbanisation model at Highlands, Ebène and the Port Louis regeneration project;
- (b) a trip to Reunion was organised in December 2016 by AFD for the Chairperson and one CEO of Landscape (Mauritius) Ltd to meet various public sector organisations involved in real estate development in Reunion and visit some of their flagship developments, and
- (c) following this trip, a delegation from Réunion Island comprising representatives from SODIAC (*Société Dyonisienne d'Aménagement et de Construction*); TCO (*Communauté d'Agglomération du Territoire de la Côte Ouest*); AGORAH (*Agence pour l'Observation de la Réunion, l'Aménagement*

et l'Habitat); CAUE (*Conseil d'Architecture, d'Urbanisme et d'Environnement de l'Eure*) were invited on a 2-day workshop in February 2017 to share their experience and know-how with the employees of Landscape (Mauritius) Ltd.

Thus, in light of my reply, it is clear that Landscape (Mauritius) Ltd has never been mandated to elaborate a National Master Plan nor is it doing so. The Ministry of Housing and Lands is the sole authority for national land planning issues.

INVESTMENT PROJECT FAST TRACK COMMITTEE – SET UP

(No. B/17) Mr D. Ramful (Third Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Home Affairs, External Communications and National Development Unit, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to the Fast Track Steering Committee set up at the level of his Office to speed up investment by the private sector, he will state the number of meetings held as at to date, indicating the status of each of the projects presently under consideration thereof.

Reply: The Investment Project Fast Track Committee (IPFTC) has been set up with the objective to expedite the processing of permits and licences relating to private sector investment projects. The Committee comprises representatives of various Ministries and Authorities. The Board of Investment acts as the Secretary to the Committee.

Since its setting up, the Committee met 21 times and has facilitated 123 investment projects with an investment totalling around Rs190 billion. These projects will be implemented over a period of 5 to 10 years.

As at date, 22 projects are under consideration at the level of the Fast Track Committee with an investment value of around Rs48 billion. These projects have the potential to create 6200 jobs.

The list of these projects is being tabled with a short description, value and status in respect of each.

PUBLIC SECTOR INVESTMENT – FUNDS DISBURSED

(No. B/18) Mr D. Ramful (Third Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Home Affairs, External Communications and National Development Unit, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to the

public sector investment, he will state the quantum of the funds disbursed as at to date under the Capital Budget for financial year 2016/2017, indicating –

- (a) if the total sum voted for capital expenditure is expected to be absorbed by the end of this financial year and, if not, why not, and
- (b) the status of each of the projects mentioned in the Public Sector Investment Programme for 2016/2017.

Reply: In 2016/2017, a total amount of Rs20.6 billion has been appropriated for financing capital projects. To date, Rs5.8 billion has already been paid and an amount of Rs9.3 billion has been committed for disbursement by 30 June 2017, totalling an amount of Rs15.1 billion.

The expected under-spending is mainly due to the following –

- a) additional time taken to finalise project specifications and detailed design, and to complete procurement exercises;
- b) postponement of construction works due to appeals made by aggrieved parties to the Independent Review Panel and the Supreme Court, and
- c) issues relating to land acquisition and way leaves.

Concerning part (b) of the question, the information on the status of 1,476 projects in the PSIP is progressive and in the context of the Budget exercise, a comprehensive document on the status of each of the 1,476 projects will be circulated.

PUBLIC SECTOR REFORM PROGRAMME – IMPLEMENTATION

(No. B/19) Mr D. Ramful (Third Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Home Affairs, External Communications and National Development Unit, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to the Major Public Sector Reform Programme announced in the 2016-2017 Budget, he will state where matters stand as to the implementation of each of the twenty measures listed thereunder.

Reply: Public sector reform has been on the agenda of several Governments in the past. Various public sector improvement programmes have been announced with, however, little progress on the implementation side.

In the 2016-2017 Budget, I announced, under Strategy Nine, twenty measures aimed at bringing about a major transformation of the public sector. While some measures have

already been completed as at date, others are at varying levels of implementation depending on the degree of complexity of the individual cases. Apart from the human factor, there are other legal and other regulatory considerations to look into.

First, with regard to the merger of the supporting institutions in the SME sector, namely, SMEDA, Enterprise Mauritius and National Women Entrepreneur Council, after discussion with all relevant parties, it was noted that, as a result of Enterprise Mauritius being a company registered under the Companies Act while the other institutions are parastatal bodies, a number of complex issues would arise with respect to human resources, legal and regulatory aspects. Consequently, a decision would need to be taken on the inclusion of Enterprise Mauritius in this merger exercise.

Second, the merger of all organisations managing the public sector real estate assets namely, the State Property Development Co Ltd, Business Parks of Mauritius Ltd, State Land Development Co Ltd, the Belle Mare Tourist Village Ltd and Les Pailles Conference Centre Ltd, has been completed. The new company, Landscape (Mauritius) Ltd. is operational since 01 December 2016. Le Val Development Ltd will, however, be merged at a later stage.

Third, with regard to the review of the role and functions of the National Computer Board to adapt to the evolving needs of the sector, I am informed that the Ministry of Technology, Communication and Innovation has requested the Office of Public Sector Governance (OPSG) to provide assistance in the merger exercise. The report is being awaited.

Fourth, regarding the merger of the Central Informatics Bureau (CIB), the Central Information Systems Division (CISD) and the IT Security Unit (ITSU), I am informed that the OPSG has made the following recommendations to the Ministry of Technology, Communication and Information (MTCI) -

- (a) as a short term measure, the CIB, CISD and ITSU will report to the Chief Technical Officer of the MTCI, and
- (b) in a second phase, the three bodies will move to a unified body, after staff issues are addressed by a Monitoring Committee, chaired by the Permanent Secretary of the MTCI.

Fifth, I am informed that the Broadcasting and Communications Authority Bill, which will give effect to the merger between the regulatory bodies, namely the Information Communication Technology Authority (ICTA) and the Independent Broadcasting Authority (IBA), is at the legal drafting stage. Consultation with stakeholders will follow the legal drafting. The Bill will be introduced in the National Assembly shortly after.

Sixth, for the incorporation of the Registrar General Department into the MRA to have one single revenue collection agency and for better enforcement, consultations are ongoing with stakeholders, especially the staff unions. However, no agreement has been reached with the Staff Union at this stage.

Seventh, the draft legislative amendments to enable the MRA to act as a collecting agent for contributions to the National Pension Fund, the National Savings Fund, the HRDC training levy and the Workfare Programme Fund have been finalised and are expected to be introduced in the National Assembly through the Business Facilitation Bill in May 2017. The measure will, thus, become operational in July 2017.

Eighth, the State Investment Corporation (SIC) is reorganising its company structure. Deloitte is currently working on a new organisational set up and recruitment of professionals in specific fields (Finance, Human Resource and Investment) will be made in coming months. The SIC has disinvested in non-strategic shares for an amount of Rs370 m. Additionally, the SIC is successfully turning around the Casino activity – financials at year end 2016 show operating profits mainly deriving from a cost-cutting process (notably reduction of staff expenses).

Ninth, with regard to the DBM, I am informed that the Bank is implementing an internal restructuring programme based on expenditure control and revenue enhancement. The focus is on creation and running of SME parks and managing government financing schemes for micro enterprises and small establishments. Thus, a new Micro Credit Scheme and Project Financing Scheme are operational since October 2016. A tender exercise for the recruitment of a Project Manager for the construction of SME parks at Vuillemin and Plaine Magnien has been floated and the contract will be awarded soon. DBM has also submitted a Turnaround Plan containing strategies to bring the Bank back on the track of profitability. The Plan is, currently, being examined.

Tenth, with regard to the merger between the Mauritius Housing Company Ltd. (MHC) and the National Housing Development Co Ltd (NHDC), I am informed that this will give rise to a number of complex issues for the MHC given that it is a deposit-taking institution governed by the Bank of Mauritius. Consequently, instead of an outright merger, measures will be taken to avoid duplication and overlapping of responsibilities between the two institutions for a more effective financing and service delivery to meet demand for social housing.

Eleventh, with regard to the merger between the National Art Gallery and the Mauritius Museum Council to benefit from synergies under common management, a draft

Bill for the new entity 'Mauritius Museums and Arts Council' (MMAC) has been prepared. Discussions will be held with the Attorney General's Office and other stakeholders soon. It is expected that the draft Bill will be introduced in the National Assembly shortly after.

Twelfth, I am informed that, with a view to identifying weaknesses and making proposals to revamp the Citizens Advice Bureaus (CABs), the National Development Unit has carried out an audit of the CABs and has held a number of discussions with NGOs and other concerned Ministries. The main proposals are -

- (i) an online Citizen Support Portal will be implemented by the Citizen Support Unit of the NDU in collaboration with all Ministries, Local Authorities and Parastatal Bodies, and
- (ii) all Ministries, Local Authorities and Parastatal Bodies will designate Desk Officers to facilitate the task of CABs, more particularly with respect to dealing with complaints and providing necessary information.

Thirteenth, with regard to the submission of Turnaround Plans by public sector bodies that have been making losses and accumulating debts, thirteen such organisations have been identified. These are -

- 1) Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation;
- 2) Mauritius Post Ltd;
- 3) National Transport Corporation;
- 4) Rose Belle Sugar Estate Board;
- 5) Mauritius Meat Authority;
- 6) Mauritius Shipping Corporation Ltd;
- 7) Waste Water Management Authority;
- 8) Irrigation Authority;
- 9) Central Water Authority;
- 10) Cargo Handling Corporation Ltd;
- 11) Development Bank of Mauritius Ltd;
- 12) Airport of Rodrigues Ltd, and
- 13) University of Mauritius.

With the exception of the University of Mauritius which has asked for a delay, the other twelve organisations have submitted their Turnaround Plans. These are being examined at the level of my Ministry.

Fourteenth, the Request for Proposal for provision of consultancy services for the conversion of the Department of Civil Aviation into a Civil Aviation Authority has already

been launched in February 2017. The bids are being evaluated. A consultant will shortly be appointed to advise and assist in the transformation exercise aimed at enhancing our regulatory and air navigational services.

Fifteenth, the aim of the regrouping of all Welfare Funds under one roof is essentially to rationalise and improve on the provision of corporate services to all the Welfare Funds, and, at the same time, achieve cost savings. A Policy Paper is being worked out by my Ministry.

Sixteenth, a new Planning Legislation where provision is being made for the setting up of the National Planning Commission, which is the revamped Town and Country Planning Board, has already been prepared and vetted by the Attorney General's Office. The Bill is expected to be introduced in the National Assembly soon. A Committee will be set up to look into the smooth transition, especially with regard to staff issues.

Seventeenth, with regard to the restructuring of the National Transport Authority, I am informed that a restructuring plan, prepared by the OPSG, has already been submitted to the Ministry of Public Infrastructure and Land Transport. The Plan is being examined at the level of the Ministry. The Traffic Management and Road Safety Unit, on its side, has been requested to work together with the Road Development Authority (RDA) to avoid overlapping of works. With regard to the RDA, I have been informed that its Board has already endorsed a Restructuring Plan in March 2017 and the RDA is now moving towards implementation.

Eighteenth, the Ministry of Public Infrastructure and Land Transport has restructured its Technical Division with the introduction of Sector Cluster to better assist Ministries in preparing and executing their capital projects in a timely manner. Along the same vein, a Framework Agreement has been worked out to enable line Ministries to procure consultants directly. The Framework Agreement is currently being vetted by the Central Procurement Board and it is expected to be operational by May 2017.

Nineteenth, I have also been informed that the amendments to the Capital Project Process Manual and the Project Plan Committee have already been worked out. To that effect, the Finance and Audit Act will be amended accordingly.

Twentieth, with regard to the re-engineering of the Public Sector Efficiency Bureau, a draft Public Sector Business Transformation Strategy has been prepared. This Strategy contains, among others, proposals for reform of all institutions looking after public sector reforms like the Office of Public Sector Governance, the Public Sector Re-Engineering

Bureau and the Public Sector Efficiency Bureau. A Ministerial Committee has been set up to look into the implementation of the recommendations of the draft Strategy.

COMMERCIAL BANKS – CAPITALISATION OF INTERESTS

(No. B/20) Mr K. Ramano (Third Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Home Affairs, External Communications and National Development Unit, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to the measures concerning the capitalisation of interests announced in the 2016-2017 Budget, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Bank of Mauritius, information as to if guidelines have been issued in relation thereto and, if so, indicate if the commercial banks have complied therewith.

Reply: In the Finance (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2016, the *Code Civil Mauricien* was amended to clarify that interest due for less than a year cannot be capitalised.

On 12 September 2016, the Bank of Mauritius has apprised all commercial banks of the said amendment and to ensure that all their loan agreements/documents are amended to reflect the change brought to Article 2202-6 of the Civil Code.

I am informed by the Bank of Mauritius that it does not intend to issue any guideline on this matter.

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY – SPEAKER – HOUSING ALLOWANCE

(No. B/21) Ms M. Sewocksingh (Third Member for Curepipe & Midlands) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Home Affairs, External Communications and National Development Unit, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether he will state if the incumbent of the office of Speaker of the National Assembly is in receipt of a housing allowance and, if so, indicate –

- (a) the quantum thereof, and
- (b) if he is aware that the residence of the incumbent of the office of Speaker of the National Assembly also serves as the official address of a private company, namely, Rum & Sugar Limited and, if so, indicate the measures that will be taken on account thereof, if any.

Reply: In regard to part (a) of the question, holders of some constitutional posts are entitled to a housing allowance which is meant to cover both the extra expenses incurred for housing facilities and security measures.

Ever since 2008, hon. Speakers of the National Assembly draw a monthly housing allowance in lieu of the benefit of an official residence. The present hon. Speaker draws a monthly housing allowance of Rs24,000. It is emphasised that a housing allowance is not to be confused with a rental allocation as such.

In regard to part (b) of the question, the hon. Speaker has two private residences, one at Curepipe and the other one at Flic-en-Flac, and she uses both of them.

According to the Registrar of Companies, the official address of Rum & Sugar Ltd is 15 Goldcoast Complex, Kalimaye Road, Flic-en-Flac, which is the address of one of the private residences of the hon. Speaker.

The question of taking any measure does not arise.

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION BILL – INTRODUCTION

(No. B/22) Mr S. Bhadain (Second Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Home Affairs, External Communications and National Development Unit, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to the proposed introduction of legislation for the promotion of transparency and access to information, he will state where matters stand as to the proposed Freedom of Information Bill for the introduction thereof in the House, indicating the time frame set therefor, if any.

Reply: The hon. Member is referred to the reply to Parliamentary Question B/1020 on Tuesday 29 November 2016, when he himself was a Member of the Government, and in which the House was informed that the Attorney General's Office had already submitted a working draft of a Freedom of Information Bill, and that this draft was being examined at the level of my Office. The examination and in-house consultations are proceeding with much interest as well as with the greatest care and caution.

Once the exercise of in-house consultations is completed to satisfaction, all concerned stakeholders will also be consulted.

I believe in the merits, in the national interest, of a Freedom of Information legislation that matches the aspirations of the Nation without, however, and in any way, unnecessarily and unduly impairing or delaying the development, and the transformation and modernisation process of our country.

SSR INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT – MR A.S. – VIP LOUNGE FACILITIES

(No. B/23) Mr S. Bhadain (Second Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Home Affairs, External Communications and National

Development Unit, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to Mr A.S., he will state if VIP lounge facilities at the Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam International Airport were extended thereto or to representatives thereof, on behalf of Government, over the period January 2015 to date and, if so, indicate the relevant dates on which the said facilities were extended thereto and, in each case, further indicate the names of the person who submitted the said request.

Reply: According to records available at the Prime Minister's Office, Mr A.S. was granted access to the Arrival and Departure VIP Lounges at Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam International Airport, following request made by the Secretary to the President, on 31 occasions during the period 01 October 2015 to 21 February 2017. Mr A.S. was accompanied by members of his family and/or his close collaborators on 21 of these occasions.

The information regarding the specific dates on which such facilities were granted to Mr A.S. is being tabled.

It is pointed out that it has so far been the practice to extend such facilities to special guests of some personalities. However, the whole issue of grant of VIP facilities regarding access to and from the VIP Lounges at Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam International Airport is being reviewed.

STATE BANK OF MAURITIUS LTD - MR V. L. - EURO LOAN

(No. B/26) Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Rt. hon. Minister Mentor, Minister of Defence, Minister for Rodrigues whether, in regard to the inquiry initiated against Mr V. L., into the Euro loan contracted with the State Bank of Mauritius Ltd., he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Independent Commission against Corruption, information as to where matters stand.

(Withdrawn)

STRAY DOGS - CATCHING EXERCISES

(No. B/43) Dr. R. Sorefan (Fourth Member for La Caverne & Phoenix) asked the Minister of Agro-Industry and Food Security whether, in regard to the stray dogs, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Mauritius Society for Animal Welfare, information as to –

- (a) if consideration will be given for urgent measures to be taken to address the issue of the presence thereof in residential and commercial areas, within hospital premises and on the public beaches
- (b) the number of vans and staff attached to the catching exercises thereof, indicating if the acquisition of additional vans and the recruitment of additional staff are being envisaged, and
- (c) if consideration will be given for the advisability of carrying out the catching exercises thereof after sunset.

Reply: The Mauritius Society for Animal Welfare is addressing the issue of stray dogs on three fronts, namely -

- (i) dog catching and euthanasia in accordance with the provisions of the Animal Welfare Act 2013 and the standing rules of the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE);
- (ii) mass sterilisation, and
- (iii) education and sensitisation on responsible pet ownership.

With regard to part (a) of the question, dog catching activities are being carried out by MSAW on a regular and daily basis throughout the island including places such as residential and commercial areas, hospital premises and public beaches. The work is normally planned taking into consideration complaints received from different quarters regarding the presence of stray dogs.

Regarding part (b) of the question, I am told that MSAW currently has 4 vans and is employing 6 animal handlers, 1 Animal Control Inspector and 10 handy workers for the dog catching activity. Provision will be made in the forthcoming budget for the purchase of one additional van and the recruitment of 3 additional animal handlers and one Operations Superintendent.

As regard part (c), I am informed that MSAW does carry out this activity, after sunset upon request.

My Ministry is putting more emphasis on the sterilisation of the animals. In this context, the collaboration of the Humane Society International has been enlisted for the implementation of a pilot project aimed at sterilising 8,000 dogs over a period of one year. A mass sterilisation campaign is also being implemented by MSAW since September 2015 and some 4,000 dogs have been sterilised so far. This campaign will be intensified with the forthcoming recruitment of four Veterinary Officers from India. It is targetted to sterilise some 12,000 dogs annually.

**MUNICIPAL/DISTRICT COUNCILS - STREET LIGHTING
VANS/LORRIES**

(No. B/44) **Dr. R. Sorefan (Fourth Member for La Caverne & Phoenix)** asked the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the street lighting vans/lorries, he will, for the benefit of House, obtain from each of the Municipal/District Councils, information as to –

- (a) the number thereof available, indicating the number thereof which are operational;
- (b) the number of staff attached thereto, indicating the present number of existing vacancies, grade-wise, as at to date, and
- (c) if consideration will be given for the -
 - (i) provision of additional street lighting vans/lorries and staffing with a view to attending to street lighting faults in a timely manner, and
 - (ii) implementation of roster systems for street lighting faults to be attended on a 24/7 basis.

Reply: I am arranging for the information requested for at parts (a) and (b) of the question to be placed in the Library of the National Assembly.

As regards part (c) (i) of the question, I am informed that complaints relating to street lighting faults are being attended by the Local Authorities within a reasonable delay. As regards provision of additional street lighting vans/lorries, this is a matter for consideration in the first instance by each individual Municipal or District Council. They have to examine this issue by taking into consideration the yearly estimate or the staffing position which they can sustain.

As far as part (c) (ii) of the question is concerned, I understand from the Local Authorities that the implementation of roster systems to attend to street lighting faults on a 24/7 basis is not envisaged for the time being, as payment of overtime is resorted to whenever night checks and urgent works need to be carried out.

**PHOENIX HIGH SECURITY PRISON (FORMER) – DETENTION
CENTRE**

(No. B/46) **Dr. R. Sorefan (Fourth Member for La Caverne & Phoenix)** asked the Rt. hon. Rt. hon. Minister Mentor, Minister of Defence, Minister for Rodrigues whether, in regard to the former Phoenix High Security Prison, known as La Bastille Prison, he will, for

the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Prisons, information as to if it has been vested into the Police Department and, if so, indicate the –

- (a) number of cells that would be available thereat, and
- (b) expected date of coming into operation thereof.

Reply: I am informed by the Commissioner of Prisons that on 25 November 2016, the Police took over the former Phoenix High Security Prison, known as La Bastille Prison, from the Prisons Department for the purpose of converting it into a Detention Centre.

As regards part (a) of the question, I am informed that the building comprises 24 cells. All of them will be renovated for detention purposes.

With regard to part (b) of the question, I am informed that the proposed Detention Centre will be operational by mid next year.

AQUACULTURE PROJECTS - ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

(No. B/47) Mr E. Jhuboo (Third Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Minister of Agro-Industry and Food Security whether, in regard to the proposed implementation of aqua farming projects, he will state if environmental impact assessments have been carried out in relation thereto, especially, with regard to the local eco-systems and to the tourism industry and, if so, indicate the name of the company which has carried out same.

Reply (The Minister of Ocean Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping): In line with the Government policy to develop the Ocean Economy, my Ministry is promoting the development of Aquaculture to increase fish production and create employment.

In accordance with Government Notice No. 106 of 2015, 20 sites have been prescribed for the development of large scale aquaculture activities and 11 sites have been identified for small scale aquaculture projects. Out of the 20 sites for large scale aquaculture activities, 18 sites have already been allocated as well as the 8 sites for small scale aquaculture projects.

For the small scale aquaculture projects an EIA license is not required.

As regards a large scale aquaculture project one of the condition to be met is that the Promoter should obtain an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) license prior to implementation of the project.

The EIA license provides for an assessment of the impact of the project on the local ecosystem and other activities in the vicinity including tourism activities.

So far, one large scale aquaculture company has already obtained its EIA license in February 2014, and the application of another company is under process.

CHAMAREL – WATER SUPPLY

(No. B/48) Mr E. Jhuboo (Third Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to the Chamarel region, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Central Water Authority, information as to if provision has been made for an increase of water storage capacity thereat.

Reply: I am informed by the Central Water Authority that the region of Chamarel is supplied from Chamarel reservoir, which is fed from a borehole with a normal yield of 500 cubic meters. The water supply is adequate for 246 consumers living in the region.

I am also informed by the CWA that the houses of six consumers along Piton Chamarel Road are above the level of the Chamarel reservoir and have to be supplied by water tankers.

The CWA is considering the installation of a water tank and a pump to ensure regular water supply to these consumers.

PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES – WEB ACCESSIBILITY

(No. B/49) Mr S. Mohamed (First Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the hon. Minister of Technology, Communication and Innovation whether, in regard to the persons with disabilities, he will state the measures taken, if any, by his Ministry to ensure that this section of the population gets access to the website contents posted by public and private bodies, respectively.

Reply: The UN Convention defines disability as persons with disabilities, including those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments.

I am informed that there is a total of 59,868 persons with disabilities, including 15,568 severely disabled persons, who are above 60 years of age and there are 28,851 who are below 60 years including Rodrigues.

My Ministry has adopted a series of measures to make Information Technology accessible to the whole population including persons with disabilities. Facilities offered range from internet services available through programs, implemented by the National Computer Board (NCB) in Community Centres, computer clubs, Post Offices and Cyber

Caravans to training offered by the National Computer Board in the field of Information, Communication and Technology.

Web accessibility is the inclusive practice of making websites usable by all, including disabled persons. Already the Government portal has a link (<http://disability.govmu.org>) for disabled persons with vision impairment where size of text as well as background colours and text colours can be changed.

My Ministry is contemplating to bring further enhancement to the Government portal to include features like sign language for videos hosted on the websites of Government Ministries and Departments.

Furthermore, my Ministry, through the National Computer Board, will organise sensitisation campaigns for Internet users on the various accessibility options and will also sensitise Ministries and Departments on the need to have such features supported on their websites.

CERTIFICATE OF CHARACTER - MINOR OFFENCES

(No. B/50) Mr J. C. Lepoigneur (Fifth Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Attorney-General whether, in regard to the Certificate of Character, he will state where matters stand concerning the proposal that consideration be given for minor offences not to be mentioned therein.

(Withdrawn)

INDIAN OCEAN ISLAND GAMES 2019 – FEDERATIONS - PARTICIPATION

(No. B/51) Mr J. C. Lepoigneur (Fifth Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether, in regard to the *Jeux des Iles de l'Océan Indien* 2019, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the federations, information as to if they have started preparation for participation therein and, if not, why not.

(Withdrawn)

HANDISPORTS - NATIONAL COACH - SUSPENSION

(No. B/52) Mr J. C. Lepoigneur (Fifth Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether, in regard to Mr J. M. B., National Coach for

HandiSports, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to the reasons for the suspension thereof, indicating the duration thereof.

(Withdrawn)

CHEBEL - HOUSING UNITS - BENEFICIARIES

(No. B/53) Mr J. C. Lepoigneur (Fifth Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Housing and Lands whether, in regard to the housing units which have been delivered to the inhabitants of Chebel, in Beau Bassin, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the National Housing Development Company Ltd., a list of the beneficiaries thereof, indicating in each case the -

- (a) former address thereof;
- (b) date of delivery thereof, and
- (c) application reference thereof.

(Withdrawn)

AGALEGA ISLAND - MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

(No. B/55) Mr K. Ramano (Third Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes) asked the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the Agalega Island, he will state where matters stand as to the implementation of the Memorandum of Understanding signed between the Republic of Mauritius and the Republic of India in 2015.

Reply: As the House may be aware, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed on 11 March 2015 between the Government of the Republic of India and the Government of the Republic of Mauritius on the occasion of the visit of His Excellency the Prime Minister of India to Mauritius. The Memorandum of Understanding provides for assistance in terms of a grant money (18 m. USD) and technical support by the Government of the Republic of India for provision of sea and air transportation facilities at Agalega.

Pursuant to the Memorandum of Understanding, the Government of India has appointed a team of Indian Experts for the conduct of studies and for the preparation of a Detailed Project Report (DPR) for the construction of a jetty and airstrip as well as supporting infrastructures and facilities.

The Detailed Project Report is being prepared in India by the Indian Experts and would be made available to us by end of April this year.

I had co-chaired with the High Commissioner of India in Mauritius the fifth Meeting of the Joint Project Monitoring Committee held in New Delhi from 09 to 11 February 2017

and during the course of which the Indian side indicated that the listing of firms for the project would be finalised soon. The estimates of costs and tender documents will be worked out by the Indian side and the entire procurement process will be carried out in India. It is expected that the project will be completed in 2018.

AIR ASIA AIRLINE – OPERATIONS - SUSPENSION

(No. B/56) Mr A. Ganoo (First Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Minister of Tourism whether, in regard to the Air Asia airline, he will state the reasons why it has stopped operating flights along the Mauritius route, indicating –

- (a) the number of tourists from the Asian countries having visited Mauritius through same over the time it carried out its operations along the said route and
- (b) if any local lobby group had exercised pressures for a cessation of the operation thereof.

Reply: I wish to inform the House that Air Asia X started its operations from Kuala Lumpur to Mauritius on 05 October 2016, with three weekly frequencies. However, on 13 February 2017, Air Asia X notified Airports of Mauritius Ltd that due to a network restructuring exercise, a decision had been taken to suspend its flights to and from Mauritius and wind down its operations by 25 March 2017.

It would appear that the decision of Air Asia X to suspend its operations to Mauritius was a purely commercial one being given that it could hardly achieve its target of bringing 50,000 tourists to Mauritius in the first year of operation.

Regarding part (a) of the question, I am advised by the Passport and Immigration Office that the total number of tourists brought by Air Asia X to Mauritius for the period 05 October 2016 to 24 March 2017 was 21,161. The House may wish to learn that 9,049 tourists were from Asian countries.

As regards part (b) of the question, the answer is no.

ALBION - OIL REFINERY PROJECT

(No. B/57) Mr A. Ganoo (First Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Minister of Industry, Commerce and Consumer Protection whether, in regard to the project for the setting up of an oil refinery in Mauritius, he will state where matters stand as to the implementation thereof, indicating if –

- (a) some Indian experts recently effected a site visit at Albion in relation thereto, and
- (b) State land has been leased to promoters therefor.

Reply: In due course, Government will make public its stand on the development of a petroleum hub at Albion, including the proposed oil refinery project.

In February 2017, an Indian delegation effected a site visit at Albion for another project, i.e. the setting up of an oil terminal.

Regarding part (b) of the question, I am informed by the Ministry of Housing and Lands that no State land at Albion has been leased to any promoter for an oil refinery project.

DISABILITY BILL - INTRODUCTION

(No. B/58) Mr A. Ganoo (First Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Minister of Social Security, National Solidarity, and Environment and Sustainable Development whether, in regard to people with disabilities, he will state –

- (a) where matters stand regarding the proposed introduction of a Disability Bill in the House and
- (b) the procedures and criteria used for the appointment of Medical Practitioners to serve on the Medical Board of his Ministry.

Reply: As stated by the then Minister of Social Security National Solidarity and Reform Institutions in reply to a Private Notice Question by the then Leader of the Opposition on 12 July 2016, my Ministry has been working on the draft Disability Bill which aims at promoting and protecting the rights of persons with disabilities, eliminating discrimination against the disabled and incorporating the provisions of the United Nations Convention of the rights of persons with disabilities. The Attorney General's Office subsequently gave its unfinalised preliminary draft in respect of the draft Disability Bill in April 2016 for official consultations, with Ministries and Departments concerned. Thereafter, the views obtained were submitted to the Attorney General's Office in December 2016 for consideration. On 20 January 2017, a Draft Zero of the Bill was sent to my Ministry by the Attorney General's Office.

A number of issues still have to be addressed. Once these issues are addressed, I shall submit the draft Bill for the agreement in principle of Cabinet, before the document is shared with a broader spectrum of stakeholders involving NGO'S, Disabled People's Organisations,

Disability Activists, and Civil Society at large. After this process, the draft Bill will be finalised with the Attorney General's Office before its introduction in the National Assembly.

Concerning part (b) of the question, I am informed that the following steps were taken for the appointment of Medical Practitioners to serve on the Medical Board of my Ministry.

1. A Communiqué was published in local newspapers inviting applications from Medical Practitioners, outside the public service who wished to be considered for employment as Medical Practitioner on a sessional basis at the then Ministry of Social Security, National Solidarity and Reform Institutions. This Communiqué was also made available on the website of the Ministry for consultation.
2. The prospective candidates were given a period of 21 days to submit their applications. After the closing date and receipt of all applications, the Ministry set up an Interviewing Panel, under the powers delegated by the Public Service Commission. Then, covering approval for the composition of the Interviewing Panel was sought from the Public Service Commission and Medical Practitioners were selected after interview.

CEB - SAINT LOUIS POWER STATION & LES GRANDES SALINES TANK FARM

(No. B/59) Mrs D. Selvon (Second Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to the installation of the new gas tanks at the Saint Louis Power Station, in Les Salines, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Central Electricity Board, information as to if any –

- (a) Evacuation Plan for the inhabitants of Camp Chapelon living in the vicinity of the said station has been prepared and training provided thereto in the event of a major catastrophe or accident and
- (b) compensation will be paid for damages allegedly caused to private houses, at Bain des Dames, by ground vibrations occasioned in the course of the said installation.

Reply: I am assuming that the hon. Member is referring to the two projects of the CEB, namely the redevelopment of St Louis Power station at Camp Chapelon and the construction of heavy fuel storage tanks at Les Grandes Salines.

With regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed by CEB that these matters are dealt with by the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Centre.

I have to add that -

- (i) all fuel oil storage tanks are surrounded by bund walls to contain any oil spill;
- (ii) the fire-fighting systems at the power stations comply with the National Fire Protection Association, USA standards;
- (iii) CEB personnel are fully trained to handle any major catastrophe or accident;
- (iv) a stock of all necessary equipment for combating any oil spills is kept on each site and every site also has its own Oil Spill Contingency Plan which is updated regularly.

I am also informed that at Les Grandes Salines Tank Farm, two reinforced cement concrete bunds are being erected around the tanks. The first one in the immediate vicinity of the tanks is designed for 110% of the total volume of the biggest tank and the second one is designed to contain all overflows and splash in case of a major catastrophe and can contain up to 1600 m³.

With regard to part (b) of the question, I am informed by the CEB that it has engaged an independent consultant to carry out a survey and report on any possible impact of the works and that, in the event that it were established that the works had caused damage to property, to make an assessment of such damage.

The consultant is presently carrying out the survey.

BONNEFIN ROAD, PAILLES – SIDEWALKS & DRAINS

(No. B/60) Mrs D. Selvon (Second Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure and Land Transport whether, in regard to the Bonnefin Road, in Pailles, he will state if consideration will be given for the lining thereof with adequately covered sidewalks and drains to ensure the safety of the inhabitants thereof, especially that of the children.

Reply: The Wastewater Management Authority is presently implementing a major sewerage project in the region of Pailles/Guibies. The works under Phase 1 are presently ongoing and the expected completion date is May 2017. It is also anticipated that works under Phase 2 will start by the end of the year 2017 with an overall contract duration of 40 months.

The possible implementation of a project for provision of sidewalks and covered drains before December 2017 will be explored. If this is not possible, the project will be undertaken once the major sewerage project is completed.

RICHELIEU – EX-CHA HOUSES - REPAIRS

(No. B/61) Mrs D. Selvon (Second Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Housing and Lands whether, in regard to the ex-CHA houses located at Richelieu, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to if consideration will be given for same to be urgently replaced, having regard to the decrepit state thereof to ensure the safety of the inhabitants thereof, especially that of the children living therein.

Reply: I wish to draw the attention of the House and of the hon. Member that, with regard to the state of the Ex-CHA houses at Richelieu, I have on two occasions, that is, on 12 July and 15 November 2016 in regard to PQ B/763 and B/935, informed the House -

- (i) that all the 550 houses have been sold at a nominal price of Rs500 more than 20 years ago. Accordingly, the inhabitants are full-fledged owners of their housing units. The responsibility of upgrading and rehabilitating these housing units rests upon the owners, and
- (ii) of the various schemes available for the upgrading of their house.

The hon. Member may accordingly refer to the replies made previously on the matter.

I would like to add that these families are not only owners of their housing units, but have also been given the opportunity to purchase their land at the nominal price of Rs2,000.

LANDSCOPE (MAURITIUS) LTD – MS N.H. – VIPSU SERVICE

(No. B/62) Mrs D. Selvon (Second Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Rt. hon. Minister Mentor, Minister of Defence, Minister for Rodrigues whether, in regard to Ms N.H., one of the CEOs of Landscape (Mauritius) Ltd., he will state if she is being attended to by officers of the VIPSU and, if so, indicate the –

- (a) reasons therefor;
- (b) cost thereof;
- (c) time during which she will be enjoying this service, and

- (d) names of other officials of same rank enjoying similar service.

Reply (The Prime Minister): I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that there is no officer of VIPSU or any other Unit of the Mauritius Police Force attached to Ms N.H. Parts (a), (b) and (c) of the question, therefore, do not arise.

In regard to part (d) of the question, the Commissioner of Police has also informed that no official having the status of Chief Executive Officer of any parastatal body or Government-owned company is provided with security services from the Mauritius Police Force.

POINTE AUX CAVES - PETROLEUM PRODUCTS HUB – FEASIBILITY STUDIES

(No. B/63) Mr P. Armance (First Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Industry, Commerce and Consumer Protection whether, in regard to the project of transforming Mauritius into a Petroleum Hub, he will state –

- (a) if a prior feasibility study has been carried out in relation thereto and, if so, indicate
- (i) when and
 - (ii) the names of the consultants appointed therefor and
- (b) how and why the site, commonly referred to as Pointe aux Caves, in Albion, was chosen to house the facilities in connection therewith.

Reply: In June 2015, Engineers India Ltd (EIL) was assigned the responsibility to carry out a pre-feasibility study on the project. After the submission of the report by EIL, a five member Indian delegation, including a representative from EIL, effected a mission in Mauritius in February 2017, during which a site visit was carried out at Albion.

Following this mission, a consultant will be appointed to carry out a detailed feasibility study.

Regarding part (b) of the question, in the 1996 Port Master Plan Study, the site at Albion was identified to accommodate dry and liquid bulk terminals as the site has, inter-alia, the following advantages -

- It is located on the sheltered side of the island during most of the year;
- Deep water is found close to the shore, which would enable the construction of berthing facilities without the need for dredging works;
- Most of the land is not used for agricultural purposes mainly because of poor soil conditions;
- The site is sufficiently far away from existing residential areas;
- Albion is quite close to Port Louis Harbour.

Furthermore, in the 2002 Port Master Plan, it was recommended that the Albion site be reserved for long term port development, mainly for dedicated tank farms for petroleum products.

POINTE AUX SABLES - ROSE HILL BUS ROUTE

(No. B/66) Mr P. Armance (First Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure and Land Transport whether, in regard to Pointe aux Sables and the vicinity thereof, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the National Transport Authority, information as to where matters stand as to the proposed coming into operation of a new bus route linking same to Rose Hill, indicating the time frame set for the implementation thereof.

Reply: In reply to similar Parliamentary Questions on 10 November 2015 and 19 July 2016, I informed the House that applications were received from two bus companies, namely the Rose Hill Transport Bus Service and the Triolet Bus Service in February and April 2015 respectively, to operate new bus routes connecting Pointe aux Sables to Rose Hill. I also stated that the creation of a new bus route between Pointe aux Sables and Rose Hill was justified and that the NTA was looking into all the implications, including related infrastructure and amenities. Accordingly, joint enquiries were conducted by the NTA and the Traffic Management and Road Safety Unit (TMRSU). It was observed that the bus terminus at Pointe aux Sables is at a cross-road and could accommodate a maximum of ten buses only. Additional buses along any new route would create obstruction and traffic hazards at the present location. The need to construct a new bus terminus with all appropriate facilities at Pointe aux Sables was thus identified.

I am now informed by the TMRSU that a plot of 2 A of State land has already been vested in my Ministry at Pointe aux Sables by the Ministry of Housing and Lands for the

construction of a new traffic centre at Pointe aux Sables. A project value of Rs75m is, in fact, reflected in the budget for the implementation of the project as from financial year 2017/2018. As at date, detailed designs have been completed by the TMRSU and an amount of Rs40m is being proposed for the forthcoming budget. Bidding documents are being currently finalised and will be launched in July 2017. The contract is expected to be awarded by September/October 2017 and works will start by November 2017. The duration of the project will be about 24 months.

With the implementation of this project, the NTA would be in a position to grant licenses for the operation of new bus routes from Pointe aux Sables to Rose Hill.

AUTO/MOTORCYCLES - PROVISIONAL LICENCE (LEARNER)

(No. B/70) Mr S. Baboo (Second Member for Vacoas & Floreal) asked the Rt. hon. Minister Mentor, Minister of Defence, Minister for Rodrigues whether, in regard to the learner licence for motor cycle, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to -

- (a) the roads on which the holders thereof are not permitted to drive and
- (b) if consideration will be given for -
 - (i) restricting a specific period for the holders thereof to drive motor cycles unless and until a firm licence is issued thereto and
 - (ii) prohibiting the holders thereof from driving on motorways and other hazardous roads.

Reply: As regards part (a) of the question, I am informed that holders of Provisional Licence (Learner) for auto/motorcycles are not permitted to drive on the following roads -

- (a) The main Mahebourg Road from Plaine Magnien to Nouvelle France (top of Lapeyre hill);
- (b) The main Savanne Road from St Aubin Estate to Nouvelle France (top of Lapeyre hill);
- (c) The Trou aux Cerfs Road;
- (d) Connal, Henri Lemaire and Church Streets in Beau Bassin;
- (e) Vandermeersch, Edward VII and Labourdonnais Streets in Rose Hill;
- (f) St Paul and John Kennedy Avenues in Phoenix and Vacoas;
- (g) Floreal Road from St Paul Road in Vacoas to George Guibert Street in Curepipe Road;

- (h) The road from Case Noyale to Chamarel;
- (i) The Staub Road at Baie du Cap;
- (j) La Nicoliere Road;
- (k) The main road running through the village of Triolet;
- (l) The Trunk Road from Phoenix to Port Louis;
- (m) The New Southern Entrance Road to Port Louis, and
- (n) All Motorways.

Concerning part (b)(i) of the question, a provisional driving licence is meant to be valid for a period of six months only or until the holder has passed a driving test for that category of vehicle as per Regulation 55 (1) of the Road Traffic Regulations 1954.

However, the regulation is not being applied following a decision of Government in year 1989 for not charging a fee for the renewal of a licence as there was no legal basis for doing so.

Given the trend in the number of road accidents, the Ministry of Public Infrastructure and Land Transport and Police are envisaging to reinforce the current legislation by imposing a validity period on Provisional Licences for auto/motorcycles.

Regarding part (b) (ii) of the question, in virtue of Regulation 9 of the Road Traffic (Motorways) Regulations 1963, holders of provisional driving licences are not allowed to drive on motorways.

I am further informed that the Ministry of Public Infrastructure and Land Transport is carrying out an assessment of the state of roads following which a new list of prohibited roads for learner drivers will be proposed.

TERRE ROUGE VERDUN LINK ROAD - REPAIRS

(No B/71) Mr S. Baboo (Second Member for Vacoas & Floreal) asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure and Land Transport whether, in regard to the Terre Rouge Verdun Link Road, he will state the total estimated cost for the repairs thereof, indicating the –

- (a) quantum thereof spent as at to date and
- (b) timeframe set for the completion of the repair works.

(Withdrawn)

CEB - POWER CUTS

(No. B/72) Mr S. Baboo (Second Member for Vacoas & Floreal) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to the power cut of 19 December 2016, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Central Electricity Board, information as to the reasons therefor, indicating the –

- (a) estimated economic loss to the country, and
- (b) measures taken to avoid the recurrence of similar power cuts, if any.

(Withdrawn)

METRO EXPRESS PROJECT - STATIONS

(No. B/73) Mr S. Baboo (Second Member for Vacoas & Floreal) asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure and Land Transport whether, in regard to the Metro Express Project, he will state the route thereof, indicating when same was communicated to the Local Authorities and to the private land owners concerned therewith, indicating the -

- (a) measures taken to compensate the said land owners, and
- (b) sites identified for the relocation of the public markets that are found on the said route.

Reply: I already informed the House in reply to the Private Notice Question of 15 December 2016 that the Metro Express Project will start in Ian Palach in Curepipe and end at Immigration Square in Port Louis. It will comprise 19 stations, including five interchanges which will be called the Urban Terminals.

The Ministry of Housing and Lands started acquisition of land as far back as 2013, upon request formulated by the Mauritius Light Rail Transit Authority, based on the survey report submitted by the Singapore Cooperation Enterprise. Private land owners were hence approached where required, as part of the acquisition procedures.

As regards part (a) of the question, I am informed that the compensation procedures are underway at the level of the Ministry of Housing and Lands and compensation has been effected for most of the plots acquired and are being processed for the remaining ones.

As regards part (b) of the question, the Ministry of Local Government is identifying suitable sites for relocation of markets identified on the route of the Metro Express Project.

DR. A.G. JEETOO HOSPITAL - HOUSEKEEPING & MAINTENANCE

(No. B/74) Mr S. Abbas Mamode (Fourth Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether, in regard to the

Dr A.G. Jeetoo Hospital, he will state if he is aware of the poor housekeeping and maintenance thereof and, if so, indicate the remedial measures that will be taken in relation thereto.

(Withdrawn)

PORT LOUIS MARITIME & PORT LOUIS EAST - SOCIAL HOUSING UNITS

(No. B/75) Mr S. Abbas Mamode (Fourth Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Housing and lands whether, in regard to Constituency No. 3, Port Louis Maritime and Port Louis East, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the National Housing Development Company Ltd., information as to if consideration is being given for the construction of social housing units thereat and, if so, when and, if not, why not.

(Withdrawn)

FANFARON & PLAINE VERTE POLICE STATIONS - POLICE OFFICERS

(No. B/76) Mr S. Abbas Mamode (Fourth Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Rt. hon. Minister Mentor, Minister of Defence, Minister for Rodrigues whether, in regard to the Fanfaron and Plaine Verte Police Stations, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to the number of Police Officers posted thereat respectively, indicating the respective rank thereof.

(Withdrawn)

HOSPITALS - ONCOLOGISTS

(No. B/77) Mr S. Abbas Mamode (Fourth Member for Port Louis Maritime and Port Louis East) asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether, in regard to the public hospitals, he will state the number of oncologists attached to each of them.

(Withdrawn)

RODRIGUES - MAURITIUS TROCHETIA – DELAYED TRIP

(No. B/78) Ms M. Sewocksingh (Third Member for Curepipe & Midlands) asked the Minister of Ocean Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping whether, in

regard to the Mauritius Trochetia, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Mauritius Shipping Corporation Limited, information as to if the –

- (a) trip thereof to Rodrigues in February 2017 was cancelled due to a shortage of marine gas oil, and
- (b) Corporation has a valid agreement for the supply of marine gas oil and, if so, indicate the name of the –
 - (i) supplier thereof, and
 - (ii) duration of the contract therefor.

Reply: Regarding part (a) of the question I am informed by the Mauritius Shipping Corporation Ltd that the MV Mauritius Trochetia was scheduled to depart to Rodrigues on 01 February 2017, but was delayed by one day due to unavailability of sufficient Marine Gas Oil (MGO) to sail and operate safely.

In regard to parts (b) (i) and (ii) of the question, I am informed that Indian Oil (Mauritius) Ltd agreed on 06 January 2017, to supply Heavy Fuel Oil and Marine Gas oil for the month of January 2017. It is the practice at the Mauritius Shipping Corporation Ltd to purchase their requirements for fuel oil and gas oil for their vessels, MV Mauritius Trochetia and MV Anna on a monthly basis in advance. This is a practice that is followed by the industry in view of the fact that the price of bunker products fluctuates on international market.

With a view to ensuring a guaranteed supply of bunker, the MSCL has decided to launch tender for a longer period. It has launched a tender exercise on 27 February 2017 for the supply of Heavy Fuel Oil and Marine Gas Oil for up to a period of one year. However, only one supplier quoted for a period of supply of up to 4 months only.

CUREPIPE & MIDLANDS – DRUG ADDICTION

(No. B/79) Ms M. Sewocksingh (Third Member for Curepipe & Midlands) asked the Rt. hon. Minister Mentor, Minister of Defence, Minister for Rodrigues whether, in regard to drugs, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as the number of reported cases thereof since 2015 to date in Constituency No. 17, Curepipe and Midlands.

Reply: I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that a total of 355 drug related cases have been reported since 2015 to date in Constituency No. 17.

153 cases were reported in 2015 and 159 cases in 2016. As for 2017, 43 cases have been reported to date.

CUREPIPE & MIDLANDS – TOWN HALL RENOVATION & DRAINS

(No. B/80) Ms M. Sewocksingh (Third Member for Curepipe & Midlands) asked the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether, in regard to Constituency No. 17, Curepipe and Midlands, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Municipal Council of Curepipe, information as to where matters stand as to –

- (a) the renovation of the Town Hall of Curepipe, indicating the sum allocated therefor, and
- (b) if any cleaning up of the drains in the region of Midlands were carried out prior to the flash flood which occurred on Sunday 12 February 2017.

Reply: I am informed by the Municipal Council of Curepipe that consultation is in progress with the relevant stakeholders in connection with the Restoration and Renovation of the Town Hall of Curepipe.

The House may wish to note that the Municipal Council of Curepipe has on 09 December 2016 sought the approval of the Project Plan Committee prior to invitation of bids for the project.

I understand that the Project Plan Committee is in principle agreeable to the project proposal and has requested the Municipal Council of Curepipe to seek a second opinion on the cost of the project, which is now estimated to approximately Rs135 m., compared to an initial project value of Rs38 m. in 2014.

The House may also wish to note that a meeting was held at the level of my Ministry on 06 February 2017, with representatives of the Municipal Council of Curepipe, the Ministry of Arts and Culture, the National Heritage Fund and the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development in connection with the funding of the project.

During the meeting it has been proposed that the teak roof shingles (Bordeaux) be replaced by another material which would last longer and also bring the cost of the project downwards.

The Municipal Council of Curepipe is currently working in collaboration with its consultant and the National Heritage Fund, following which, the approval of the National Heritage Fund Board would be sought on the new roof structure.

The Municipal Council of Curepipe has therefore decided to reallocate Rs50 m. from the Market Fair at Forest Side project to that of Restoration and Renovation of the Town Hall of Curepipe in addition to an amount of Rs5 m. which it has earmarked for the latter

project. The Council will request the Government to contribute the difference from the Lotto Fund.

The more time we will take, the higher will be the cost for restoration and renovation of the Town Hall or it may even collapse! I wish to assure the House that all avenues are being explored so that the implementation of the project can start in the forthcoming financial year.

With regard to part (b) of the question, I am informed by the District Council of Grand Port that the drains at Morcellement Soobhany and along the Royal Road, Midlands from La Chapelle to the Kovil were cleaned on 14 January and 03 February 2017, respectively.

RESIDENCE LA CURE - SQUATTERS

(No. B/81) Mrs A. Perraud (First Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Housing and Lands whether, in regard to the proposed relocation of the squatters of Marjolain, in residence La Cure, he will state where matters stand.

(Withdrawn)

AGALEGA ISLAND – 2016 CERTIFICATE PRIMARY EDUCATION EXAMINATIONS - PERFORMANCE

(No. B/82) Mrs A. Perraud (First Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources, Tertiary Education and Scientific Research whether, following the poor performance of the pupils of the Agalega Island who participated in the 2016 Certificate Primary Education Examinations, she will state if the matter has been looked into and measures taken in relation thereto and, if so, give details thereof.

(Withdrawn)

SCHOOL MATERIALS - CASH GRANT - DISTRIBUTION

(No. B/83) Mrs A. Perraud (First Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue) asked the Minister of Social Integration and Economic Empowerment whether, in regard to the Cash Grant in lieu of School Materials, he will state how the distribution thereof has been carried out in each of the poverty-stricken areas.

(Withdrawn)

PORT & AIRPORT – DRUGS SEIZURE

(No. B/84) Mr A. Ganoo (First Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Rt. hon. Minister Mentor, Minister of Defence, Minister for Rodrigues whether, in regard to drugs, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to the quantity and value thereof seized in 2014, 2015, 2016 and since January 2017 to date in the port and airport areas, respectively, including by the Anti-Drugs and Smuggling Unit, indicating the -

- (a) number of suspects arrested in connection with the recent case of seizure thereof on the Cargo MSC Ivana, and
- (b) measures taken or that will be taken to prevent Mauritius from becoming a trafficking hub therefor.

Reply: The information relating to the quantity and value of drugs seized in the port and airport areas from 2014 to date is being tabled.

As regards part (a) of the question, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that two suspects have been arrested and provisionally charged for Drug Dealing with Aggravating Circumstance, that is, Importation of Heroin with an averment of Trafficking, in breach of Sections 30(1)(b)(ii), 41(3), 41(4), 47(2) and 47(5a) of the Dangerous Drugs Act. Both suspects have been remanded to Police Cell.

Enquiry into the case is in progress.

I can assure the House and the population that there will be no cover up as certain members of the opposition tend to allude and that the law will apply in all its rigour and firmness against those who are behind drug trafficking.

With regard to part (b) of the question, the following measures have been put in place -

- Effective deployment of Field Intelligence Officers (FIOs) in every division to collate, analyse and disseminate timely intelligence;
- Capacity building through continuous professional development of ADSU Officers both locally and overseas and training of NCG personnel by ADSU to increase interoperability and reinforcement of cooperation at Regional and International levels for timely sharing of information and intelligence;

- Collaboration between ADSU and other local agencies such as MRA and FIU) to share intelligence/information;
- Profiling of passengers and cargo at Port and Airport by ADSU personnel;
- Heightened patrols by NCG Harbour Secure Post in the Port area to avert drug trafficking and other illegal activities, and
- Logistic support through acquisition of offshore patrol vessels, Fast Interceptor Boats, Dornier Aircraft and drones as well as the use of the Coastal Surveillance Radar System for the surveillance of our coastal areas and Exclusive Economic Zone and for an effective border control.
- Use of trained sniffer dogs.

METRO EXPRESS PROJECT – BUS INDUSTRY WORKERS – CONSULTATIONS

(No. B/85) Mr V. Baloomoody (Third Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure and Land Transport whether, in regard to the Metro Express Project, he will state if prior to the finalization thereof, consultations were held with the workers of the bus industry, indicating the actions taken, if any, to ensure that the implementation thereof will not lead to the laying off of any worker in the said industry.

Reply: I already informed the House in reply to the Private Notice Question of 15 December 2016 that consultations were held in 2012 with workers of the bus industry by the Singapore Corporation Enterprise and those who were steering the project. I also stated that in all my dealings with bus companies, I have always assured both the bus companies and individual owners that we want them on board.

My Ministry and the National Transport Authority, as regulator of the public transport industry, will be called upon to carry out further consultations in due course with bus industry workers as well as taxi unions so as to ensure that the interest of all workers and operators are at all times safeguarded.

SCHOOLS – KREOL MORISIEN

(No. B/86) Mr V. Baloomoody (Third Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources, Tertiary Education and Scientific Research whether, in regard to the Creole language, she will state the measures taken, if any,

since her assumption of office to ensure that the said language enjoys the rightful status it deserves within our educational system.

Reply: In my reply to PQ B/501 on 24 May last year, I stated, *inter alia*, that in line with the Nine Year Continuous Basic Education (NYCBE) and as stipulated in the National Curriculum Framework (NCF) for Grades 1 to 9, KM will be rolled out as an optional subject throughout the nine-year cycle.

As for the measures taken since my assumption of Office, I had also informed the House that my Ministry was working on the elaboration of the NCF for Grades 7 to 9. As a matter of fact, the NCF for Grades 7 to 9 was approved by Government on 16 December 2016 and was launched on 13 February 2017.

As such textbooks for Grades 1 to 6 have been prepared and made available by the MIE, which will also provide KM textbooks for Grades 7 to 9.

For the first time, *Kreol Morisien* will be offered as subject for PSAC Assessment and will be at par with the optional core subjects.

Thus, due recognition has been given to KM as an optional subject to be formally assessed at the end of the primary cycle at PSAC level. At the secondary level, the teaching of *Kreol Morisien* will become a reality as from January 2018 in line with the NYCBE reforms. Students completing Grade 6 will have the option to take KM at Grade 7 as from January 2018.

My Ministry is providing all necessary support and resources for the teaching of KM in 168 Government and Aided Primary Schools. To this effect, 71 General Purpose Educators and DHMs were trained to teach KM in primary schools. Moreover, in 2016, 112 Trainee Educators (KM) completed their Teacher's Diploma at the MIE and are currently teaching in schools.

In addition, MIE is reinforcing its Kreol Unit by forging ties with the University of Mauritius. In this regard, MIE is proposing to sign a MoU with the University of Mauritius to further enable a concerted effort towards teacher training and development of textbooks.

PRISONS - CELLPHONES & SIM CARDS - SEIZURE

(No. B/87) Mr V. Baloomoody (Third Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Rt. hon. Minister Mentor, Minister of Defence, Minister for Rodrigues whether, in regard to cellphones and SIM cards, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the

Commissioner of Prisons, information as to the number thereof seized in the prisons over the past year, indicating the security measures that have been taken to prevent the entry thereof and of other forbidden articles thereat.

Reply: I am informed by the Commissioner of Prisons that 424 cell phones and 79 SIM cards were seized in the prisons over the past year.

I am also informed that several security measures have been put in place to address the issue of entry of illicit items in the prisons. These comprise, amongst others -

- (a) systematic searches using technological equipment, of all persons entering the Prisons, including all support staff and Prison Officers and all vehicles entering the Prisons. In-depth searches are also carried out on all detainees leaving and entering the Prisons.
- (b) Special Searches in collaboration with the Police Department (SMF and Police Dog Unit).
- (c) regular sentry and patrols in and around Prisons to discourage pelting of prohibited articles.
- (d) use of trained Sniffer dogs.
- (e) close monitoring of the movement of High Profile Detainees.
- (f) restriction in the use of mobile phones by prisons staff.

BIOMETRIC IDENTITY CARD - FINGERPRINTS

(No. B/88) Mr S. Bhadain (Second Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes) asked the Minister of Technology, Communication and Innovation whether, in regard to the biometric identity card, he will state if all the fingerprints collected for the purpose thereof have been destroyed and/or deleted, indicating if during the processing phase, fingerprints and/or fingerprints minutiae have been retained in any database and are in the possession of the State.

Reply: Following the judgment of the Supreme Court in the case of *Madhewoo v The State of Mauritius and others* which was delivered on 29 May 2015, Government decided that fingerprints will henceforth not be stored in any database, save and except for the sole and strict purpose of producing an Identity Card in line with the judgment.

Accordingly, the fingerprint images and minutiae were removed from the database in September 2015. As regards the backup tapes, these have also been electronically destroyed.

The deletion exercise was conducted in the presence of representatives from Mauritius National Identity Scheme, Government Online Centre, IT Security Unit, Central Informatics Bureau, Ministry of Technology, Communication and Innovation, Police IT Unit, Data Protection Office and the Chief Usher of the Supreme Court, amongst others.

I assure the hon. Member that no fingerprint data has been retained in any database by the State.