



SIXTH NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

PARLIAMENTARY

DEBATES

(HANSARD)

(UNREVISED)

FIRST SESSION

FRIDAY 16 JUNE 2017

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BILL (*Public*)

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MAURITIUS

Sixth National Assembly

FIRST SESSION

Debate No. 13 of 2017

Sitting of 16 June 2017

The Assembly met in the Assembly House, Port Louis at 3.00 p.m.

The National Anthem was played

(Madam Speaker in the Chair)

PAPERS LAID

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

A. **Ministry of Arts and Culture**

The Reports of the Director of Audit on the Financial Statements of the Aapravasi Ghat Trust Fund for the years ended 31 December 2014 and 2015.

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

- (a) The Legal Metrology (Pre-packed Commodities) (Amendment) Regulations 2017. (Government Notice No. 109 of 2017)
- (b) The Bread (Control of Manufacture and Sale) (Amendment) Regulations 2017. (Government Notice No. 110 of 2017)
- (c) The Consumer Protection (Control of Price of Taxable and Non-taxable Goods) (Amendment No. 2) Regulations 2017. (Government Notice No. 111 of 2017)
- (d) The Rodrigues Consumer Protection (Control of Price of Taxable and Non-taxable Goods) (Amendment No. 18) Regulations 2017. (Government Notice No. 112 of 2017)
- (e) The Rodrigues Consumer Protection (Control of Price of Taxable and Non-taxable Goods) (Amendment No. 19) Regulations 2017. (Government Notice No. 113 of 2017)
- (f) The Rodrigues Consumer Protection (Control of Price of Taxable and Non-taxable Goods) (Amendment No. 20) Regulations 2017. (Government Notice No. 114 of 2017)
- (g) The Consumer Protection (Consumer Goods) (Maximum Price) (Amendment) Regulations 2017. (Government Notice No. 115 of 2017)

ANNOUNCEMENT**POINT OF ORDER - SITTING 25 APRIL 2017 – PHOTOGRAPHS UPLOADED ON FACEBOOK**

Madam Speaker: Hon. Members, at the sitting of Tuesday 25 April last, the hon. First Member for Port Louis Maritime and Port Louis East, hon. Shakeel Mohamed, rose on a point of order claiming that photographs have been taken unlawfully within the Assembly by a Member of the Government and had been uploaded on Facebook.

At the outset, I wish to inform the House that with the implementation of E-Parliament, Members are allowed the use of electronic devices, including tablets and mobile phones in the Chamber to access and download parliamentary documents and other information necessary for them to deliver on their parliamentary duties. It is therefore expected that the use of these devices by hon. Members in the Chamber should, besides being discreet, be exclusively reserved in the pursuit of parliamentary business with due regard to the decorum of the House.

Any other use to which these devices may be put, such as, in the case at hand, taking the photograph of an hon. Member depicting him in an unenviable situation and the uploading thereof on the social media website Facebook constitutes a serious breach of etiquette which ought to be dealt with severity.

The enquiry has revealed that the picture was taken from the floor and is not a screenshot taken from the Parliament Live Broadcast stream.

(Interruptions)

Right in the middle of a point of order which you rose yourself!

However, after considering the issues raised by the hon. Member, I have come to the conclusion that the impugned act neither falls within the purview of the rules of coverage nor constitutes an offence under the National Assembly (Privileges, Immunities and Powers) Act, and therefore cannot be considered as a breach of privilege. Besides, all my attempts to find out, with certainty, who took the impugned photograph, have not been conclusive.

I am, therefore, unable to take any action in that regard, the more so as our Standing Orders do not regulate the use of mobile phones in the Chamber.

I take this opportunity to make a pressing appeal to the good sense of hon. Members, when using their electronic devices, to act in accordance with the central principle that such devices should be used with due regard to the decorum of the House.

I must also add that I have been advised that the impugned act may be reported to the Police for enquiry for a potential breach of section 46 (ga) of the Information and Communication Technologies Act (ICT Act).

The hon. aggrieved Member may, if he still wants to seek redress, avail himself of the provisions of the ICT Act.

Thank you.

ORAL ANSWER TO QUESTION

REPUBLIC OF INDIA – DOLLAR CREDIT LINE AGREEMENT & AGALEGA DEVELOPMENT

The Leader of the Opposition (Mr X. L. Duval) (*by Private Notice*) 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 his recent mission to the Republic of India, he will provide full details thereof, indicating –

- (a) the Dollar Credit Line Agreement signed during his visit and table copy thereof;
- (b) the terms and conditions of the redeemable preference shares to be issued, and
- (c) the infrastructural works to be carried out in the Agalega Islands, indicating the estimated cost thereof.

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, as the House is aware, I was on a State visit to India on 26 and 27 May 2017. The details of the outcome of my visit were highlighted in the Press Communique issued after the Cabinet Meeting on 02 June 2017.

Madam Speaker, during my State visit, I was accompanied by the hon. Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities, who had fruitful discussions with his counterpart, the Minister of State with Independent Charge for Power, Coal, New and Renewable Energy and Mines. He also had discussions with other energy institutions on possible areas of cooperation.

Madam Speaker, with regard to part (a) of the question, a Dollar Credit Line Agreement was signed on 27 May 2017 between the State Bank of Mauritius Infrastructure Development Company Ltd and the Export-Import Bank of India (EXIM India) for an amount of USD 500 m..

The purpose of the credit is for the SBM (Mauritius) Infrastructure Development Company Ltd to subscribe in redeemable preference shares to be issued by public sector Special Purpose Vehicles to implement the following infrastructure and development projects

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- i. Metro Express Project by Metro Express Ltd;
- ii. Construction of Social Housing Units by National Housing Development Company Ltd;
- iii. Construction of two Towers by Landscape (Mauritius) Ltd to accommodate Government Offices, and
- iv. Water and Energy Projects by SPVs to be set up.

The Dollar Credit Line of USD 500 m. bears an annual interest rate of 1.8 per cent with a repayment period of 20 years including a moratorium of 7 years for capital. The interest accrued during this period will be capitalised and becomes payable upon completion of projects or 7 years whichever is earlier.

Capital and interest will be repayable in 26 equal semi-annual installments after the grace period of 7 years.

It is proposed that Government will guarantee the repayment of one semi-annual installment at a time in case of default by the respective SPVs. No guarantee document has yet been signed.

Madam Speaker, I would like to make it clear that a loan should be evaluated by its effective cost and not merely by its interest rate.

The cost of borrowing on the local market for 20 years is around 6.5%. Thus, even with an annual appreciation of 3% of the dollar, the servicing of the Dollar Credit Line will still be lower than borrowing in Mauritian Rupees. Moreover, the Line of Credit comes with a moratorium period of 7 years and the interest rate is fixed for the twenty-year period. Long term line of credit usually carries a variable rate of interest, and the tendency is for the interest rate to increase.

The House may note that at the beginning of this week, the US Federal Reserve has increased its base rate by 25 basis points and there are expectations of further increases in interest rate level in the future.

Borrowing locally in rupees will not help because we will have in any way to purchase foreign currencies to make disbursement for imports. If we don't get the foreign currencies from abroad, we will have to use our foreign currency reserve to make those payments. Hence, depleting our foreign currency reserve.

Madam Speaker, we are here talking of project financing with a high import content, meaning that implementation of the projects will have to be financed with foreign currencies. Most of the foreign currencies borrowed will not stay in our banking system, but will be used for payments of imports. This means that the line of credit will have a limited impact on excess liquidity in our banking system.

I would also like to point out that major infrastructural developments are envisaged by the public sector over the medium term. In fact, some Rs74 billion are planned to be invested by Government and a further Rs43 billion by public enterprises over the next three years. Financing of this massive investment from local sources alone would neither have been sufficient nor possible. In fact, relying only on the local market would have crowded out the private sector and also public corporations of their credit requirements. This would also have led to sharp increase in yields on Government securities, with consequential increase in the cost of public debt servicing.

Madam Speaker, the agreements between the SBM (Mauritius) Infrastructure Development Company Ltd and the SPVs together with the Guarantee documents will be tabled in the National Assembly once signed. Concerning the Dollar Credit Line Agreement between EXIM Bank of India and SBM (Mauritius) Infrastructure Development Company Ltd, it is not proposed to table copies thereof now.

Madam Speaker, concerning part (b), discussions are now under way between SBM (Mauritius) Infrastructure Development Company Ltd and the SPVs concerned to work out the terms and conditions of the redeemable preference shares.

Madam Speaker, I wish to clarify a point that was raised by the hon. Leader of the Opposition as to why redeemable preference shares are not included in the Public Sector Debt. According to the IMF Government Finance Statistics Manual (2014), redeemable preference shares are classified as equity and not debt.

Madam Speaker, in regard to part (c) of the question, it is relevant to point out that the Agalega airstrip of 1,300 mts long and 30 mts wide was constructed during the years 1984/85

and is made up of compacted corals. As from 1998, the surface of the airstrip started to deteriorate, with small pebbles coming off from the surface.

In 1999, some remediable works were carried out to resurface the airstrip, but, unfortunately, the bitumen materials used did not adhere to the surface and over time, it started to peel off. In view of the bad state of the airstrip, the Civil Aviation Department had since then not authorised the landing of commercial planes.

Since 2003, several initiatives for the upgrading of the airstrip at Agalega have not been successful.

Access by sea to Agalega is also severely constrained owing to inadequate infrastructure and facilities, as there is no proper jetty on the island for embarkation and disembarkation of passengers and cargo.

The possibility of the Indian Government providing assistance to upgrade the airstrip in Agalega has been raised with the Indian side on several occasions since 2005.

In March 2014, the Indian Authorities proposed that the Government of Mauritius may consider –

- (i) designating a suitable Implementing Agency for preparing a Detailed Project Report for the implementation of infrastructural works in Agalega and for overseeing the overall implementation of the project;
- (ii) setting up of a Joint Project Monitoring Committee consisting of representatives of both India and Mauritius to oversee and monitor the implementation of the project, as well as to monitor progress made by the Implementing Agency.

The Indian side also agreed to consider deputing relevant technical experts, as and when required, to assist and work with the Implementing Agency for the preparation of the Detailed Project Report up to the final implementation of the project.

As suggested by the Indian side, the Joint Project Monitoring Committee was set up in April 2014 at the Ministry of Local Government and Outer Islands and comprised of the following –

- (i) the then hon. Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands as Chairperson;
- (ii) the Secretary to Cabinet and Head of Civil Service;

- (iii) H.E. the Indian High Commissioner;
- (iv) the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Local Government and Outer Islands;
- (v) the Commandant, National Coast Guard;
- (vi) the Director, Civil Aviation Department;
- (vii) the Director General, Mauritius Ports Authority, and
- (viii) the Chief Executive Officer, Airports of Mauritius Co. Ltd.

Furthermore, a Technical Committee was set up under the Chair of the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Local Government and Outer Islands and comprised representatives of various Ministries and the Indian High Commission.

The Technical Committee was tasked with the responsibility of preparing the technical documents, including drawings, designs and specifications for the implementation of the various infrastructures of the project, i.e. the jetty and the airstrip and other associated buildings.

Being given that the Mauritius side had no technical expertise in those specific areas, the Indian side was invited to consider commissioning a full scale technical study.

In August 2014, three Indian technical experts proceeded to Agalega for the preparation of a comprehensive work plan for the implementation of the project.

In parallel, following discussions at the level of the Joint Project Monitoring Committee, a draft Memorandum of Understanding for the development of air and sea transportation facilities in Agalega was prepared for consideration by both sides.

Subsequently, both sides finalised the Memorandum of Understanding which was approved by the then Government on 31 October 2014.

During the State Visit of H.E. Shri Narendra Modi, Prime Minister of India to Mauritius in March 2015, the Memorandum of Understanding (which was already approved by the then Government in October 2014) was signed between Mauritius and India for the Improvement in Sea and Air Transportation Facilities at Agalega.

The House will recall that a copy of the MoU was laid on the Table of the National Assembly on 31 March 2015 during the reply made to the Private Notice Question on Agalega.

The MoU, *inter alia*, provides that the project shall be carried out under a Government-to-Government arrangement for which funds to the tune of USD 18 million would be made available under the financial grant by the Government of the Republic of India to the Government of the Republic of Mauritius. Any requirement for additional funds would be met through supplementary arrangements between the two Governments.

Since the signature of the MoU in March 2015, the Joint Project Monitoring Committee initially co-chaired by the Minister of Ocean Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping and subsequently by the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands, on the Mauritius side, and the High Commissioner of India, on the Indian side, has had several meetings to oversee and monitor progress in the implementation of the project. I am informed that following extensive discussions at the level of the Joint Project Monitoring Committee, the Indian side commissioned an Indian firm for the preparation of a Detailed Project Report and Detailed Engineering Design Report for the Development of Infrastructure on Agalega Islands.

The Indian firm has completed its assignment and in its Detailed Project Report, it has included the following proposed facilities for the long-term development of Agalega:

- (i) construction of a new runway of 3,000m along with associated aircraft movement area to facilitate operations of B737-900/ and Airbus 321 type of aircraft;
- (ii) jetty infrastructure for berthing and movement of ships of length 149m and drawing draught of 9m, and
- (iii) development of other associated support infrastructure, such as maritime and air traffic control buildings, *hangar*, passenger terminal building, desalination plant, as well as electricity, water and sewerage systems.

The Indian side has confirmed that India will fully finance and construct the Agalega project.

On 16 May 2017, the Detailed Project Report was examined by the Joint Project Monitoring Committee co-chaired by the hon. Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands and H.E. Mr Abhay Thakur, High Commissioner of India.

Following a preliminary examination of the Detailed Project Report, the Joint Project Monitoring Committee has, *inter alia*, highlighted that the design parameters contained

therein for both the runway and the jetty have taken into account the present and future requirements of the Mauritian Authorities.

Madam Speaker, since the Agalega Project will be entirely financed by the Government of the Republic of India, its procurement process will be the responsibility of the Government of the Republic of India. I am informed that the Indian side is in the process of preparing the necessary documents for launching of Expressions of Interest for the construction of the infrastructural works in Agalega. The final cost estimates of such works will be known only after evaluation of the Expressions of Interest by the Indian authorities.

Madam Speaker, Mauritius is defined as including the Islands of Mauritius, Rodrigues, Agalega, Tromelin, Cargados Carajos and the Chagos Archipelago, including Diego Garcia and any other island comprised in the State of Mauritius in section 111 of the Constitution.

Let me state in unequivocal terms that it has never been and it will never be the intention of this Government to cede Agalega to any foreign country. The Agalega Islands will always be an integral part of our territory.

Let me also reaffirm, most emphatically, the commitment of my Government to ensure that the territorial integrity and sovereignty, and rights, as well as the security interests of Mauritius are fully respected and safeguarded.

Madam Speaker, having said that, let me remind the House over the last 20 years subsequent Governments have been struggling to improve connectivity by air and sea to Agalega. All efforts so far have been in vain. Let us, therefore, welcome the offer of India for the yet another laudable initiative to carry out at its own costs the infrastructural works at Agalega for its long term socio-economic development.

Mr X. L. Duval: Madam Speaker, I have many, many questions and maybe it requires, in fact, two PNQs. This time, I will just try and get the basic information. I hope that you will give us extra time because of the length of the answer which, for once, I think, was justified.

Madam Speaker, firstly I will like to ask the hon. Prime Minister surely there should be an estimated cost of all these infrastructures. The final cost like the *Metro Leger* will come later. What is the estimated cost of all these things in Agalega?

The Prime Minister: Well, initially, Madam Speaker, if my memory serves me right, I think around, maybe, USD18 to USD20 m. were earmarked for upgrading the airstrip. After discussions with the Indian Government, we have reviewed the whole project, and that is why there is this DPR which has been worked out and has been looked at, at the level of the Committee, which as I mentioned, is chaired by the Minister of Local Government and the Indian High Commissioner. Therefore, it will be only after the Expressions of Interest have been received that we will be able to know approximately how much the cost of all these infrastructural projects will come to.

Mr X. L. Duval: Madam Speaker, the USD20 m., about Rs600 m., the Prime Minister knows full well was for the previous small airfield that there was there. Now, we are talking about an airfield of 3 kms. Three kms will take an A380 which will land on 2.7 kms. It is nearly the same length as the Plaisance airport and nearly the three times the airport of Rodrigues. What is the reason for having such a huge landing strip on such a small island in the middle of the Indian Ocean with 300 people living there?

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, I have just said that was the initial plan just to upgrade the airstrip. But after discussions, we have reviewed the whole project and we are looking especially at the very long term development of Agalega. Therefore, I do not see anything wrong in coming up with the state-of-the-art airstrip that will be able to accommodate bigger aircrafts. Let me take the example of Rodrigues. What is happening to Rodrigues right now? The request is now to review and to upgrade the landing strip because we can only accommodate, I think, ATR72 only. So, are we going to agree to spend millions of rupees to upgrade the airstrip and then probably in years to come we will have to seek other financial support to be able to upgrade that upgraded strip? I think if we have vision, if we are farsighted, then we should know what is best that we can do now for years and years to come.

Mr X. L. Duval: Madam Speaker, is the Prime Minister expecting a population explosion on Agalega? Madam Speaker, the population of Mauritius, at this stage, wants to know the facts. They want to know the truth. They do not want to be hidden anything and then everybody can take whatever decision can be taken. Does the Prime Minister really expect the population of Mauritius to believe that for 300 people living in Agalega, we need a 3km airport, which will take all its reserves and all that, half of the North Island? Is that seriously what the hon. Prime Minister hopes that we will all swallow?

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, I have, together with the hon. Leader of Opposition, been in previous Governments. We know very well how those previous Governments have struggled to be able to upgrade, at least, these facilities in Agalega, what are the problems that the people of Agalega have been facing, in terms of aircraft, to be able to land there, in terms of ship, to be able to come closer for transporting goods and other materials. Now, that we are able to do something which is really big, in terms of infrastructure development, we are being asked why is it that it is of such big magnitude.

(Interruptions)

Okay! This is my opinion.

The Leader of the Opposition questioned whether I am going to make people swallow that. Well, what we are doing is going to remain for generations and generations to come for the Republic of Mauritius. As I say, all these investments, all these infrastructural upgradings will be for the ownership of Mauritius.

Mr X. L. Duval: Madam Speaker, I do not think anyone will swallow what the Prime Minister has just said unfortunately. Madam Speaker, I want to ask the Prime Minister that this huge airport that we are going to have, has to be protected somehow. It has to have protection around. Who will ensure the protection of this huge facility there? Who will ensure the protection of the airport?

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, there is a difference between an airstrip which is going to be long enough to accommodate, as I mentioned, the type of aircraft that we are providing for and a huge airport. The airport will not be like the new terminal in Plaisance but, definitely, there is going to be building. As I said, let us wait and then we will inform the House about the type of infrastructures for the airport development and their costs. But with regard to who will control those facilities, the Mauritius Ports Authority will be responsible for the jetty and the Department of Civil Aviation, together with the Mauritian Police, will be responsible for the airport that is going to be developed.

Mr X. L. Duval: Will the Prime Minister confirm that the previous project which he has referred to at length in his speech is, in fact, a tiny one? This can be proven easily, of a small airfield and very small facilities attached. This time we are going to have a 3-km airfield taking half the island of North Island. Will the hon. Prime Minister tell us really what

is the use of this airfield and whether it is not going to be used for military planes of whatever nation to use that airfield?

The Prime Minister: As I have said, Madam Speaker ...

(Interruptions)

What Diego Garcia are you talking about? Listen to the answer! The Leader of Opposition has asked a question, at least, show respect! What we have agreed with the Government of India is for an implementation of a number of measures to promote, protect and to safeguard the following maritime security and related objectives, that is, for continuous surveillance and monitoring of the Exclusive Economic Zone of the Republic of Mauritius - because we know we do not have the means, we do not have the resources for that - counter piracy, which is a problem, counterterrorism, controlling poaching and illegal unreported and unregulated fishing, counter narcotics and human trafficking, provision for hydrographic services, promoting economic development, including the blue economy initiatives and, there again, we have a lot that we are foreseeing that will be done in the future and so on and so forth. I can go on, but these are the objectives that have been emphasised between the two Governments.

Mr X. L. Duval: Madam Speaker, can I ask the hon. Prime Minister whether there will be following troops, garrisons permanently or some time at Agalega?

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, whoever would want to come to Agalega, just like whoever wants to come to...

(Interruptions)

Let me answer! The hon. Leader of the Opposition will have time to ask his supplementary questions! Whether it is troops or whoever it is, they want to come to Mauritius and use our landing strip or they want to come through a ship. Well, they will have to ask for permission from the Mauritian authorities, and the same will apply in Agalega. They will have to ask for permission.

Mr X. L. Duval: Madam Speaker, I asked specifically whether they will be permanent garrisoning of foreign troops on Mauritius land in Agalega.

The Prime Minister: It is for us to decide! We will take a decision! There is no decision as yet! The hon. Leader of the Opposition is asking me now! There is no decision now. Where are the war troops? There are no troops!

(Interruptions)

When the time will come, whoever as I say - it is not only a question of India - is going to ask for permission, it will be considered by the relevant authorities and if there are matters which concern security and other issues, it will be decided by Government.

Mr X. L. Duval: Madam Speaker, my point is to find out whether this agreement is in the interest of the Mauritius population or in the interest of the MSM. So, I would ask, again, whether he will table...

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Order, Please!

Mr X. L. Duval: It is alright! Whether the hon. Prime Minister will table today the Maritime Security Agreement that he has signed, I expect with the approval of the Cabinet.

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, first of all, I do things and we take decisions in the interest of the country. We do not take decisions in the interest of the party. My party is something different. I am acting in the capacity of the Prime Minister of this country and for the whole population, and people will see. People will see what is the legacy that we are going to leave when we are no longer here. We will see! It is not for him to decide; it is for the people to decide. People will decide!

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Hon. Jhugroo!

The Prime Minister: Now, the issue of whether who will be there permanently, of course, we have an airport, we have a seaport, they will be manned by Mauritian officers and whatever agreement we want to have with any Government or any other party, well, we will decide in due course.

Mr X. L. Duval: Madam Speaker, I won't have time to come to patrol exploration, etc. For this time, I would like to ask the hon. Prime Minister whether, as according to law,

an Environment Impact Assessment will be made on this beautiful Island of Agalega, most beautiful place on earth; whether there will be an EIA for the airport and for the jetty, as provided in the law.

The Prime Minister: We will do whatever is required according to the regulations.

Mr X. L. Duval: The Prime Minister will not come, I trust, with a change again by regulation to exempt. Can I get, at least, that commitment from the Prime Minister that he will not come with a regulation to exempt from the EIA, as in the case of the Metro Express?

The Prime Minister: This is a Government to Government agreement for upgrading of those infrastructures and, as I said, Government will take whatever decision is required in the light of whatever permits, licenses and so on.

Mr X. L. Duval: I understand there will be no EIA. This is what I can read between the lines. Madam Speaker, if I go to the loan now, my main issue is the guarantee at this stage. We will come to all the technical issues. We do not agree, but it is okay. We can disagree. Let us look at the guarantee for the loan. The hon. Prime Minister has said that he is going to guarantee each tranche, I think, individually.

I would like to ask the hon. Prime Minister what happens if in two years' time the Metro Express goes bankrupt, this whole SPV, the Mauritius infrastructure development goes bankrupt? Who is going to pay back the loan? Will SBM also go bankrupt or somehow who is going to repay back the loan to Exim Bank if in two years' time it goes bankrupt?

The Prime Minister: Well, the hon. Leader of the Opposition will be here and we will see the success of the Metro Express, I can assure him of that.

(Interruptions)

Mr X. L. Duval: It is clear to everyone that Government is guaranteeing the whole USD18 million loan to Exim Bank by whatever backdoor it wants to pretend it is, and this why I wanted the hon. Prime Minister to answer a specific question.

If it goes bankrupt in two years' time, who is going to pay? The people of Mauritius, Madam Speaker, are watching us and they want to know whether they have Rs30 billion of loan or whatever taken on their back and they have to repay this for some Metro Express or

not! This is the sort of answer that *L'Alliance Lepep* had promised to give the population when we got elected two years ago! It is clear in the electoral manifesto!

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, I have already replied that we are going to guarantee; Government will guarantee the 26 biannual instalments that are going to be repaid by all the SPVs. The discussions are ongoing with those SPVs and I have given a commitment that, once this is being assigned, that will be laid on the Table of this National Assembly.

Mr X. L. Duval: To make it clear, Madam Speaker, for everyone listening, Government is going to guarantee the whole 18 million repayment plus interest at 1.8 % plus whatever appreciation is going to happen to the dollar over the next 20 years. Is that a clear answer? Can the hon. Prime Minister give us that clear answer?

The Prime Minister: Well, the hon. Leader of the Opposition should know! This is what I have just replied. We are not going against the rules of the IMF. The handbook on securities and statistics says that redeemable preferential shares are classified as equity securities. Now, this is a clear answer, unless he does not understand what it means!

(Interruptions)

Mr X. L. Duval: I do not understand, Madam Speaker. Really, I am lost.

(Interruptions)

I admit it!

(Interruptions)

They are too clever for us.

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Hon. Jhugroo!

Mr X. L. Duval: Madam Speaker, the SBM publicity or whatever, advertisement it is, in fact, or note, communiqué, explains quite a few things. One of the things it says is that this beautiful SBM Infrastructural Development Company will seek for funds from sophisticated investors in a private placement.

Now, the Securities Act, which I am sure hon. Jhugroo knows by heart, says here that a sophisticated investor is - would you be surprised, Madam Speaker? - the Government of Mauritius, a statutory authority, a company owned 100% by Government, a bank, an insurer, and a few others.

Will the hon. Prime Minister tell us whether this National Investment Authority, by whatever name called, has, in fact, been created so as to facilitate investment of pension funds, our pension funds, our savings into this - probably, I do not know - SPV created *en catimini*, it seems?

The Prime Minister: I am surprised. The National Investment Authority has nothing to do with this issue. We are talking about a line of credit, Madam Speaker, which we have agreed with the Indian Government. I have given the details about how this money is going to be used.

In fact, we have been very transparent in the Budget Speech by giving all the information of how money is going to be used from not only Indian grant, line of credit and so on. So, this is a different matter. This is for the investment committee.

Mr X. L. Duval: I think there is some misunderstanding. I will have to explain to the hon. Prime Minister that this SBM communiqué says SMIDL, Infrastructure Development Ltd, will also issue notes to selected sophisticated investors – we saw who they were – on a private placement basis. And my question is: given what the sophisticated investors are, in fact, described to be, whether the National Investment Authority will be or not concerned by investing in this SDIML? That is the question.

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, the mechanism is going to be like that. When the State Bank of Mauritius, the Infrastructural Fund, will advance whatever amount to a SPV, all SPVs that are revenue...

(Interruptions)

Let me explain!

(Interruptions)

You had your chance to talk! You said you are going to explain, I am replying to your question!

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Please, don't lose the time when it is the last question!

The Prime Minister: All these SPVs are revenue generating institutions and, therefore, they will be able to repay back, in two installments in a year, the amount that is going to be, therefore, redeemed by the State Bank and therefore that amount will be repaid through the EXIM Bank of India.

Madam Speaker: I will allow you one last question!

Mr X. L Duval: Madam Speaker, how much time do we have? Last question! I think the hon. Prime Minister has not understood the question. I will come to this. I want to ask something completely different. There was a mission to Agalega a few weeks ago by hon. Jhugroo, I think, and hon. Seeruttun. Is the hon. Prime Minister aware that on the eve of that mission, a special plane had to go to Agalega to transport the General Manager and the Chairman of the O IDC so that they will arrange for the reception of these two semi-majesties?

(Interruptions)

Are you aware of that or are you not aware also of that plane that went on the eve so that to have a royal welcome for these two gentlemen at the cost of the taxpayers?

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, I am aware that the...

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Order!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Jhugroo, allow the hon. Prime Minister to reply!

(Interruptions)

The Prime Minister:the two honourable...

(Interruptions)

I am aware that hon. Minister Jhugroo and Minister Mahen Seeruttun have, in fact, been to Agalega previously, but I am not aware that they were planning recently to...

(Interruptions)

Yes, they have been!

(Interruptions)

Two planes! They were piloting each plane each one!

(Interruptions)

I did not know that they qualify as pilot.

(Interruptions)

The Prime Minister: But, Madam Speaker...

(Interruptions)

...I don't see why the Minister for Outer Islands – he is also responsible for Outer Islands – and the Minister of Agro-Industry should not go to Agalega? In fact, let me say that I have myself been wanting to go to Agalega, but the problem is that the plane, first of all, cannot carry more people. And secondly, for security reasons it is not advisable because I have just mentioned the state of the airstrip right now is such that there is somehow an element of risk. But I hope that I can have the opportunity in the future to plan a visit to Agalega. And I know Members of the Opposition have been wanting...

(Interruptions)

...and rightly so, they have been wanting to go to Agalega. Probably, we should make provision especially for the hon. Members who are responsible for the Constituency of Agalega to be there.

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: No, but the hon. Prime Minister will have to reply! Hon. Leader of the Opposition, I have already given you 14 additional minutes. You should understand...

(Interruptions)

You may come with another question, please! Time is over!

(Interruptions)

You come with another question! I have given you more than 15 additional minutes. Time is over!

MOTION

SUSPENSION OF S.O. 10(2)

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

The Deputy Prime Minister rose and seconded.

Question put and agreed to.

STATEMENT BY MINISTER

BAGATELLE DAM - SEEPAGE

(3.48 p.m.)

The Deputy Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, with your permission, I would like to make a statement on the seepage noted on Rivière Cascades, near the right bank of Bagatelle Dam.

The filling of the dam started on 22 December 2016 and by 08 June 2017, the dam was full. The first impounding is carried out in a controlled manner under the supervision and control of the Consultant.

On 22 May 2017, the Consultant noted that there was a local seepage at a point close to the toe of the dam, on the left bank of Rivière Cascades. I was informed accordingly and I requested that the Consultant carries out a full investigation and submits a report.

I also instructed the Director General of my Ministry and the Director of the Water Resources Unit to carry out a site visit and assess the situation.

The Consultant has provided an internal technical note, confirming that the dam and the cut off wall are well efficient. During the construction, the Consultant had recommended deepening of the cut off wall below the river bed and construction of erosion protection in Rivière Cascades at that particular point.

In the technical note, the Consultant has confirmed that he has checked the stability of the dam once again, based on the actual measured water level.

Since impounding, the Consultant is monitoring all dam and foundation instrumentation and has found no abnormal behaviour and no abnormal downstream water level.

Based on the advice of the dam expert of the Consultant, there is no cause for concern. Nevertheless, I have instructed that close monitoring of the dam instrumentation be carried out as per established standards.

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: No, I am sorry, hon. Minister, I was not aware that you had a statement. So, the statement has not been vetted by my Office. You will have to make it at a later time.

Hon. Rughoobur!

PUBLIC BILL

Second Reading

THE APPROPRIATION (2017-2018) BILL 2017

(NO. VII OF 2017)

Order for Second Reading read.

(3.50 p.m.)

Mr S. Rughoobur (Second Member for Grand’Baie & Poudre d’Or): Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, I am intervening at a time after listening to most of the hon. Members on this side and the other side of the House and, Madam Speaker, I have noted that on the other side of the House, the subject of contention of the Budget is *effets d’annonce*.

Madam Speaker, I am going to come to this contention of the hon. Members on the other side of the House, but before coming to that, Madam Speaker, the subject of my intervention today would be based on *l’aspiration du peuple*. The aspiration of the population!

Madam Speaker, we were elected in 2014, and while campaigning, Madam Speaker, we had taken some commitments with the population, and, Madam Speaker, we have to understand the reasons for which the former Government was booted out of office. This is important. We were elected, Madam Speaker, and one of the major reasons why the former Government was booted out of office was an absence of leadership but also because of the disparity between the aspiration of the population and the action of the then Government. That disparity, Madam Speaker, was so huge that the population was fed up. There was a total absence of leadership, and we came in, in January 2015 Madam Speaker.

We came in last year, Madam Speaker, when the Prime Minister was appointed hon. Minister of Finance last year, he did a series of site visits in almost all the constituencies and he visited our constituency as well, with myself, hon. Ashit Gungah and hon. Sangeet Fowdar.

Coming back to this subject of contention of the Opposition, Madam Speaker, where they are saying on and on, that *ce* budget is nothing apart from *l'effet d'annonce*; that there won't be any development; that it is going to stay where it is. All these numerous projects that you have identified, that you have enumerated will not be implemented. But, Madam Speaker, I would like to come back to that site visit that we effected with the hon. Prime Minister last year in our Constituency.

I am going to come to the different sites that we visited; the different projects that were identified and what is the status today, Madam Speaker. Let me come to the first site that we visited at Fond du Sac where, Madam Speaker, there was an acute problem of flooding. Everybody, the whole of Mauritius, is aware of this acute problem of flooding following the heavy rainfall we had in January of 2015. We requested the Prime Minister, the then Minister of Finance to effect a site visit, the first site visit was at Fond du Sac. Madam Speaker, this project has been earmarked in this Budget, but we had started working with the Prime Minister last year, and I would like to thank also the Minister of Agriculture, hon. Seeruttun who has been chairing a Committee on this project.

An amount of Rs300 m., Madam Speaker, had earmarked for the different projects of drains in Fond du Sac. What is the status today, Madam Speaker? After numerous meetings, consultants have been appointed and Madam Speaker the plans are almost ready and, as rightly stated by the PPS hon. Ramkaun, the documents are at level of procurement and

tenders are due to be floated by the end of the year. The works are going to start early next year, Madam Speaker. A project of Rs300 m. in Fond du Sac, one.

Second, Madam Speaker, together with the Prime Minister last year, we visited Péreybère, where also we had a very serious problem of flooding. We visited Péreybère and Camp Carol, together with the Prime Minister last year, and two projects were identified. These two projects have been mentioned in this Budget. What is the status today Madam Speaker? Let me inform the House that a design has been prepared, a consultant has been appointed, a contractor has been appointed. At Camp Carol, works have already started and at Péreybère, works are starting at the end of this month. The total value of project, Madam Speaker, is Rs90 m.

Third, Madam Speaker, market fair in Goodlands, Rs300 m. had been earmarked. I would like to know whether there has been a Government *plus social que ce qu'on est aujourd'hui nous*, Madam Speaker?

Rs300 m. had been identified, and that is the third project that the Prime Minister visited together with us in Goodlands. We are a Government that honours its commitments Madam Speaker, *l'aspiration du peuple*.

The Prime Minister went along with us, in those regions, because he wanted to see for himself what is the state upon which those regions were left by the former Government. We did Madam Speaker our site visits.

The Prime Minister went to Goodlands together with us, myself, hon. Ashit Gungah and hon. Sangeet Fowdar. We visited the site. The former Government had identified the site in the centre of Goodlands. We explained to the Prime Minister last year that Goodlands is heavily congested already and that we wanted to shift the site. We said that it has to be in a region where it would be less congested and we negotiated with the former owners of St Antoine Sugar Estate. I would like to thank the company and the directors Madam Speaker. They donated 10 acres of land to the Government. 10 acres of land have been donated in a prime location.

What is the status today Madam Speaker, when Rs300 m. has been earmarked. It is not now that we have started working and hon. Ashit Gungah is fully aware of what has been done till now. We have been working tirelessly since last year. A consultant has been appointed by the Ministry of Public infrastructure. Madam Speaker, Rs300 m. have been

identifies; the designs are almost ready, all clearances have been obtained. We are awaiting a final clearance from the RDA and even there the tender documents are going to be floated by the end of the year. Works are going to start early, next year, Madam Speaker.

That makes us more that Rs700 m. worth of projects in Constituency No. 6. Never before a Government has done what we are doing today under the Prime Ministership of hon. Pravind Jugnauth.

Madam Speaker, that is not all. When we were campaigning in 2014, everybody is aware, Madam Speaker, of the acute water problem which our Constituency has been facing whether it is in Grand Gaube or in Péreybère or in regions like Grand Baie, Goodlands as well Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, I am delighted to note that the Government has approved an amount of almost Rs145 m. A project of almost Rs100 m. has already started in the region of Morcellement Swan Péreybère and les Flamands and another project of almost Rs45 m. has also started from St Francois to Cap Malheureux. Rs145 m. worth of projects.

Madam Speaker, this is not *effet d'annonce*. These are concrete projects which are now being undertaken in our Constituency and these amount to almost a billion rupees worth of projects in Constituency No. 6 today, Madam Speaker. This is no *effet d'annonce*. *C'est qu'on est en train de faire concrètement dans la circonscription* Madam Speaker.

Subject of contention of the Opposition, *l'effet d'annonce*, this is what we are doing now, Madam Speaker, in our Constituency. So, in terms of capital projects, Madam Speaker, we have come almost to one billion rupees. I have also Madam Speaker to compare what was done before we took office in 2015, 10 years before, two capital projects. I have been comparing Madam Speaker. I have gone to investigate, two major capital projects only had been completed in No. 6 Grand Baie/Poudre d'Or and what were those two projects a by-pass in Goodlands and a medi clinic in Goodlands. That was all, Madam Speaker; projects of less than Rs150 m.

So, Madam Speaker, we do not believe in what has been constantly stated in this House, that what has been enumerated as a list of projects will never be realised. I have just given a list of projects worth almost a billion that are being implemented presently in our Constituency. We should not forget one thing Madam Speaker. We are only almost 28 to 30

months from the time we took office, Madam Speaker, only 30 months and we can't do miracle. But, certainly, Madam Speaker, *la population va juger*.

Madam Speaker, this is what I wanted to elaborate on, *concrètement l'aspiration du peuple*. When we were campaigning in 2014 the population, Madam Speaker, even if it is very important for our economy, even if today we know that the average economic rate of growth in the world is almost 2.6 to 2.8 and we are doing more than this but *quelle est l'aspiration du peuple*, Madame Speaker? This is the subject of my intervention. This is what the Prime Minister has noted and we also, Madam Speaker. This is what we have realised. *Quelle est l'aspiration de la population?* Infrastructure projects, development, they want to see *concrètement le développement, le travail* and that is basically the reason why this Government is laying emphasis, Madam Speaker, on *le travail et la discipline*.

First, Madam Speaker, I have been talking about *le développement dans notre circonscription, l'effet d'annonce*. Second, when we speak about the aspirations of the population, Madam Speaker, what comes to our mind? When we were campaigning in 2014 apart from development, Madam Speaker, the second major issue that repeatedly came was the issue of drugs, Madam Speaker. Constantly, people were talking about the dangers of synthetic drugs, the dangers of the other forms of drugs, hard drugs, and, Madam Speaker, immediately after taking office this Government has been working on a strategy to do away, - even if it is not that simple, Madam Speaker - to eliminate this problem but at least this Government has sent a very strong signal to the population.

We have a Commission of Enquiry. But, apart from the Commission of Enquiry after the reorganisation of the ADSU, just have a look at, Madam Speaker, what has been seized and here we have to congratulate the excellent team of the ADSU, Madam Speaker. They have been doing a very good job these few months. More than Rs2.5 billion was from drugs seized, Madam Speaker, and this has been an excellent achievement for this Government. But, once again, *l'aspiration du peuple*, Madam Speaker, this is exactly what the population wants us to do. To do away with *ces types de fléaux sociaux*, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, there were two parliamentary questions on this issue including one of my parliamentary questions on the need to increase the number of officers at the level of ADSU. I am happy that in this Budget, Madam Speaker, the Prime Minister has increased the number of officers, I think, by 50 heads. This was long overdue, Madam Speaker, and I would like to congratulate the Prime Minister for this decision.

Madam Speaker, when we talk of drugs, I think, that *du côté de la répression* there is a lot that is being done by this Government but I am going to have a proposal, Madam Speaker. I think that we will also have side-by-side to put emphasis on preventive strategy as well as rehabilitation, Madam Speaker. I think this is where we will have to rethink completely our strategy in terms of prevention and rehabilitation when we speak of drugs. I hope that in the coming weeks or coming months whether it is the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life or whoever responsible and especially at the level of the Prime Minister's Office there are some measures which are taken to ensure that we put in place an effective, preventive and rehabilitation strategy when we talk of *le combat contre la drogue*, Madam Speaker, and we have got the Commission of Enquiry that is doing an excellent job. I am sure that in their report we are going to have a series of recommendations that, of course, the Government is going to implement and I am sure that there would be recommendations based on rehabilitation and prevention.

Madam Speaker, when we were campaigning in 2014, *l'absence du développement, le problème de la drogue* but third we also had this issue of *le combat contre la pauvreté* Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, I don't think that we have had a Government *plus social que ce que nous avons aujourd'hui*. The Budget of the Ministry of Social Security has reached almost Rs22 billion, Madam Speaker!

Talking about *le combat contre la pauvreté*, I have noted that the Government has decided to put a National CSR Foundation. Madam Speaker, we have to understand one thing, today the NEF, the Ministry of *l'Intégration Sociale* has got Rs150 m. for capital projects. Almost Rs150 m. Madam Speaker, *pour le combat contre la pauvreté* ! But, what we have to understand also, Madam Speaker, is that there is 2% of CSR and this 2% of CSR, I agree that we have to ensure that it is well utilised because this is something that can help us extremely *pour le combat contre la pauvreté*.

Madam Speaker, I was looking at the consolidated profits of the hundred top companies last year, I think. The consolidated profits of the hundred top companies, I am not talking about all those thousands of companies' profits, Madam Speaker, profits of only hundred top companies in Mauritius for last year which amounts to almost Rs30 billion, profit before tax which means that if I take 2% of that consolidated profit, Madam Speaker, annually there is a fund of almost Rs600 billion which is available for poverty alleviation. This 2%, Madam Speaker, has been allowed by the Government. The Government has to

have absolute control but the hon. Prime Minister has given a further year to those private companies but, Madam Speaker, what we should understand is that we need to have better transparency on the way this 2% is utilised annually.

Can you imagine the Government has earmarked an amount of Rs150 m. for capital projects? If I am going to take this Rs150 m., Madam Speaker, and divide it by 20 constituencies, it does not make a hell of a lot of money, Madam Speaker. But, if we go to these funds that can be collected through the CSR, I believe that those funds represent an excellent tool and with an effective strategy this is going to help us fight poverty. The humble request that I am going to make, Madam Speaker, is that if Government can have a fresh look at this issue of CSR and tries to see how we can optimise on this specific resource, Madam Speaker, which is there available for the Government to utilise *pour ce combat contre la pauvreté*.

We have also got the National CSR Foundation that has been put in place and I think it is under *le ministère de l'Intégration sociale* and I would expect the Ministry to ensure that there is an appropriate structure. I am told that there is a board that has already been appointed. I hope that the board understands the heavy responsibility that it has to shoulder, Madam Speaker.

I have been looking at the guidelines of the Foundation. Madam Speaker, I was surprised. Normally, you have 1% out of the 2%. 50% goes to the private companies and 50% should be given to the MRA for the Government to spend. But, Madam Speaker, in the guidelines of this National Corporate Social Responsibility Foundation, I have noted something that I, personally, do not agree with. In these guidelines, regarding allocation of funds, I am quoting from the guidelines, Madam Speaker, it is mentioned –

“The amount to be remitted - that is, the 1% that has to be remitted out of the profit to the Government - to the Director General shall be reduced by such amount as the company intends to spend in respect of an approved CSR programme which fits within the priority areas of intervention. This is only permissible if the company submits all projects details for consideration and then receives the prior written approval of the National CSR Foundation.

I do not think that this is correct, Madam Speaker. The law clearly says that half of the 2% should go to the MRA, that 50% of the funds should go to the Government and there has to

be absolute transparency, whether at the level of the Government or at the level of the private sector, how these funds are being spent. So, Madam Speaker, there has extensive debates on this issue of CSR in the House.

Madam Speaker, I believe that we should continue discussing and trying to optimise on these funds. As I am saying, Madam Speaker, Rs13 billion worth of consolidated profits, that is there from the companies. It is not a question of monitoring private companies, Madam Speaker, we have to work as a partner. This is why this National Corporate Social Responsibility Foundation has been put in place. *Le combat contre la pauvreté, ce n'est pas que la responsabilité du gouvernement ou du secteur privé*, Madam Speaker, it is the responsibility of all the stakeholders; the Government, the private sector and even the civil society. So, I believe that in the weeks or months to come, we will have to have a serious debate on this whole issue of CSR, how can we bring better transparency and how can we optimise on these funds in order to alleviate this problem of poverty in Mauritius.

Apart from *le développement, le combat contre la drogue*, when we were campaigning in 2014, Madam Speaker, there were other issues, the issue of jobs. The Government is in office for the last, as I just said, 30 months. Madam Speaker, we hear the same - I do not know if I am going to call it complaints or *les reproches qu'on entend* - are the same that we were hearing in the year 2000 when that Government came in power, that we are embarking on huge projects like in Ebene, *l'éléphant blanc*, that two years after that Government took office in 2000, they said: "Nothing will happen with that Government" , after two years "Nothing will happen!"

But today, Madam Speaker, when we look at what has happened actually in Ebene, when we look at the number of jobs, just imagine, Madam Speaker, if at that time, we were to listen to all those prophets of doom, what would have happened today Madam Speaker, to all those youngsters? What would have happened, Madam Speaker? So, my point is that, Madam Speaker, this Government is working, it is not easy, everybody is aware of the difficult situation. I just mentioned the report of the World Bank, the average growth is almost 2.68, I think, around the world. Even, Madam Speaker, a country like Singapore struggling for 2%, coming to only 1.8% economic growth this year. Not easy at all!

Madam Speaker, I have to share an experience personally that I have going through while receiving my mandates a couple of weeks back. Normally, Madam Speaker, when these mandates come to us for a job, we keep records of their names, etc. In the Government,

normally the procedures that you have, you cannot intervene, but at the level of the private sector, where there is a possibility to do justice, you do justice. But, Madam Speaker, I had received some almost 125 such youngsters who came to see me. When the Government decided to put the National Skills Development Programme, which was meant for the SC/HSC students, I requested the Secretariat at my level to contact those 125 youngsters who came to see us with an SC and an HSC. I was surprised Madam Speaker. There was more than 85%; we contacted them to come for this NSDP course and after 3 or 4 months, once they complete the course, they might have a chance to get a secured employment in the private sector.

So, we contacted those 125 youngsters who came for a job. You will be surprised Madam Speaker. Out of this 125 youngsters that we contacted, almost 80% of them did not turn up. The reason was that they were already working in the private sector. This means, Madam Speaker, that there is a serious problem. What they wanted, actually, was a job in the public sector. I think hon. Gayan has been emphasising on this, Madam Speaker, that the Government cannot secure a job for everybody in the public sector. This is not possible, Madam Speaker! We have this problem; every week people are coming to see us, they do not want to work in the private sector, they want to work in the public sector. This is not possible! I must tell you, Madam Speaker, I was surprised. This why I believe that the Ministry of Labour has to work on a database. I am not challenging the credibility of the Statistics Office because they are going to work on information that they get, but I think we will have to see to it that procedures that are put in place so that we can trace those who are working. NPF/NSF are being contributed so that we know that those people cannot be registered at the Labour Office because, Madam Speaker, this means that the information that we have is not reliable at all. The information, we have on the rate of unemployment in the country, is not reliable at all. I am not bringing politics on this, Madam Speaker. It would be for any Government that will be coming in the months, in the years to come, but it is important for us to understand this problem. *On doit adresser ce problème*, Madam Speaker. People cannot get a job in the public sector, everybody cannot get a job in the public sector.

But I agree, Madam Speaker, the issue of job is a challenge for this Government. We are here for the last 30 months and I am sure that in the days or months to come, we will continue to struggle, Madam Speaker, to ensure that we improve on the plight of all those people, who have had a dream to go to university, secure a job either in the private sector or the public sector, will continue struggling. It is exactly the reason, why Madam Speaker, that

we are coming with strategies, we are coming with a series of measures to ensure that we can improve the economic condition of the country so that we can generate more employment.

So, Madam Speaker, I will not be longer, but what I wanted in my intervention, today, is to elaborate on the aspiration of the population. When we were campaigning in 2014, what the people wanted from us, Madam Speaker, what they were saying was not what the rate of economic growth in this country is. These were not the main issues that we were discussing with them. They were telling us, Madam Speaker, that we have a water problem in our area. They were telling us *qu'il n'y a pas de développement dans notre région. Il faut amener plus de développement*. This is what they were asking for. The whole family was affected due to the problem of drugs. *Il y a même eu des morts, Madame la présidente*, in the absence of evidence, I understand, but we know that the problem of drugs is alarming and this Government is addressing this problem. Madam Speaker, these were the issues that the people were discussing with us. They are still on our mind and it is in this spirit that this Budget has been prepared, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, in my intervention today, I spoke about *l'effet d'annonce* that I do not personally agree with. There is no such *effet d'annonce*, but on the contrary, I have shown *concrètement* almost Rs1 billion were for projects. We have the time to come again next year, Madam Speaker, *sans arrogance*. This is what the population and even the Opposition were expecting from us. We are accountable, Madam Speaker, to the country. We need to share what we are doing. I believe, Madam Speaker, that the way this Government is functioning today and the number of measures that we are taking, I just hope that these are going to bring development. They are going to meet the aspirations of the population in the interest of one and all.

With these few words, Madam Speaker, I would like to thank you for your attention.

Thank you, very much.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Quirin!

(4.25 p.m.)

Mr F. Quirin (Fourth Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière): Madame la présidente, nous sommes déjà au troisième budget de ce gouvernement *Lepep*, si on peut

encore parler de *l'Alliance Lepep*, et de budget en budget, nous sommes passés du miracle économique au fiasco économique.

Pour preuve, Madame la présidente, les économistes qui d'habitude se montrent toujours indulgents envers le ministre des Finances après la présentation du budget, ont cette fois haussé le ton et ont exprimé leurs craintes par rapport aux mesures préconisées dans ce présent budget.

Je ne citerai qu'un nom, Pierre Dinan, économiste réputé et respecté qu'il n'est plus nécessaire, bien sûr, de présenter. M. Pierre Dinan, a en effet trouvé que le budget de l'honorable ministre des Finances manque de souffle et qu'il n'y pas eu grand chose sur la stratégie économique et concernant l'avenir du pays.

Ce qui me pousse à dire, qu'en trois exercices budgétaires, l'honorable ministre des Finances est en passe de se positionner comme le spécialiste du budget aux lettres mortes. C'est-à-dire que les mesures qu'il a annoncées sont très peu où jamais appliquées.

À titre exemple, Madame la présidente, où sont les industries promises aux Mauriciens dans le budget 2016/1007, à savoir la fabrication des bicyclettes, des motocyclettes à Maurice ou encore la raffinerie d'or et la production de lingots d'or? Et j'en passe, Madame la présidente.

Au lieu d'apporter des propositions concrètes qui vont changer la vie de nos compatriotes qui éprouvent, il faut bien le dire, année après année des difficultés pour avoir une vie digne en raison d'une baisse substantielle dans leur pouvoir d'achat, le ministre des Finances a présenté un budget fade dépourvu d'incitations pour ceux et celles qui sont engagés dans la production et l'exportation du *Made in Moris*.

En effet, Madame la présidente, avec ce gouvernement qui n'a cessé de vendre des illusions à la population, nous nous retrouverons bientôt dans une situation où les chiffres de la pauvreté risquent d'être gonflés par la classe dite moyenne.

Ce n'est pas moi qui le dis, mais un rapport intitulé '*Mauritius: Inclusiveness of Growth and Shares Prosperity*.' Dans ce volumineux document, la Banque Mondiale dresse la situation des différentes classes économiques à Maurice et dans lequel je retiens cette phrase –

« The relative sizes of the rich and poor groups remained roughly the same, with a slight reduction in poverty. The upper middle class grew from 49.4% to 52.3% of the population while the lower middle class declined significantly from 31.5% to 24.9%. »

Madame la présidente, quand un pays commence à perdre sa classe moyenne, il va sans dire que tout va mal dans le pays. C'est même un avertissement à prendre avec tout le sérieux possible et ce qui est malheureusement annonciateur des pires catastrophes sociales à l'avenir.

Il n'est un secret pour personne que beaucoup de mauriciens vivent, à ce jour, bien au-delà de ce que leurs moyens financiers leur permettent. Combien de fois n'a-t-on pas entendu des jeunes couples dire: '*dette lors dette*' ou encore '*l'éducation pé fini tout nu cash*' ou '*pas capav faire l'économie.*'

En quoi ce budget vient-il en aide à cette catégorie de la population? Rien, Madame la présidente! Bien au contraire avec un alourdissement de la dette publique, avec tous ces prêts qui ont été contractés par ce gouvernement pour venir soutenir ces deux derniers budgets, nous nous dirigeons tout droit vers un appauvrissement de la population.

Madame la présidente, ce gouvernement est à l'agonie, acculé par les scandales à répétition impliquant bien souvent des proches du pouvoir et sa fameuse 'cuisine'. Des scandales dans lesquels le gouvernement n'hésite pas à engager financièrement la population et les générations futures.

Je trouve cela tout simplement scandaleux, Madame la présidente, que l'honorable Etienne Sinatambou, porte-parole du gouvernement, s'est permis de venir dire: '*si bizin la population payer, beh, li va payer.*' faisant référence au méga scandale de R 5 milliards qu'est la compensation à être payée à Betamax suivant le jugement du tribunal d'arbitrage singapourien. *Finne mettre razer* ...

(Interruptions)

Cela a été rapporté !

'*Finne mettre razer dans la main zakot*', peut-on dire pour reprendre cette bonne expression locale et qui décrit parfaitement la situation. Aujourd'hui, ce gouvernement tente de limiter les dégâts avec des mesures sans queue ni tête qui, au passage, oublie essentiel.

Aucune mesure concrète dans ce budget pour relancer le secteur agricole et d'ailleurs comme l'a si bien souligné le président de la *Small Planters Association*, M. Sunghoon. Rien dans ce budget sur la grande promesse électorale de l'Alliance Lepep. Le salaire minimum!

A ce propos, Madame la présidente, ce gouvernement est en train de noyer le poisson avec cette subvention de R 1000 roupies à ceux qui touchent le R 5000 par mois et R 100 roupies dans la tranche de R 9,751 à R 9,900, qui de surcroît ne sera payé qu'en août de l'année prochaine.

De la poudre aux yeux une fois encore, Madame la présidente, car nul besoin d'être un génie pour dire que cette mesure pour le moins cosmétique n'attaque pas le problème à la source qu'est la question des bas salaires à Maurice.

Dans ce présent budget, le ministre des Finances a indiqué que les conditions attachées à l'attribution des fonds du *Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)* restent inchangées.

Madame la présidente, depuis le budget 2016/007, un *new CSR Framework* a été mis en place, comme nous le savons tous, et qui a eu pour effet la création d'un *CSR Foundation* sous la responsabilité du ministre de l'Intégration sociale et qui est en opération depuis décembre dernier selon le ministre de tutelle, sauf qu'à ce jour, cette fondation n'a pas encore décaissé une seule roupie pour venir en aide à ceux qui sont dans le besoin.

La situation est telle qu'aujourd'hui beaucoup d'ONG sont sur le point de mettre la clé sous le paillason, si ce n'est pas déjà fait car elles sont au bord de l'asphyxie financière.

Avant moi, l'honorable Rughoobur a longuement lui aussi élaboré sur les fonds du CSR et qu'il faudrait avoir de la transparence dans les dépenses, dans les fonds qui sont alloués aux ONG. Mais il faudrait au moins qu'ils puissent bénéficier de ces fonds, pour qu'on puisse les contrôler pour qu'il y ait de la transparence dans la gestion de ces fonds. Mais jusqu'à présent, rien, ils n'ont rien reçu et comme je viens de le dire, ils sont au bord de l'asphyxie financière.

Et il n'y a pas un seul responsable d'ONG, Madame la présidente, avec qui j'ai eu l'occasion de discuter ces dernières semaines, et qui n'a pas été critique envers la façon dont les fonds du CSR sont distribués. Les indicateurs sur la pauvreté à Maurice continue à

grimper et selon certaines statistiques, il y aurait environ 24,600 personnes à Maurice qui vivent dans l'extrême pauvreté et cela avec moins de R 1,640 par mois.

Donc, face à la difficulté de trouver des fonds pour aider ces familles, une ONG a trouvé la bonne idée de lancer un «*crowd funding*» à travers l'Internet pour pouvoir offrir à un millier de familles de quoi se nourrir chaque mois. Pourquoi donc, Madame la présidente, ces fonds du CSR ne sont pas disponibles ? Et selon le ministre de l'Intégration Sociale, il paraît que dans une de ses réponses en date du 04 avril dernier, il nous avait indiqué que plus de 100 millions avaient été crédités dans les comptes justement du *National CSR Foundation*, venant de la MRA.

Mais que fait donc cette fondation avec tout cet argent ? Surtout pourquoi les ONG doivent presque mendier, Madame la présidente, avant d'obtenir des fonds et qui vont leur permettre de donner un peu d'espoir à des personnes qui sont dans l'extrême pauvreté ou qui sont victimes des fléaux qui rongent notre société. Neuf mois depuis que le *National CSR Foundation* a été mis en place et neuf mois depuis que les ONG attendent le décaissement des fonds pour quelques 250 projets. Et dans tout cela, que font les officiers de la *National Empowerment Foundation* ?

Madame la présidente, dans une récente interview de presse, le président de la *CSR Foundation* a demandé plus de temps. Mais combien de temps encore avant que les ONG puissent enfin bénéficier de ces fonds. Il va sans dire, Madame la présidente, que cette grosse machinerie qui a été mise en place depuis neuf mois est complètement en panne et cela au détriment de ceux qui vivent quotidiennement dans la pauvreté.

Outre ces familles, il y a aussi tous ces hommes et toutes ces femmes qui sont les victimes des méfaits de la drogue, de la violence conjugale, les victimes d'abus sexuels et de l'alcool entre autres. Avec la fermeture de certains ONG le désarroi s'est déjà emparé de ces laissés-pour-compte de la société.

L'espoir était aussi chez eux, chez ceux qui ont des enfants handicapés et qui ont besoin des écoles spécialisées, des écoles particulières pour assurer leur formation et leur intégration dans la société. Les ONG ont besoin de ces fonds CSR pour pouvoir, non seulement, aider ces personnes et ces enfants en difficulté mais aussi pour faire fonctionner leurs structures dont les charges sont de plus en plus lourdes.

Malheureusement, Madame la présidente, ce présent budget fait totalement l'impasse sur les handicapés. Ce n'est pas la révision des infrastructures de quatre collèges pour les rendre plus accessibles aux élèves handicapés qui va changer la vie des personnes autrement capables. Et la situation à ce niveau est très grave et certains responsables ou militants de la cause des handicapés sont sortis de leur silence depuis la présentation de ce budget.

M. Armoogum Parsuramen dont l'engagement est connu mondialement pour les handicapés à travers la *Global Rainbow Foundation*, est allé jusqu'à considérer ce présent budget de cosmétiques. Je le cite –

« Dans l'exercice du budget 2017/18, les quelques propositions en faveur des handicapés étaient plus cosmétiques qu'autre chose. Nous aurions, par exemple, mieux apprécié les subsides sur les couches pour adultes et une obligation d'avoir un minimum de rampes d'accès dans les autobus »

A-t-il notamment déploré sur le peu ou sinon aucune considération de l'État envers les handicapés ? Quelle aberration, Madame la présidente ! Nous sommes déjà à la fin de l'année financière 2016/2017, mais la centaine de millions de roupies est toujours au chaud dans les caisses de la *CSR Foundation*. Le ministre de l'Intégration Sociale avait promis en mai dernier en réponse à une question parlementaire qu'il allait tout faire pour que ces fonds soient disponibles. Je le cite –

“I have urged the Foundation not to wait until the end of June to start payment. They can go out and start analyzing all the proposals and they can start the payment as soon as possible.”

Zéro ! A ce titre, j'ajouterai aussi les propos de Madame Jacqueline Forget, la présidente de l'ONG SENS (*Special Education Needs Society*), et qui dit –

« Il y a un manque de transparence dans le processus d'allocation du budget du CSR aux ONG. »

Et aussi pour reprendre les propos d'un honorable membre, les seules personnes qui touchent de l'argent pour l'heure avec cette fondation sont le président et les membres de cette fondation. C'est rien de plus qu'une situation injuste envers ceux et celles qui ont besoin d'être aidés.

Dans ce même chapitre, Madame la présidente, je ne peux rester silencieux sur le sort qui est réservé à certaines personnes handicapées qui touchent une allocation de la Sécurité sociale. Après avoir bénéficié d'une pension d'Invalides ou d'un « *Carer's Allowance* » pendant un certain temps ces personnes voient cette allocation qu'elles reçoivent, être annulée subitement sous prétexte qu'elle ne répond plus aux critères de 60% d'invalidité. Je ne sais pas quel est le type de miracle qui a pu se produire entre-temps, une personne qui bénéficie d'une assistance, d'une allocation parce que cette personne est handicapée et invalide et subitement sans aucune raison valable ces personnes ne reçoivent plus leur allocation.

Cette situation est décrite comme un véritable calvaire pour ne pas dire une humiliation pour ces personnes. Et je prie donc l'honorable ministre de la Sécurité sociale de trouver des solutions appropriées à ce type de problème, y compris pour ceux qui ont bénéficié d'un don d'équipement de son ministère mais qui pour des raisons évidentes ne sont pas en mesure de se déplacer pour venir récupérer ces équipements qui pourraient améliorer leur quotidien.

Madame la présidente, à la même époque l'année dernière, j'avais dénoncé dans mon intervention les ravages que font les drogues synthétiques dans notre société. Et c'est avec peine, tristesse et colère que je reviens sur cette question une fois de plus. La situation de la drogue à Maurice a dépassé le seuil de l'inquiétude. Tous les indicateurs démontrent que nous sommes désormais une plaque tournante de ce business lucratif dans cette partie du monde, notamment entre Madagascar et l'Afrique du Sud.

Et à ce niveau, la république de Maurice a cassé tous les records possibles et imaginables. Des saisies record de drogues dures telles que l'héroïne ont été enregistrées récemment. Et cela démontre dans une très large mesure à quel point la situation s'est aggravée.

Les faits qui ont été relevés jusqu'ici devant la commission d'enquête sur la drogue présidée par l'ex-juge Lam Shang Leen, donne déjà un aperçu de l'ampleur de la situation. Plus grave encore dans ce dossier, ce sont les ramifications qui existent entre les barons de la drogue et différentes sphères de la vie publique, notamment au sein de la force policière, de la douane et de la politique dont certains « *zenfants lacaze* » dont nous avons tous entendu parler.

À ce titre, Madame la présidente, je voudrais aussi dénoncer de toutes mes forces, l'utilisation qu'ont fait certaines personnes issues du mouvement sportif et qui utilisent le sport pour camoufler leur trafic de drogue. Des cas ont été mis au grand jour récemment et tout ce que le sport peut représenter comme noblesse a été bafoué et les blessures seront à jamais gravées dans les mémoires. Madame la présidente, le volume de drogues dures saisies ces dernières semaines, donne froid dans le dos.

Madame la présidente, le volume de drogues dures saisies ces dernières semaines donne froid dans le dos. Puisque les barons de la drogue se sont infiltrés partout, la triste vérité de cette situation est que c'est la jeunesse de ce pays qui paie les conséquences.

Nous ne voyons toujours pas venir une politique nationale contre les proliférations des drogues à Maurice. Aujourd'hui, nous constatons que les drogues en tous genres se vendent comme des gâteaux piments dans tous les coins de rues. Pour ne citer qu'un exemple, les habitants des régions de Bambous et de Rivière Noire assistent impuissants à une expansion de la vente des drogues synthétiques dans leurs quartiers. Depuis des années, les habitants de cette région où la pauvreté fait ravage sont désarmés face à l'autodestruction de sa jeunesse. Ils ont constaté que même les adultes se laissent tenter par l'expérience destructrice de ces produits. Et au niveau de ma circonscription la situation s'est empirée davantage malgré quelques arrestations. Vers qui doivent se tourner ces habitants pour trouver des solutions durables aux maux et fléaux qui les rongent? C'est la jeunesse qui est en nette perte, Madame la présidente.

En effet, la jeunesse, reste le maillon faible de ce budget. Qui dit jeunesse dit tout aussi bien l'avenir de ce pays. L'exemple que donne ce gouvernement me pousse à me demander si nous ne devons pas déjà parler d'une génération perdue. Il n'y a pas dans ce budget un seul item qui vise à valoriser cette jeunesse mauricienne qui, elle-même, fait face à tous ces maux qui ne cessent de ronger notre société et qui pourraient à terme mettre en danger le socle familial.

Madame la présidente, le budget de l'honorable Premier ministre et ministre des finances parle de formation visant à permettre à des jeunes citoyens de postuler pour obtenir de l'emploi sur des bateaux de croisière ou encore d'être formés pour des *industrial placement under the National Skills Development Programme*. Mais où en sont les initiatives pour aider ces jeunes qui veulent se lancer dans les affaires ou mettre en place leur propre *start-up*? Rien, absolument rien, n'a été prévu pour eux, Madame la présidente, et

l'honorable Premier ministre veut nous faire croire que ce présent budget va relever les défis de nos ambitions. Du rêve ou encore du rêve, Madame la présidente.

Et je peux en dire autant pour le service de santé. Le départ de l'honorable Gayan avait un certain moment redonné de l'espoir mais, au contraire, son successeur, l'honorable Husnoo est arrivé en fanfare, il est vrai, mais par la suite rien n'a rien changé et dans certains cas, la situation est même devenue catastrophique.

Comment ne pas évoquer le cas de ces patients qui sont appelés à faire leur dialyse dans les hôpitaux. C'est inadmissible que ces personnes, qui souffrent déjà d'une santé déficiente, doivent attendre pendant plus de deux heures avant d'être transportées chez elles par la suite. Et j'espère que l'achat de cinq nouvelles ambulances, comme annoncé dans ce présent budget va permettre, tout au moins, à ces patients de rentrer rapidement chez eux après leurs traitements.

Et je peux en dire autant pour les patients qui souffrent d'un cancer et qui doivent se rendre à l'hôpital Victoria à Candos pour obtenir des soins. Il y a une salle d'attente exiguë, des heures d'attente interminables, difficultés pour avoir une ambulance à l'aller comme au retour, des toilettes insalubres. Bref, Madame la présidente, toutes les conditions sont réunies non pas pour les soulager, mais pour rendre leur souffrance encore plus insoutenable. J'ose espérer qu'avec l'arrivée de 319 nouveaux médecins, les choses vont s'améliorer pour ces mauriciens qui n'ont d'autres moyens que de se rendre dans les hôpitaux pour obtenir des soins.

Madame la présidente, même le secteur sportif n'échappe pas à cette politique qui consiste à vendre des rêves c'est le moins que l'on puisse dire avec les propositions qui ont été faites par l'honorable ministre des finances. Pour preuve, on se rappellera que, dans une des mesures phares du budget 2016-2017 pour le sport, il était question de mettre en place un plan pour soutenir le développement professionnel de nos meilleurs athlètes en leur offrant un contrat d'embauche en tant qu'entraîneur pour les jeunes sportifs et sportives.

Une année plus tard, Madame la présidente, nous constatons que cette mesure n'était en effet qu'un effet d'annonce, comme tant d'autres, pour le mouvement sportif. Dans ces conditions, Madame la présidente, comment peut-on croire, cette fois encore, que la proposition de mettre en place un *hall of fame* et un *allowance scheme* visant à venir en aide financièrement à nos anciennes gloires sportives à la retraite relève d'une réelle intention de

les récompenser pour leurs performances passées, performances qui, souvent, ont fait honneur à la nation mauricienne tout entière? Et j'ai moi-même, en plusieurs occasions, réclamé dans cette Chambre et ailleurs que plus de considération soit donnée à ceux qui ont défendu et qui défendent les couleurs de notre République.

J'avais même dit que ces sportifs vivent un véritable calvaire après avoir fait honneur au sport mauricien. Dans la foulée, j'avais évoqué le cas du boxeur Bruno Julie, tout le monde s'en souvient je suppose, notre seul médaillé d'Olympique à ce jour, qui avait dû mendier pour obtenir un travail. Le mot est fort mais c'était le cas. Inacceptable ! Et j'en passe sur ce qu'avait dit notre champion en parlant de l'ex-ministre de la jeunesse et des sports. Mais je retiens que ce n'est qu'après mon intervention sur le budget 2016-2017 dans cette même Assemblée, que certaines personnes au niveau du CEB avaient pris contact avec Bruno Julie pour finalement le recruter.

Si notre champion de boxe a pu trouver une stabilité professionnelle qu'il mérite amplement, je me pose cependant la question de savoir combien de sportifs qu'ils soient retraités ou actifs, peinent à joindre les deux bouts à chaque fin de mois? Et par la même occasion je dirais qu'un emploi au CEB dans le cas de Julie n'est pas suffisant. Il mérite largement mieux. Une médaille olympique, Madame la présidente, n'a pas de prix. C'est un exploit sportif de dimension planétaire qu'il fallait savoir saluer à sa juste mesure pour donner aux autres sportifs l'envie d'aller chercher un jour un podium olympique. Idem pour Buckland et Milazar, finalistes mondiaux en athlétisme. R10,000 par mois ce n'est certes pas négligeable pour un bon sportif, mais pas suffisant pour des sportifs de leur niveau. Il est vraiment nécessaire de donner une dimension très forte à ces performances exceptionnelles. À titre d'exemple pourquoi pas une pension mensuelle de R50,000 qui serait appropriée pour que l'exploit ait vraiment un sens.

Madame la présidente, il ne faudrait pas que cette mesure, *long overdue* en faveur des sportifs à la retraite, demeure une proposition sans suite. Au cas contraire, le mal sera encore plus profond chez nos sportifs. Dans la foulée, il serait souhaitable que l'honorable ministre des sports place tous les sportifs sur le même pied d'égalité. Je l'ai déjà dit ici même dans cette Chambre et je le redis que c'est une démarche malsaine que de différencier les sports olympiques et non olympiques quand il s'agit de récompenser. Autres mesures que l'honorable ministre des finances a annoncées pour le mouvement sportif est la mise en place d'un *National Sports Policy*.

N'est-ce pas là un constat d'échec, Madame la présidente ? Dans des pays comme l'Inde, Trinidad et Tobago, Sainte Lucie ou encore les îles Cayman, un *National Sports Policy* a été élaboré après qu'il fut constaté que leur mouvement sportif ne fonctionnait pas comme il se devait. Et quand je disais l'année dernière que ce gouvernement n'a pas de politique définie pour le sport, nous avons aujourd'hui la preuve et cette mesure autour de laquelle se dégage déjà un parfum de scandale. En attendant que le ministre nous donne des précisions sur ce projet, on se pose déjà la question de savoir comment les R5 millions qui seront consacrées à la préparation d'un *National Sports Policy* vont être dépensées?

Le constat d'échec, Madame la présidente est évident. Selon les programmes qui ont été identifiés pour l'élaboration de ce *National Sports Policy*, l'honorable ministre des finances a mentionné une plus grande participation des jeunes filles aux activités sportives et bien sûr de se tenir l'écart des drogues et autres problèmes de la société. L'échec est double dans ce cas de figure. D'abord concernant la prolifération des drogues au sein de la jeunesse mauricienne, année après année, les ONG, les travailleurs sociaux et moi-même dans cette Assemblée avons tiré la sonnette d'alarme sur les conséquences désastreuses de ce fléau, non seulement chez les jeunes, mais dans les familles mauriciennes. Et les statistiques sont là pour le prouver. Et le sport reste, en toute circonstance, Madame la présidente, le moyen le plus efficace pour lutter contre les fléaux qui rongent notre société et pas besoin d'un *National Sports Policy* pour savoir que le mal est déjà fait et que trop de temps a été perdu. Et aujourd'hui, notre république se retrouve face à une génération qui a perdu ses repères.

Il faut voir comment sont organisées les activités dans les centres de jeunesse à travers l'île pour se rendre compte à quel point ce ministère a failli dans sa tâche d'accompagner les jeunes dans notre pays.

L'honorable ministre, je crois comprendre, a fait une tournée dans quelques centres de jeunesse ces dernières semaines. Et je pense qu'il a lui-même certainement constaté le manque d'activité dans ces centres. Pour ne citer qu'un chiffre, la participation des jeunes dans les activités des centres de jeunesse est passée de 81,630 en 2014 à 67,895 en 2016. Et en 2015, ce chiffre était de 54,107. Que doit-on déduire, Madame la présidente? Ces chiffres, je le précise, sont tirées de l'*Annual Statistical Report Youth and Sports* de 2016.

Madame la présidente, l'échec par rapport à la participation des jeunes filles dans les compétitions sportives n'est pas un fait nouveau. Tous les responsables des fédérations sportives à Maurice vous diront à quel point la situation est dramatique.

Rapport après rapport, cet échec a été constaté et pour vous donner un chiffre il n'y avait en 2016 que 36 athlètes de haut niveau. Elles étaient 22 en 2013, 26 en 2014 et 43 en 2015, parce que sans doute c'était l'année des jeux des îles.

En 2016, dans certaines disciplines comme le tennis, la boxe et le kick boxing, il n'y avait pas un seul élément féminin qui faisait le haut niveau. Qu'a-on fait depuis tout ce temps au sein du ministère de la jeunesse et des sports pour remédier à cette situation? C'est pourtant bien le MJS qui organise des compétitions telles que les jeux des jeunes, les jeux de l'avenir ou encore les jeux de l'espoir.

Qu'a fait ce ministère en constatant que le taux de participation des jeunes filles avait considérablement baissé? Absolument rien, pourrait-on dire, car pour le *National Youth Games* la participation est passée de 719 sur 2,945 participants en 2013 à 552 en 2014 et 559 en 2015.

Combien de temps encore devons-nous patienter pour qu'il y ait enfin des actions en faveur d'une plus grande participation des filles dans les activités sportives? Il est à espérer que le *National Sports Policy* prenne justement des initiatives et viennent de l'avant rapidement avec un vrai programme dans ce sens. Autre question sur ce dossier et comment seront dépensés les R 20 millions attribuées pour les différents projets?

Madame la présidente, quant à la somme de R 18 millions qui a été attribuée pour la préparation des athlètes en marge des jeux des îles, j'estime que c'est une démarche tout à fait élémentaire. Toutefois, je souhaite vivement qu'il n'y ait pas d'amalgame entre ce fonds et celui qui est consacré de façon annuelle pour le fonctionnement des fédérations.

Je souhaite aussi, madame la présidente, qu'il y ait de la transparence dans l'allocation de ce budget de R 18 millions tant au niveau du ministère des sports qu'au niveau des fédérations. Il faudrait qu'il y ait de l'équité dans la distribution de cet argent et qu'en retour, les fédérations fassent preuve de beaucoup de réalisme dans leur demande.

La question est de savoir si, à deux ans des jeux des îles, ces R 18 millions vont être suffisantes pour une préparation adéquate de nos athlètes? Personnellement, j'ai de sérieux doutes.

Je constate aussi qu'il y a une somme de R 50 millions qui est prévue sous ce même item pour l'année financière 2018-2019. Madame la présidente, à mon humble avis, il aurait

été plus judicieux que les R18 et R50 millions soient réparties équitablement sur deux années. C'est maintenant qu'il faut investir dans la préparation de la sélection nationale pour espérer obtenir des résultats en 2019. L'année prochaine, seront à une année des jeux et il sera peut-être trop tard.

Madame la présidente, depuis décembre 2014, le ministère de la jeunesse et des sports a connu deux ministres et l'actuel titulaire au poste est en fonction depuis février de cette année. Et il y a une certitude qui se dresse devant nous: il n'y a eu aucune amélioration dans le fonctionnement et les prises de décision dans ce ministère. À ce titre, je vais vous citer quelques exemples pour soutenir mes dires.

Le judo, Madame la présidente, une discipline qui a tant fait honneur à la république de Maurice dans le passé, se retrouve depuis octobre 2015 dans une situation de plus confuse. La situation est telle que je crains le pire pour nos judokas qui seront en lice pour les dixièmes jeux des îles, qui auront lieu en 2019 comme nous savons tous ici à Maurice.

Je crains le pire car, à ce jour, la fédération mauricienne de judo ne fonctionne pas. Il n'y a pas de dirigeants et les judokas sont laissés à eux-mêmes sans direction, sans objectif et ce surtout sans compétition depuis plus d'une année. Nous sommes dans le flou. Nous ne savons pas encore combien de temps cette situation va perdurer. Les judokas s'entraînent normalement, mais nous n'avons pas de compétition.

Et là, ce sont les propos de la judokate Sarah Silva, médaillé d'or aux derniers jeux d'îles. Les propos rapportés dans la presse alors que d'autres soutiennent n'avoir participé à aucune compétition depuis une année.

Depuis que la fédération mauricienne de judo a éclaté en 1000 morceaux, aucune action n'a été prise pour la remettre sur les rails.

Depuis février dernier, honorable ministre appliquait la loi et je fais ici référence à la section 9 du Sports Act, pour mettre en place un comité temporaire qui a pour mission de remettre en place un comité directeur à la tête de cette fédération.

Mais là encore l'échec a été constaté et j'apprends que le ministère a décidé de dissoudre ce comité sans toutefois qu'aucunes lumières ne soient aperçues au bout du tunnel. Dans cette même foulée, j'apprends qu'un nouveau comité temporaire sera mis sur pied pour une période de 18 mois.

En attendant, ce sont les athlètes qui souffrent j'ai bien peur, en raison de cette situation, qu'il faudra sans doute faire une croix sur nos espoirs de faire le plein de médailles d'or dans cette discipline comme c'était le cas dans le passé aux jeux des îles.

Dans ce même panier, Madame la présidente, on peut mettre le football. Notre élimination dans les qualifications pour la CAN 2018 par les Comores, qui était jusqu'à un passé récent, le souffre-douleur de toutes les équipes nationales de la région, et bien la preuve que le Club M est quasiment à la dérive. Là encore, vous conviendrez avec moi, qu'il y a des inquiétudes légitimes à avoir à deux ans des Jeux des îles ici à Maurice.

Et là où le bât blesse, en ce qu'il s'agit du football, c'est la formation. Au risque de me répéter une nouvelle fois, je dirais que c'est le parent pauvre du sport mauricien, en particulier le football. Les écoles de formation fonctionnent toujours au petit bonheur en raison d'une absence de fonds et d'une stratégie mal définie. Qui ne se souvient pas de la bourde de l'ex ministre des sports qui avait annoncé, ici même dans cette Chambre, en grande pompe la réouverture des écoles de foot dans le pays mais qui avait dû vite se raviser puisque tout de suite après ces mêmes écoles ont dû fermer leurs portes faute de fonds disponibles. Une année après, les choses n'ont pas changé et je constate qu'aucun fonds n'a été attribué dans les *estimates* sous cet item.

Plus grave, comme son prédécesseur, l'honorable ministre des Sports, l'actuel, veut nous vendre du rêve à travers l'académie de football avec un *famous club*. Dans le sillage de la présentation du budget 2017-2018 nous avons constaté une réactualisation du projet phare du programme électoral de l'alliance lepep l'académie de football de West Ham. Pendant une semaine, Madame la présidente, un dénommé, Ian Hendon, était à Maurice et a même rencontré le Premier ministre.

Madame la présidente, d'abord cette question. Ian Hendon est-t-il venu à Maurice au nom de la direction de West Ham ou en son nom personnel ? Il y trop des ondes d'ombres qui entourent cette visite, et qui ressemble beaucoup à celle qui avait effectué l'agent politique, Sam Allardyce, en pleine campagne électoral de décembre 2014.

En effet dans les recherches que j'ai effectuées, j'arrive à la conclusion que ce monsieur Ian Hendon ne fait plus parti du staff de West Ham United depuis mai 2015. Du bluff. Au moment il devint le *manager* de Leyton Orient.

Selon les informations qui sont disponibles, Ian Hendon a été nommé en juillet 2011 *Development Coach* sous Sam Allardyce, qui était à l'époque le *Manager* de West Ham, il est vrai, puis, il a été nommé *First Team Coach* en décembre 2012 jusqu'en mai 2015. Et par la suite plus rien sur ce monsieur et j'ai des informations en provenance du monde footballistique anglais à l'effet qu'il n'a plus rien à faire avec le *club* de West Ham. Cherche-t-on à manipuler l'opinion publique, une fois encore, autour de ce projet fictif qu'est la mise en place d'une Académie de Football de West Ham à Maurice ? Que l'honorable ministre vienne nous prouver le contraire !

Aux dernières nouvelles, Madame la présidente, si l'honorable ministre des Sports l'ignore, Ian Hendon a été recruté en mai 2017 *Director of Football* de Billericay Town, une petite équipe qui espère grimper en quatrième division anglaise.

(Interruptions)

Il y a effectivement, vous en conviendrez, anguille sous roche dans cette histoire. Et cela me fait penser au recrutement en 2012 d'un certain Pietro Allata, que mes collègues je suppose s'en souviennent effectivement, Pietro Allata qui avait été recruté et que suite aux questions que j'avais posées ici même, dans cette Assemblée, a dû quitter le pays rapidement.

Madame la présidente, je me demande au final si nous n'avons pas affaire à des bluffeurs ? L'honorable ministre des Sports a été nommé depuis février et depuis le Comité d'Organisation des Jeux des Iles n'a pas toujours son *Chief Executive Officer* après la démission de Georges Chung.

L'organisation des Jeux des Iles à Maurice en 2019 demeure plus que jamais un rendez-vous important pour la jeunesse de notre pays et dans toute la région. Mais, à 2 ans de ce rendez-vous, une menace pèse sur l'avenir même de ces jeux et qui risque d'amoindrir le succès de cette manifestation en 2019.

En effet, comme vous le savez certainement, la Réunion a placé une épée de Damoclès sur la tête de Maurice avec la menace de ne pas participer à nos jeux si une solution n'est pas trouvée sur la manière dont sont admis leurs athlètes. Le mouvement sportif mauricien n'imagine pas un seul instant que nos amis de l'île sœur soient absents à ces jeux.

Mais il semblerait que l'absence éventuelle des Réunionnais ne pose pas de problème à notre ami, l'honorable ministre des Sports, qui au lendemain de la menace réunionnaise, a déclaré sur les ondes d'une radio et je le cite –

« On fera la fête quand même »

(Interruptions)

Voilà le type de réaction que nous avons pour témoigner du désintéressement de certains concernant ce problème, Madame la présidente. J'espère que depuis cette déclaration à la légère, l'honorable ministre s'est rendu compte de la gravité de la situation et a compris qu'il devrait accorder toute son attention et tout le sérieux voulu pour trouver une solution durable à ce problème.

Puisqu'on parle de problèmes auxquels aucune solution n'est trouvée, je dois ajouter la situation du *Trust Fund for Excellence in Sports* qui est sans *Chief Executive Officer* depuis une année bientôt. Doit-on penser que le ministre a des difficultés pour trouver des gens compétents pour travailler à ses côtés ? Si tel est le cas, c'est très grave.

Tout aussi grave, Madame la présidente, l'absence de considération que le ministère de la Jeunesse et des Sports accorde aux handballeurs qui sont actuellement en préparation pour défendre les couleurs du pays pour les championnats du monde juniors du *Beach Handball*, qui se tiendront à Maurice en juillet prochain. Inconcevable, Madame la présidente, que ces jeunes ont dû dormir sous des tentes pour pouvoir s'entraîner le lendemain. Alors que tout le monde sait que des véhicules du ministère sont bien garés dans le parking et ne sont utilisés que pour certaines activités du ministère et du ministre en particulier..

Madame la présidente, je dois aussi dénoncer dans cette lignée, le fait que le ministre du Tourisme a ignoré une demande venant de la Fédération de Handball. Il est un fait que ces championnats du monde de *Beach Handball* apporteront entre 600 et 700 touristes à Maurice sans oublier l'impact médiatique de cette compétition dans le monde puisque plusieurs journaux et sites spécialisés dans le *handball* parleront de Maurice. Quoi de plus normal que le ministère du Tourisme accorde son aide à l'organisation de cette compétition ? Comme c'est l'honorable Gayan qui est à la barre au tourisme doit-on s'étonner que les portes de ce ministère soient restées fermées aux responsables de cette compétition ? Je n'en sais rien. Et ce gouvernement veut nous faire croire qu'il a une politique juste et équitable ?

L'équité dans le sport est un point central, Madame la présidente. Elle nous amène à comprendre notre position, voire notre niveau face à la concurrence dans la région, comme sur le continent.

A ce propos je voudrais saluer ceux et celles qui ont défendu les couleurs mauriciennes dans les compétitions africaines et qui ont gagné des titres, souvent dans des conditions difficiles. Car je sais que la pratique du sport de haut niveau est exigeante et oblige les athlètes à des sacrifices considérables.

Nous savons aussi que dans nombre de cas, la carrière d'un sportif de haut niveau est courte et que l'argent gagné au cours de cette carrière n'est jamais suffisant en raison des aléas liés à la pratique du sport de haut niveau.

C'est pour cette raison que je continuerai à plaider pour une valorisation de ces athlètes de haut niveau par l'État. Notamment, en les assurant une porte de sortie après leur carrière. Si c'est sans doute normal d'assurer une pension à ceux qui ont défendu avec brio les couleurs nationales, il est aussi, Madame la présidente, tout à fait normal qu'avant ne vienne la pension, vient le travail mais aussi la valorisation.

La valorisation du sport et des sportifs passe aussi par une politique équitable dans la pratique du sport même au niveau amateur. Comment donc valoriser cette pratique, surtout qu'il est désormais reconnu que le sport a des effets bénéfiques indéniables sur la santé quand les collectivités locales, elles décident d'augmenter les frais de locations des salles de sports ? Dans un passé récent pourrait-on dire le *Mauritius Sports Council* sous la présidence de la toute-puissante conseillère du Premier ministre, Madame Rawat Currimjee - qu'il faut le rappeler est elle-même une ancienne athlète - avait donné le tempo en augmentant tous les frais de locations des sites sportifs.

Aujourd'hui, nous constatons que des collectivités locales, telle que la mairie de Vacoas-Phoenix, ont décidé d'augmenter de 100% les frais de locations des *courts* de badminton, de *squash* et des terrains de *foot* synthétiques. Quel drame pour un pays qui bat tous les records des maladies comme le diabète et l'hypertension ! Au lieu de prendre des décisions pour encourager la pratique du sport, ce gouvernement fait tout le contraire.

Comment non plus ne pas dénoncer, Madame la présidente, toute cette supercherie qui entoure désormais l'organisation du football professionnel à Maurice. L'année dernière j'avais attiré l'attention de cette Chambre sur la problématique qui existe dans l'attribution

des R26 millions de l'État dans les caisses de la *Mauritius Professional Football League Ltd.* Aucune indication sur le montant qui sera alloué pour l'année financière 2017-2018 dans ce présent budget au football professionnel, sauf qu'il sera financé par le *Lotto Fund*. Depuis trois ans le gouvernement a investi des millions et des millions dans ce projet.

Je le redis, loin de moi l'idée d'être contre le fait que l'État finance le football professionnel, mais je suis de ceux qui croient qu'il est important que la transparence doit primer dans la gestion des fonds qui sont alloués à cette compagnie privée. Tel n'est pas le cas, car la MPFL semble-t-il n'est redevable envers personne.

Aujourd'hui, que constatons-nous, Madame la présidente ? La MPFL est en situation financière critique et un arrêt de ces activités après la fin du championnat ce dimanche n'est plus une rumeur, mais une réalité. Pourtant depuis trois ans le ministère de la Jeunesse et des Sports injecte des millions et des millions de roupies dans les caisses de cette compagnie. Depuis le mois de mai la MPFL, la ligue professionnelle, est presque en cessation de paiement vis-à-vis des clubs professionnels. Selon mes informations sur les quelques R 300,000 qui reviennent chaque mois à un club pour assurer les salaires des joueurs, la ligue professionnelle n'a déboursé que R 100,000.

Ce n'est, en fait, que le signe avant-coureur d'une situation qui va se dégrader davantage. Comme toujours dans de telles circonstances ce sont les joueurs qui en font les frais. Les responsables des clubs n'ont cessé de lancer des appels au secours, Madame la présidente. Comme celui de Jean-François Paul, président de Roche Bois Bolton City dans un quotidien récemment, il y a quelques jours de cela, et je le cite –

« Je ne sais plus quoi répondre aux joueurs. Ils sont frustrés. Je peux même les comprendre, car certains comptent sur cet argent pour faire bouillir la marmite et régler les dettes. Le comble est que la MPFL joue aux abonnés absents. Elle n'a même pas jugé utile de nous informer de la situation »

Madame la présidente, cette ligue avait été créée avec en toile de fond la promesse de créer une industrie du football à Maurice. Or, aujourd'hui, les joueurs sont dans le doute total.

Bon nombre d'entre eux avaient délaissé leur travail pour devenir des joueurs professionnels. Désormais l'espoir a laissé place à la désillusion et j'espère que l'honorable ministre des Sports, dans son intervention, viendra nous dire quelles seront les actions qui seront prises dans les plus brefs délais pour sauver le football professionnel. A ce propos, je

voudrais mettre en exergue la nonchalance de la Mauritius Football Association, qui a choisi la facilité en se lavant les mains des problèmes du football professionnel.

Madame le présidente, avec d'autres collègues de notre Assemblée, j'ai l'honneur de siéger en tant que parlementaire au sein du Parlement panafricain, où nous essayons d'apporter notre contribution dans les débats autour de la problématique du développement en Afrique, ce continent auquel nous appartenons.

Force est de constater que 50 ans bientôt après notre adhésion à la Charte de l'OUA en 1968 et maintenant l'Union Africaine, nous avons toujours cette mauvaise habitude de nous mettre en retrait par rapport à ce continent qui, je le répète, est le nôtre !

En me référant aux maigres paragraphes consacrés à ce continent dans le budget, je constate, qu'une fois encore, le gouvernement se met en position de 'nous et l'Afrique'. On nous parle de Commissions mixtes pour consolider nos relations bilatérales.

Madame la présidente, est-ce qu'on peut en 2017, alors qu'on évolue à la vitesse grand V en termes de relations régionales et internationales avec des instruments modernes pour asseoir la coopération et l'intégration régionales, nous cloîtrer derrière des instruments vétustes pour promouvoir nos relations.

On ne peut faire face aux impératifs du développement d'aujourd'hui avec des instruments d'hier tels qu'un système de commission mixte. D'ailleurs, tisser des relations avec une poignée de pays sur le continent ne peut nullement être qualifié de politique africaine!

Il faut en finir avec cette terminologie mal inspirée de 'Mauritius-Africa Strategy' et contribuer à faire avancer le rêve panafricain en concertant des efforts pour l'émergence d'une Afrique intégrée, comme préconisé par l'acte constitutif de l'Union africaine.

Madame la présidente, en cette année 2017, il est prévu qu'une zone de libre échange continentale soit mise en œuvre! Pas un mot dans le discours du budget à ce sujet alors que nous avons pleinement souscrit à ce projet ambitieux et d'envergure à travers notre adhésion au Traité d'Abuja, et encore notre soutien à ce projet lors d'un récent sommet de l'Union Africaine.

Au contraire, on nous parle de poursuivre des négociations en vue d'un accord de libres échanges avec la Chine, entre autres. Est-ce que nous avons étudié les contradictions

qui puissent émerger en se faisant avec notre engagement pour une zone de libre échange continentale?

Madame la présidente, nous venons de célébrer la journée de l'Afrique. C'était le 25 mai dernier. Cet évènement est passé inaperçu dans le public! A ma connaissance, aucune manifestation officielle n'a été organisée pour marquer ce jour, pas même au niveau des établissements scolaires, mis à part un simple communiqué.

Alors que nous avons entériné des décisions au niveau du continent pour valoriser et sensibiliser nos populations quant aux ambitions de notre continent, pas un mot n'a été dit sur cet instrument d'intégration qu'est le passeport africain, ça fait rire mais c'est le cas, pourtant entériné par nos représentants dans les instances décisionnelles de l'Union Africaine.

Madame la présidente, il est prévu que d'ici 2020, l'obligation de visa pour la mobilité intra-africaine sera abolie et remplacé par un passeport africain électronique qui garantira la libre circulation des personnes sur l'ensemble du continent africain. Doit-on déduire que le gouvernement mauricien n'accorde aucune importance à la concrétisation de ce projet ?

On nous parle plutôt d'exploiter les avantages que représentent le continent au lieu d'apporter notre pierre à son développement. Alors comment nous faire accepter comme africain à part entière? Il ne faut pas seulement être partie prenante des grandes décisions mais aussi de les mettre en œuvre avec conviction tant au niveau national qu'au niveau régional et continental.

Nous pouvons certes tisser des relations bilatérales avec d'autres pays du continent mais cela doit se faire dans les paramètres de notre appartenance aux communautés économiques, régionales et de cette Afrique intégrée dont nous nous revendiquons. Madame la présidente, avant de terminer, je souhaiterais dire quelques mots sur ma circonscription de Beau Bassin/Petite Rivière.

Après l'épisode de la raffinerie pétrolière, nous avons pris connaissance cette fois qu'un *petroleum hub* sera une réalité en 2020 à Albion. C'est ce que j'appelle *add insult to injury*, non seulement pour les habitants de cette région, mais aussi pour tous ceux qui habitent dans les régions avoisinantes. Les habitants d'Albion ont dit haut et fort leur mécontentement et leur opposition à ce type de projet qui est tout, sauf écologique.

Du reste, il existe une plateforme citoyenne à Albion qui milite contre ce projet et dont les appels pour que ce gouvernement change de position sont restés malheureusement lettres mortes.

Comme beaucoup de projets de ce gouvernement, celui d'un *petroleum hub* à Albion, est entouré de zones d'ombres. N'est-il pas temps que le gouvernement rende public tous les détails concernant ce projet? Y a-t-il eu une étude de faisabilité et environnementale qui a été faite sur ce projet? Si tel est le cas, qu'on rende public les conclusions de cette étude.

Toujours dans cette partie de la circonscription, Madame la présidente, notamment à Canot, c'est ahurissant comment l'aménagement d'un terrain de football peut prendre autant de temps! Les habitants de Canot parlent presque de deux années de travaux qui ne sont toujours pas complétés. Une récente visite sur le site m'a fait comprendre que les travaux ont été abandonnés depuis plusieurs mois déjà. Et j'ai eu l'occasion d'entendre l'honorable Rughoobur, avant moi, parler des centaines de millions qui sont investis, qui sont dépensés dans sa circonscription. C'est très bien ! Je suis tout heureux pour lui. Mais qu'en est-il de la circonscription numéro 20? Un terrain de foot qui démarre deux ans de cela, qui n'est pas complété, les travaux sont abandonnés, est-ce que c'est logique? Donc, il est grand temps, Madame la présidente, que les autorités concernées, dont le ministère de la jeunesse et des sports, assument leurs responsabilités afin que les travaux sur ce terrain de football, longtemps réclamés par les jeunes de cette localité, puissent être complétés dans un délai raisonnable.

Et pour revenir à la situation, au morcellement Hermitage à Coromandel, que j'avais évoquée l'année dernière, il est à constater que les choses n'ont guère évolué dans la bonne direction. Rien n'a été fait et cela malgré l'assurance donnée par le ministre des infrastructures publiques lors des différentes questions parlementaires sur ce sujet. Et comme nous le savons tous, l'instabilité du terrain représente toujours un danger pour les habitants de cette région et ce ne sont guère les promesses faites par le ministre des collectivités locales, récemment dans son intervention, qui vont rassurer les résidents de cette région de notre circonscription.

Madame la présidente, il est grand temps de passer de la parole aux actes. Donc, pour conclure, Madame la présidente, je citerai l'écrivain français Stéphane Hessel-

« Le temps de l'indignation est arrivé »

La population ne demande qu'une chose, des élections générales anticipées au plus vite afin de sortir le pays du gouffre où ce gouvernement nous a entraînés. L'île Maurice a besoin d'une équipe propre, compétente et expérimentée à sa tête et c'est tout le mal que je souhaite à notre pays. Je vous remercie.

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

At 5.22 pm the sitting was suspended.

On resuming at 6.09 p.m. with the Deputy Speaker in the Chair.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Toussaint!

The Minister of Youth and Sports (Mr S. Toussaint): Merci, M. le président. Ce 16 juin, nous commémorons la journée mondiale de l'enfant africain. Cette journée crée dans les années 70, c'était par rapport aux enfants victimes de la guerre en Afrique du Sud et c'est un thème qui est resté pour combattre la pauvreté sur le continent africain.

Le 23 janvier 2017, un enfant pauvre, *un piti cité* comme disaient mes adversaires fut nommé ministre de la république et ce *piti cité* Malherbes est grandement reconnaissant vis-à-vis de notre Premier ministre, l'honorable Pravind Jugnauth, un homme de cœur, un homme qui comprend ce que cela veut dire la compétence, l'éducation, le savoir-faire et le savoir être. Et quand je pense à cela, M. le président, je ne puis m'empêcher de ressentir des émotions fortes en pensant à mes parents qui ne sont plus de ce monde. Je dois dire quand tout les cas, moi, je suis très fier de porter le nom de mon père, pas comme certains dans le passé.

Mon intervention sera basée sur trois volets: la jeunesse de l'île Maurice, le sport évidemment et, bien sûr, notre circonscription Curepipe/Midlands, No. 17. *Nu 17!* Ambrose Bierce a dit cela –

« La jeunesse c'est l'âge du possible »

Et j'y crois fermement. De par mon expérience de 22 ans comme éducateur chez des adolescentes, je puis dire que la jeunesse mauricienne de la république de l'île Maurice, de l'île Rodrigues, d'Agalega et des Chagos aussi, la jeunesse a une place très importante dans mon cœur et notre gouvernement, notre Premier ministre a lui aussi à cœur toute la jeunesse de la république de Maurice.

J'ai entamé une tournée comme l'a si bien dit l'honorable Quirin dans les centres de jeunesse, les *Youth Centres* du pays. Nous en avons 29. C'est vrai, le constat est difficile. C'est vrai que pendant un certain temps nos centres de jeunesse n'ont pas fonctionné.

Je suis entièrement d'accord avec vous, honorable Quirin. Vous connaissez bien le Centre de Barkly. A qui la faute, M. le président? A qui la faute? 2005 à 2014, à qui la faute? Si la jeunesse mauricienne n'arrivait pas à se retrouver ; si les centres de jeunesse n'arrivaient plus à donner ce que la jeunesse cherchait, à qui la faute? A l'époque est-ce qu'il y avait un Premier Ministre qui avait du cœur, qui ressentait les choses, qui sentait que sa jeunesse était en perdition et qu'il fallait faire quelque chose ? Non M. le président, rien, zéro et c'est tout à fait normal je suis entièrement d'accord avec cela. Mon honorable ami Adrien Duval en a parlé des activités pour les jeunes, tout à fait normal puisque durant ces 10 dernières années il n'y a rien eu pour la jeunesse mauricienne. Et je n'ai pas la prétention de venir dire ici que je vais régler ce problème-là d'un coup de baguette magique, loin de là M. le président. Et c'est dans ce sens que j'ai entamé une tournée dans les centres de jeunesse et je n'ai pas encore terminé cette tournée. Alors j'ai été à Flacq, à Tamarin, à Rivière du Rempart, à Baie du Tombeau...

(Interruptions)

Ou kann mo l'agenda? A Cité Kennedy, à Barkly et je compte bien sur, après que nous soyons libérés un peu des travaux parlementaires, continuer cette tournée.

(Interruptions)

Oui mo pou vini, avek plaisir, honorable Ramful. M. le président c'était une tournée pour écouter ce qu'avaient à dire nos jeunes, pour aller à l'écoute de ces jeunes, pour être proche de ses jeunes. C'est sûr ce n'était pas évident, ce n'était pas facile, cela a pris beaucoup de temps et il fallait écouter. C'était juste écouter et à partir de là essayer de trouver quelque chose qu'on aurait pu éventuellement faire ensemble avec ces jeunes. Et je trouve cela formidable qu'à chaque fois, à la fin de cette rencontre, les jeunes eux-mêmes proposaient par mal de choses. Les jeunes eux-mêmes me disaient qu'ils sont disposés à prendre en main leur région, leur localité. Il y a des régions - je ne citerai pas les noms - où on a tendance, si c'est vrai ou pas je ne sais pas, je n'habite pas dans ces régions, à, comment dire, mettre des étiquettes.

(Interruptions)

...par rapport à tel est tel fléau et la salle était remplie. Les centres de jeunesse étaient remplis avec 150 - 200 jeunes, qui étaient là et qui sont venus me dire qu'ils veulent travailler, qu'ils veulent faire quelque chose pour l'avancement de leur région et pour qu'on arrête justement de mettre des étiquettes sur leur dos, *ki tel region ena la drogue ena ici ena la bas, tou zenes voleur, tous zenes ici là-bas*. Ce n'est pas ça.

Ils voulaient absolument un changement et ce qui était magnifique aussi c'est que, eux-mêmes, ils ont proposé qu'on mette sur pied un comité de gestion et que les jeunes eux-mêmes avec les officiers de mon ministère, avec les *Youth Officers*, travailleraient la main dans la main ensemble dans un comité de gestion pour gérer leur centre de jeunesse, extraordinaire. Je vais passer à un autre thème par rapport à la jeunesse, aux centres de jeunesse. J'aurais pu en parler des heures et des heures et des jours et des jours s'il fallait car cela me passionne.

Mais je vais passer à un autre thème par rapport à la jeunesse, le *Duke of Edinburgh International Award* M. le président. Donc c'est un programme qui est patronné par le Prince Edward, le comte de Wessex au Royaume-Uni. Et c'est un *award* qui donne l'occasion à nos jeunes de faire pas mal de choses par rapport à la formation, par rapport à la façon de forger leur caractère. Il y a le *Bronze Award*, le *Silver Award*, le *Gold Award*.

Et je puis dire aujourd'hui que nous travaillons sur un plan pour que le *Duke of Edinburgh International Award* puisse être pratiqué, puisse entrer dans tous les centres de jeunesse de la république de Maurice y compris Rodrigues et éventuellement Agaléga.

M. le président que je parlais de Rodrigues, donc j'ai effectué une visite assez rapide éclair à l'île Rodrigues de trois jours et je puis vous dire que Rodrigues a une place très importante dans mon cœur.

J'ai eu l'occasion de rencontrer la jeunesse Rodrigues, j'ai eu l'occasion de rencontrer les sportifs natifs de l'île Rodrigues, des colosses M. le président. J'ai eu l'occasion de rencontrer des dirigeants de clubs. J'ai été aussi rendre visite à des parents de sportifs Rodriguais qui sont à l'île Maurice à plein temps de par leurs entraînements et tous les stages qui sont en train d'effectuer. Et là j'ai en tête les parents de Christiane Legentil, qui actuellement est en France pour un stage. Elle se prépare pour la francophonie dans le judo. L'inquiétude des parents quand les jeunes sportifs ou étudiants de Rodrigues viennent à l'île Maurice c'est bien sûr le logement ; est-ce que les enfants sont en sécurité, est-ce que tout se

passer bien pour eux. C'est tout à fait normal, c'est tout à fait naturel. J'ai donné la garantie aux parents que j'ai rencontrés que je veillerai moi-même, personnellement, à ce que tout se passe bien pour nos sportifs, pour nos jeunes de Rodrigues qui viennent ici à l'île Maurice soit pour étudier, soit, dans le domaine du sport, pour s'entraîner.

J'ai aussi eu l'immense plaisir et honneur de rencontrer notre marathonnienne, une petite dame...

(Interruptions)

Milazar exactement, très humble et vous savez, M. le président, elle nous racontait que pour aller travailler de là où elle habite, elle y va à pied et elle court. Oui encore, elle court le matin pour aller travailler. Elle travaille à l'hôpital. Je n'ai pas en tête à peu près combien de kilomètres que cela fait, elle court et elle y va. C'est pour vous dire le courage que cette petite bonne femme a. Donc comme le chanteur sniper dans sa chanson donc l'honorable Francisco

(Interruptions)

Pas Franco mais Francisco François avait dit la dernière fois la chanson de sniper *mo envi fer rekonet mo l'ile partou à travers le monde*. Donc je puisse dire aux habitants de l'île Rodrigues qu'ils peuvent compter sur moi et sur notre gouvernement pour aider nos frères et nos sœurs de Rodrigues.

Un autre point dans la section jeunesse c'est le *National Young Volunteer Scheme*, le *Volunteer Mauritius*. Donc, c'est un projet qui prendra très bientôt une nouvelle dimension. Je vous laisserai découvrir la surprise.

M. le président, l'emploi : il me semble que l'honorable Rughoobur en a parlé et c'est aussi une préoccupation pour beaucoup de nos jeunes et beaucoup de parents. C'est dans cette optique qu'au niveau de mon ministère, nous avons démarré une série de *Job Fair*, salon de l'emploi que le ministère de la jeunesse et des sports organisent. Nous en avons fait déjà trois ; un à Moka, un à Curepipe, et le dernier en date à Souillac et nous reprendrons bien sûr très vite. Ce sera un salon de l'emploi mensuel. Et je peux vous dire qu'à chaque fois nous avons à peu près 1,000 à 1,500 qui sont disponibles dans ces salons de l'emploi que nous organisons. 1000 à 1,500 emplois, M. le président ! Et nous avons, comme visiteurs, à peu près 800 à 1,000 jeunes qui viennent nous visiter, nous rencontrer dans ces différents salons de l'emploi. Le dernier à Souillac, chez nos honorables amis. Nous avons aussi

organisé un coin jeune où la jeunesse pouvait passer un petit moment, de façon saine et avoir une activité tout en visitant le salon de l'emploi.

Un autre projet qui me tient énormément à cœur, M. le président, et qui a eu un succès extraordinaire, c'est le carrefour des jeunes. Le carrefour des jeunes, c'était un rassemblement pendant les vacances de 66 jeunes venant de différentes régions, cité St Claire à Goodlands ; cité Olivia dans la région de Bel Air ; cité Anouska, Forest Side ; cité La Ferme Bambous et African Town à Riambel dans le but de ramener des jeunes pendant trois jours et de leur offrir une formation, une initiation au théâtre, à la danse, au chant et il y avait aussi une activité le *water wise*, c'est-à-dire prendre conscience par rapport à la mer, à la rivière quand on pense aux cas des noyades que nous avons. Trois jours de rêve, M. le président, dans une colonie de vacances. Et je peux vous dire que nous allons reprendre ces activités sur une plus grande échelle durant les vacances d'hiver qui vont venir.

M. le président, pour terminer sur le volet jeunesse, je vais citer Beethoven.

« La musique est une révélation plus haute que toute sagesse et toute philosophie. »

Dans ce cadre, mon ministère organise un projet innovant. Mon ministère offre une plateforme d'expression artistique à différents jeunes de différentes régions du pays. Les auditions ont déjà démarrées et vont prendre fin le 22 juin dans les différents centres de jeunesse. C'est une façon de redynamiser nos centres de jeunesse. Alors ce week-end ci, donc le 18 ; trois rendez-vous au centre de jeunesse d'Helvetia de 12.30 à 14.30. Toujours le 18, au centre de jeunesse de Bambous de 15.00 à 17.00 et toujours le 18 de 17.30 à 19.30 au centre de jeunesse de Barkly, des auditions qui permettront, M. le président, à nos jeunes - je dis bien c'est pour nos jeunes - le samedi 24 de participer à notre carrefour de musique dans différentes régions de l'île ; Bel Air, Pamplemousses, St Pierre, Rose Belle, Rose Hill, Curepipe, Port Louis, le Waterfront, Chemin Grenier, Bambous et Goodlands. Et ce n'est qu'un commencement. Plus tard, on essaiera éventuellement d'aller dans tous les coins et recoins de la République de Maurice y compris chez notre ami, l'honorable François. Une plateforme qui permettra aux jeunes de nous montrer leurs talents artistiques, leurs talents de musiciens, leurs talents de chanteurs, leurs talents de danseurs et je peux vous dire que ces auditions sont faits par des professionnels dans ce domaine. Ce n'est pas n'importe qui *pou ale batte batter*. Et je suis sûre d'après les échos que je suis en train d'avoir, les éditions se passent très bien et nous avons des numéros exceptionnels et des numéros de professionnels déjà, M. le président.

Donc, M. le président, quand j'ai écouté certains membres de l'opposition qui disent que ce budget est vide, qu'il n'y a rien dans ce budget, qu'on est en train de bluffer, je viens de donner la preuve. Actions, actions et actions ! Et c'est bien sûr le budget de l'honorable Pravind Jugnauth qui nous donne les fonds nécessaires pour pouvoir réaliser tout cela. *Parski narien pas kado* ! Sans un budget qui viendrait de notre Premier ministre et de notre ministre de finances, je n'aurais pas pu réaliser tout cela pour la jeunesse mauricienne.

Deuxième volet de mon discours, M. le président, je dirai d'abord et avant tout *Mens sana in corpore sano*, un esprit sain dans un corps sain.

(Interruptions)

Pas mwa ki inn dire ça !

Concernant le sports, depuis que j'ai pris ma fonction, le 23 janvier dernier, j'ai rencontré un nombre incalculable des sportifs, des dirigeants, d'entraîneurs, des personnes dans le monde du sport. Et je peux dire à l'honorable Quirin que très bientôt - ainsi que à d'autres membres de Chambre - nous aurons des nouvelles par rapport au football. Donc, je peux dire que cela pour le moment. Surprise, surprise ! Le 03 mars dernier, M. le président, lors du *National Sports Award* de la MSC, j'ai annoncé pas mal de choses et ce n'était pas tout simplement des effets d'annonce. J'avais annoncé qu'au niveau de mon ministère nous allons augmenter l'allocation mensuelle au niveau du *High Level Sports Unit*.

Fait, comme le dirait notre ami, l'honorable Aliphon. Nous avons donné une hausse de R3,000 sur toutes les allocations. C'est fait, c'est là ! On peut aller demander, on peut aller mesurer, on peut aller calculer. Enfin, pas l'honorable Rutnah peut-être ! N'est-ce pas, Ravi ? Mais on peut aller le voir. C'est là, c'est tangible !

(Interruptions)

Brother sa!

En plus de cela, M. le président, j'avais annoncé que les *sparring partners* toucheraient R5,000. Fait aussi ! *Zis avan budget la ! Aster mazine avec sa budget la !*

L'allocation est passée de R1,500 à R5,000, et je le redis, cela était fait avant même le discours du budget.

Et M. le président, je dois m'attarder un petit peu sur cette allocation des *sparring partners*. Si je prends, par exemple, la boxe ou la course à pied pratiquée par les non-voyants, les aveugles, vous allez comprendre cela. Personnellement, j'ai un ami aveugle qui est un très grand champion d'athlétisme et vous savez que les aveugles doivent courir avec leur guide attaché.

(Interruptions)

Oui, c'est normal !

L'aveugle doit courir avec son guide attaché, ce qui veut dire que le guide doit être aussi bon que l'athlète. Sinon, qu'est-ce qui allait se passer, M. le président ? C'est que l'athlète allait trainer derrière lui, son guide. Donc, le guide a besoin de s'entraîner, d'être aussi bon que l'athlète. Et le guide, le *sparring partner* touchait seulement R 1,500. Ce n'était pas normal ! Le *Sparring partner*, pour s'entraîner pour la boxe, par exemple : recevoir des coups pareils, là parce que le boxeur ne peut pas nécessairement s'entraîner tout seul tout le temps, il y a des sacs de frappe bien sûr, mais a besoin d'avoir quelqu'un qui va lui donner tout ce qu'il faut sur le *ring*. Et donc, le *sparring partner* touchait R 1500, M. le président. Et voilà, fait, bien avant même le budget !

Et j'avais aussi annoncé lors de mon discours dans le *Sports Award* du 3 mars, que j'allais organiser une rencontre d'abord, entre le ministère de la Jeunesse et des Sports, les sportifs, les fédérations, pour leur expliquer le fonctionnement du ministère, et tout ce dont ils peuvent avoir comme aide, comme encadrement, M. le président, plusieurs services qu'ils peuvent recevoir. Et je puis dire que cette rencontre a eu lieu le 22 avril, à l'hôtel Gold Crest à Quatre Bornes, où il y avait les athlètes, les membres de la fédération, les officiers de mon ministère, pour expliquer le fonctionnement du ministère. Annoncé le 3 mars, fait le 22 avril, M. le président !

J'avais aussi annoncé lors de cette soirée d'*Award*, un atelier de travail pour une meilleure collaboration entre les sportifs, les fédérations et la presse. Cela aussi, M. le président, a été fait le 5 juin dernier à l'hôtel de Labourdonnais à Port Louis.

Les différents participants ont eu l'occasion dans des carrefours de s'exprimer et de dire que ce soit athlète. Et on comprend aussi que, par exemple, un journaliste a parfois de difficultés à avoir des renseignements, etc. Alors, tout le monde a pu s'exprimer ce jour-là dans des carrefours. Et le but, c'était, M. le président, de valoriser nos sportifs avec l'aide de

nos amis de la presse. Comme je dis tout le temps, on peut avoir les infrastructures, on peut avoir les services et autres choses encore, *but at the end of the day*, c'est le sportif, c'est l'athlète qui va courir et il est seul à ce moment-là. *Medail la li ki pou amener sa*. Et c'est pour cela, que je dis et je continue de le dire, le sportif a besoin d'être au centre de nos préoccupations.

M. le président, l'honorable Quirin a parlé d'un *National Sports Policy* et il a parlé de l'état du sport à l'Ile Maurice. Je fais un parallèle comme au début par rapport à nos centres de jeunesse, il faudrait dire oui, que pendant les cinq, dix dernières années, rien n'avait été fait pour nos sportifs et que l'état dans notre sport mauricien était déplorable. Aujourd'hui, je n'ai pas la prétention de venir dire que moi, Stephan Toussaint, d'en coup de baguette magique je 'vais régler tous les problèmes du sport. Non, M. le président !

Nous avons besoin d'avoir une structure ou tout un chacun pourrait venir apporter sa contribution. Une structure est importante, et d'où justement quand j'ai expliqué ce projet à notre honorable Premier Ministre et Ministre des Finances, il a trouvé cela excellent puisqu'il connaît le monde sportif, puisque que, M. le président, il a à cœur les sportifs de ce pays. Et c'est dans ce cadre que dans notre budget nous avons pu obtenir R 25 millions, M. le président, pour mettre en pratique notre *National Sports Policy*. Les détails viendront très bientôt. Comment cela va se faire, comme le budget sera alloué

M. le président, dans le but de sensibiliser la population à pratiquer une discipline sportive, dans le but de donner l'occasion aux jeunes, aux moins jeunes, de participer à une activité sportive, de s'amuser, de passer un bon moment, un bon dimanche, un bon samedi, dans ce cadre, M. le président, mon ministère a organisé une activité *Anou Zwe*. Quatre éditions ont déjà été organisées depuis le début de cette année à Flacq, Cité Malherbes, Cité Ste Claire, Goodlands, et récemment, Mahebourg, M. le président.

Dix disciplines étaient au programme, le football A5, le basketball A5, le cyclisme, relais pédestre, boxe, kick-boxing, judo, tennis de table, haltérophile, volleyball, et des *fun games* pour les tout-petits jouets.

Il me vient à l'esprit, il y avait aussi démonstration de handball. Cette image est là encore, où *deux grand dimoune*, M. le président, *enn tonton ek enn tantine* - je préfère ne pas dire l'âge, essayez d'imaginer - qui ont vu le poteau de handball et il y avait dans le filet quatre trous. Il fallait tout simplement essayer de viser et d'envoyer. Et ces tontons et tantines étaient là tout tremblants, voulant essayer d'envoyer. J'étais là à leur côté pour leur

expliquer n'importe quel trou qu'il fallait viser - et hop, une fois, et hop, deux fois, et hop, trois fois - et ils se sont amusés. Extraordinaire !

Et des activités aussi tels que chasse aux trésors, châteaux gonflables, *face painting*, *shoot and win*, *bottle flips*, *sac race*, *potato race*, *spoon race*, etc. Et la dernière édition, l'honorable Mahen Jhugroo était présent, l'honorable Bobby Hurreeram y était, l'honorable Boissézon y était et je ne sais pas qui était présent encore...

(Interruptions)

Oui, le ministre Koonjoo avait fait aussi sa régata, le ministre Gayan avait fait aussi un concert, le Rotary était présent. Au fait, c'était une belle fête qui a rassemblé, M. le président, ce jour-là, à peu près 5,000 personnes sur le *Waterfront* de Mahébourg. 5,000 personnes à s'amuser, M. le président.

(Interruptions)

Et '*anou jouer*' va continuer, M. le président, puisque les gens en demandent. De partout les gens en demandent surtout après le succès de Mahébourg, Mr Love, et même Rodrigues a fait sa demande pour une édition de '*anou jouer*' et pourquoi pas Agalega, M. le président! Pourquoi pas! On verra.

(Interruptions)

Je passe maintenant, M. le président, au *National Youth Games* pour initier les plus petits et les plus jeunes à pratiquer une activité sportive. Le portfolio du ministère est aussi le sport pour tous, M. le président. Nous parlons souvent de maladie, de diabète, de tension, de problèmes de cœur. Donc, on encourage toute la population à pratiquer une activité sportive. Nous avons eu dans ce sens un atelier de travail avec des représentants du Commonwealth et nous attendons leurs propositions, dans cette optique, très bientôt.

Les dames ne sont pas en reste. Cette année, la Commission Nationale du Sport Féminin célèbre ses 25 ans, toute jeune, et la CNSF organise plusieurs activités pour que les dames puissent pratiquer une activité physique. Ces activités ne s'arrêtent parce qu'au zumba. C'est la mode en ce moment. Mais il y a aussi des cours de *self defence*. Gare à vous, Messieurs ! *Banne Madame conne faire self defence!*

(Interruptions)

Le football, M. le président, notre sport préféré, le sport que la plupart des mauriciens suivent et les écoles de foot fonctionnent. Nous avons même lancé une compétition inter-écoles de foot où 4000 jeunes, on peut vérifier cela, ce n'est pas juste un effet d'annonce. 4000 jeunes participent à ces compétitions de foot, inter-écoles de foot. Bien sûr et je le redis, je suis d'accord avec l'honorable Quirin que c'est à la base qu'il faut démarrer. La formation doit démarrer avec les petits. Cela n'a pas été fait pendant très longtemps. Je ne sais pas si dans l'ancien gouvernement ils s'intéressaient au football où ils étaient juste des 'baters boules'. Mais le football, la compétition inter-écoles de foot est là, 'batter', fait l'honorable Benydin.

Je puis vous assurer, M. le président, que nous allons prendre toutes les dispositions nécessaires par rapport à la ligue professionnelle. Nous avons déjà entamé des discussions avec la MFA, le MPFL et les officiers de mon ministère et j'espère de tout cœur que nous allons pouvoir trouver une solution aux problèmes soulevés par l'honorable Quirin.

M. le président, les infrastructures ne sont pas en reste et j'ai en tête le complexe sportif de Côte D'Or. Un grand projet qui comprendra une piscine olympique, un stade de football, un gymnase, un palais des sports qui pourra accueillir le handball, le basketball, le volleyball. Le judo, les négociations et les préparatifs sont en bonne voie. Ce complexe sportif sera bientôt une réalité.

(Interruptions)

Non loin de Curepipe. Et je puis dire aussi que le palais des sports aura plusieurs fonctions. On utilisera le palais des sports, bien sûr, pour les disciplines que je viens de citer mais, comme l'a annoncé aussi le ministre des Arts et de la Culture, les artistes pourront aussi utiliser ce complexe pour les concerts. Alors soyez rassurés, chers amis artistes, cette demande a été faite pendant très longtemps et c'est nous, ce gouvernement, avec à sa tête l'honorable Pravind Jugnauth, qui allons réaliser ce projet.

Au niveau des infrastructures, les rénovations à Rodrigues vont très bien. Au stade Camp du Roi, la piscine sera bientôt ré-ouverte au mois d'août, M. le président.

(Interruptions)

Bientôt! Et je n'ai pas besoin de passer en revue tout ce qu'il y a, toutes les propositions au niveau du budget. Alors rapidement quand même sinon on va dire que...

(Interruptions)

...oui, rapidement –

- construction of sports infrastructure;
- multi sports complex;
- Port Louis, Triolet, Saint Pierre swimming pools;
- Phoenix, Rivière des Anguilles, Curepipe, je viendrais avec Curepipe tout à l'heure ;
- Centre National Francois Blaquart;
- upgrading of sports infrastructure;
- lighting of training grounds;
- fencing;
- turfing;
- Maryse Justin;
- Camp du Roi, je viens de dire;
- Stade Auguste Vollaire;
- Harry Latour;
- Beau Bassin;
- Bel Air Football ground, le plan a déjà été fait...

- *(Interruptions)*

- Le gradin de Rose Belle parmi tant d'autres.

M. le président, nous sommes très conscients de la responsabilité que nous avons par rapport aux Jeux des Iles que l'île Maurice organise en 2019 et je dois dire aussi, par rapport à une question de l'honorable Léopold, qu'il y a eu une demande au niveau de Rodrigues pour que certaines disciplines se fassent dans l'île, semi-marathon, la boxe et le judo. Et je puis garantir aux honorables Léopold et François que très bientôt ils auront de bonnes nouvelles.

La préparation de nos athlètes est très importante et R 18 millions comme l'ancien ministre des Sports me rappelle. Je suis entouré de deux anciens ministres des Sports. R 18 millions pour la préparation de nos athlètes cette année et je dois dire que j'ai fait des recherches, moi aussi, dans les anciens discours de budget.

Alors les derniers Jeux étaient en 2015, et à deux ans de 2015 ça fait 2013, si je sais bien compter. Et en 2013, il me semble - ou 2012 - il me semble *zéro laquer, pas ene sou,*

zéro laquer pour la préparation des athlètes pour les Jeux des Iles de 2015. L'honorable Quirin avait dénoncé cela, avec raison, malheureusement pour lui. Qui était ministre des Finances, M. le président ? Qui était ministre des Finances ? Réponse évidente à une question évidente. *The invisible Leader of the Opposition* était ministre des Finances, M. le président. Zéro ! Et après il a l'audace, l'autre jour, de venir me montrer et de me dire 'piscine Curepipe zéro', *ou pou trouvé, ou pou koné*.

Préparation pour les Jeux des Iles, toute la machinerie est en place, M. le président. Et là je lance un appel ! Je lance un appel patriotique. Je lance un appel à tous les mauriciens, si nous aimons notre patrie, si nous aimons notre île, si nous aimons notre république, nous avons besoin de travailler ensemble dans le but de faire réussir ces Jeux des Iles 2019, M. le président. A moins que nous ayons certaines personnes qui sont des antipatriotes. Ce serait dommage pour notre république !

M. le président, pour terminer sur le volet sport, je reviens avec cette mesure historique. Cette mesure qui n'a jamais été fait dans le passé. Cette mesure qui vise à reconnaître nos anciennes gloires du monde sportif. Et là, je dois quand mémé répondre quelque chose à l'honorable Quirin, peut-être qu'il ne le sait pas, il a cité d'Eric Milazar. Alors, Eric Milazar est un coach au ministère de la jeunesse et des sports, M. le président. Et moi, je le dis toujours, le sportif il est au centre, et qu'ils soient les anciens où ceux qui sont là actuellement, ils peuvent venir me rencontrer.

Ma porte est toujours ouverte. Je suis un grand frère, là prêt à leur rendre service, prêt à les écouter. Si pour x raison, il y a un ancien sportif qui se retrouve quelque part dans la peine, comme on dit, je suis là M. le président. Je suis là ! Un rendez-vous et je les reçois ! Notre honorable Premier ministre Pravind Jugnauth entre dans l'histoire comme celui qui a reconnu les efforts de nos anciennes gloires. Et d'où le *scheme* d'une allocation financière entre R 3000 et R 10,000. C'est vrai, il faut démarrer quelque part, *never know* après. Il faut démarrer quelque part. *Personne pane démarrer avant ! Mais tou pou critiquer zordi !* Nous on le fait ! On a démarré quelque chose ! Le ministre des Finances, l'honorable Pravind Jugnauth.

Et ce n'est pas effets d'annonce, M. le président, les officiers de mon ministère travaillent déjà sur la mise en application de ce *scheme* très bientôt M. le président, très bientôt. Et je suis très content que plusieurs de nos anciens athlètes m'ont envoyé un sms, ont fait part à mes officiers qu'ils sont très contents de ce projet. Et je dis, ce n'est qu'un début.

M. le président, je passe sur le troisième volet de mon discours, la circonscription numéro 17, Curepipe/Midlands. D'abord, je tiens à remercier notre Vice-Premier ministre, l'honorable Soodhun, qui dès notre élection, a écouté nos appels - je dis bien nos appels - les 3 membres de la circonscription. Par rapport...

(Interruptions)

L'honorable Madame Sewocksingh et l'honorable Duval. Par rapport aux squatters de Dubreuil et de Cité Malherbes, l'honorable Soodhun, comme un grand frère, a su nous écouter et il trouve une solution à ce problème très, très vite. Je lui dis merci.

Dans la circonscription, M. le président, en parlant de Dubreuil, permettez-moi aussi de dire un point par rapport à l'usine de thé de Dubreuil, dont a fait mention l'honorable Ramful. C'est un projet que notre honorable ami, l'honorable ministre d'Agro-industrie a lancé et je puis vous rassurer que les travaux démarrent déjà. Les permis sont alloués. Et j'inviterai très bientôt l'honorable Ramful à *vine bwar ene tasse du thé ar moi dans Dubreuil*. Parce que je ne sais pas s'il sait même où se trouve Dubreuil.

(Interruptions)

Dans la circonscription, M. le président, les remplacements des tuyaux de la CWA ont été faits, remplacé, *fini tirer* les vieux tuyaux. Et les routes ont été asphaltées très vite. Et je tiens à remercier le *Deputy Prime Minister*, l'honorable Ivan Collendavelloo pour ce travail. Comme projet, la route de La Vigie à La Brasserie ; pour ceux qui connaissent Curepipe, la route actuelle commençant par le Pont Carbonel pour aller jusqu'à La Marie est surutilisée. Beaucoup de circulation et cela cause pas mal de problèmes aux habitants de Forest-side, de Pont Carbonel, de Camp Le Juge, de Cité Atlee, de Cité La Brasserie, de Cité Joachim qui se trouve à côté de la Rue Frédéric Bonfin, qui se trouve à côté. Et ce projet tombe à pic, M. le président. Un grand projet par le MPI, et je tiens à remercier l'honorable Nando Bodha pour cela.

Je vais reprendre rapidement pour dire merci à l'honorable Soodhun qui vient de faire son entrée théâtrale, et pour les squatters de Dubreuil et de Cité Malherbes, vous avez écouté notre appel dès le début, dès notre élection, et aujourd'hui la solution est là. Merci beaucoup.

M. le président, je manquerai à ma tâche si je ne parle pas, rapidement - soyez indulgent s'il vous plaît - rapidement des projets de la NDU. Donc, à mon élection - *oui mo ti*

PPS - j'ai été nommé *PPS* pour les circonscriptions 17 et 16. Et la liste est longue, M. le président. L'honorable Madame Sewocksingh a déploré l'état du jardin d'enfants de Midlands.

Je puis assurer à l'honorable chère membre que le nécessaire sera fait très bientôt. Les trottoirs, les drains, M. le président, il y a tout un chapelet de projets réalisés. Fini faire! Fait! *Completed!* Rapidement, M. le président, *road resurfacing*, Galileo Road, Quatre Carreaux, Goucharand Road, Midlands.

(Interruptions)

En 2015 déjà! Et là nous sommes en 2017! Déjà terminé en 2015! *Drains*: Seeneevassen Lane, l'Abbé la Caille, Goorun Lane, La Rue la Croix, Melisse Road, Galileo Road, Koenig Road, Cité Malherbe. R 15 million! Fait!

(Interruptions)

L'année dernière 2016! Voilà, la liste est longue! Et après on a l'audace de venir dire que ce gouvernement n'a rien fait, M. le président. Les preuves sont là. Les faits sont là. C'est pareil dans toutes les circonscriptions quand je vois mes chers amis, *PPSs*, brandir leur liste de projets réalisés, M. le président.

Je parlerai, M. le président, rapidement sur un projet, *extension of Cactus Lane*. Cactus Lane se trouve dans la Cité St. Luc, M. le président. Depuis la création de la Cité St. Luc, plus d'une vingtaine d'années, Cactus Lane était restée comme cela. La terre! Roches! 20 ans, M. le président! Et il y avait de grands ténors dans cette circonscription. Il y avait de grands *PPS* et de grands ministres dans cette circonscription, M. le président. 20 ans! Un simple petit chemin! Pas très long! Cactus Lane dans cactus même, M. le président. Terminé en avril 2017!

(Interruptions)

20 ans pas MSM ki ti au pouvoir làbas! Enfin, je préfère ne pas entrer dans ce genre de discussion.

M. le président, deux projets que les habitants de la circonscription numero 17, les habitants de la ville du Curepipe ont à cœur. Je suis aussi Curepien de naissance, M. le président. Je suis né à Curepipe. J'habite toujours à Curepipe. Je suis toujours à la Cité

Malherbe malgré ce que certains puissent dire. Les deux projets sont bien sûr la rénovation de notre Hôtel de Ville sans oublier la piscine tant attendue depuis des années M. le président. Je me souviens encore que pour la campagne municipale, M. le président, il pleuvait des cordes et j'ai dû, à un certain moment, ouvrir mon parapluie dans l'Hôtel de Ville de Curepipe.

(Interruptions)

En Plus! *Pou pas kass so brushing!*

M. le président, notre cœur saigne quand on voit cet état des lieux, quand on voit cette situation. C'est avec beaucoup de plaisir, c'est avec beaucoup de joie que nous avons appris qu'il y a un budget qui a été mis à notre disposition pour la rénovation de l'Hôtel de Ville de Curepipe, M. le président. La piscine sera une réalité. Quoi qu'on en puisse dire, la piscine mes chers et honorables Membres sera une priorité. La piscine sera là. Je donne la garantie aux habitants de Curepipe, Midlands, de Dubreuil, de 16^{ème} Mille que la piscine sera une réalité.

(Interruptions)

Couverte et chauffée!

(Interruptions)

Bien sûr!

The Deputy Speaker: Order !

Mr Toussaint: Maillot de bain, c'est cela que l'honorable Boissezon a dit. Maillot de bain! Je suis obligé de le dire malgré le fait que les grands ténors, pendant plus de 20 ans ou de 25 ans, ont occupé la ville de Curepipe, la circonscription. Zéro, M. le président! Zero! Sans oublier que depuis 2005 jusqu'à tout récemment...

(Interruptions)

Malgré le fait, M. le président, que depuis 2005 jusqu'à ce jour, le Parti Travailleiste et le PMSD géraient la Ville de Curepipe, M. le président. Combien de Maires PMSD avons-nous vu défiler dans cette ville, M. le président jusqu'à tout récemment? Combien de Maires et de Conseillers, M. le président, avons nous vu défiler dans cette Ville de Curepipe? Il avait aussi

dans cette Ville, M. le président, un député, un ministre PMSD, un certain gros mal élevé et un ministre, M. le président,...

The Deputy Speaker : Hon. Minister, please! I will ask you to refrain from using such adjective!

Mr Toussaint: I refrain, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. Il y avait un ministre dans cette Ville, le *Leader* de l'Opposition, pendant plusieurs années a été député - pas à Curepipe - ministre, ministre des Finances, du Tourisme, de l'Intégration Sociale et zéro. A aucun moment, M. le président, il a trouvé cela utile de donner à Curepipe - soi-disant une ville PMSD, une ville bleue - une piscine à la ville de Curepipe M., M. le président. Zéro!

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Please resume. There is no need to shout hon. Minister!

Mr Toussaint: M. le président,...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker : Order!

Mr Toussaint: M. le président, je tiens à m'excuser parce que mon cœur fait mal. Mon cœur saigne, M. le président, quand aujourd'hui ce gouvernement ...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker : Hon. Members!

Mr Toussaint: ... décide d'emmener un projet pour le bien-être des habitants de cette Circonscription, pour le bien-être de tout un chacun. Aujourd'hui, malheureusement ce que le *Leader* de l'Opposition trouve à dire : '*Swimming pool in Curepipe, my foot!* Zéro! Mon cœur saigne, M. le président. Comprenez ma colère, M. le président.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Please allow the hon. Minister to complete his speech.

Mr Toussaint: M. le président, je ne fais pas de politique avec cela. Les élections viendront quand ils viendront, les élections seront là quand ils seront là et dans une élection, M. le président, *Lepep ki décidé, tout entre la main Lepep*, M. le président. On verra !

Moi, je défends les habitants de la Circonscription No. 17 et je dis qu'il est grand temps qu'ils aient des infrastructures digne de ce nom, M. le président. J'ai brossé un tableau de pas mal de projets déjà réalisés bien avant le budget, des projets à venir. Là je ne puis m'empêcher de penser à ce que l'honorable Barbier avait dit la dernière fois que avec l'augmentation de son *gros mario* les jeunes, les gens n'ont pas de choix que d'aller vers le synthétique, *parski prix synthétiques plis bas qui prix gros mario*.

Je ne sais pas si j'ai bien entendu, je m'en excuse si ce n'est pas le cas, honorable Barbier. Mais Je dis à la jeunesse de la république de Maurice, qu'entre le *gros mario* et le synthétique vous avez le choix. Vous avez le choix de mener une vie saine, vous avez le choix de faire du sport, vous avez le choix de jouer de la musique, vous avez le choix de chanter, vous avez le choix de vous adonner à une activité saine.

Il n'y a pas à choisir entre le *gros mario* ou le synthétique. M. le président. Nos jeunes ont du talent. *Zeness ena talent dans sa pays la*, M. le président. Et là, je vais rapidement - je vois l'honorable Rutnah qui me fait des signes - passer sur trois noms. Un jeune de 15 ans - pour vous montrer à quel point nous avons des jeunes extraordinaires dans ce pays - j'ai demandé l'autorisation à ses parents de citer son nom parce qu'il faut qu'il ait des symboles, il faut qu'il ait des modèles - Handsun Ramsurrun a risqué sa vie pour arrêter un voleur impliqué dans une centaine de vols à l'hôpital de Candos.

Il y avait un voleur qui sévissait dans l'enceinte de l'hôpital de Candos et nous avons des jeunes, des héros qui sont là et qui ont trouvé quelque chose de bien à faire. Je vois sourire l'honorable Rutnah ! Un jeune de 11 ans seulement, M. le président. Autres jeunes qui pourraient servir de rôle modèle, un jeune de 11 ans seulement. J'ai aussi demandé l'autorisation à ses parents, Yash Bhoyroo.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Members, allow the hon. Minister to complete his speech!

Mr Toussaint: Yash Bhoyroo, un jeune de 11 ans, classé deuxième dans sa catégorie au championnat du monde de gymnastique artistique cette année à Bangkok.

(Interruptions)

C'est un jeune de Rivière du Rempart et j'ai eu le plaisir et l'honneur et le privilège de le recevoir à mon bureau. Un autre jeune et j'ai demandé aussi la permission à ses parents de citer son nom, un très jeune, âgé de huit ans seulement, champion du monde de Shotokan Karaté Kata. Agé de huit ans seulement, Arnav Singh Beeharry, M. le président.

Je n'ai aucun doute que nos jeunes ont la capacité, M. le président, de faire des merveilles si on leur donne l'occasion, si on leur donne la possibilité. Ce budget met à notre disposition des fonds pour que nous puissions avoir ces jeunes de la république. Je termine M. le président par cette citation de Henri Jeanson –

« La jeunesse est un sport que l'on peut, que dis-je ; que l'on doit pratiquer toute sa vie »

Merci, M. le président.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Oree!

(7.17 p.m.)

Mr G. Oree (Second Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue): Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order!

Mr Oree: I know hon. Bhagwan is not here because of me, but rest assured, I have already shortened my speech.

(Interruptions)

Allow me to start by saying that I am extremely grateful to my friend, hon. Ramful, for increasing my knowledge. He made me learn a new term, namely, bamboozling which means fooling, according to him this Government is fooling people, bamboozling people. Whether a bus will safely reach its destination or not depends on the driver. Whenever a team rises or falls, everyone looks at the Leader. All main political leaders of this country got elected in the last election except Navin Ramgoolam. May I ask him why?

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order!

Mr Oree: If this Government is fooling people, then what the former one was doing for the past 9 years? If we are bamboozling and only bamboozling, *ki Ramgoolam ti pé bouger 9 ans?* I equally agree with my friend, hon. Osman Mahomed, that both the Jeetoo Hospital and the new SSR Airport are very beautiful, modern and provide high standard services. But the first one was for medical treatment, while the other one was for very special VIP treatment for two persons, mainly *ou koné ou?* Our Prime Minister is seeking help from India for economic progress, but the former one looted his motherland to enrich his mistress only. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, allow me to wish him *Eid Mubarak* in advance and also tell him that our Prime Minister focuses on *barakat*, but the other one only on *mohabat*.

(Interruptions)

Let me reassure some Members of the other side who was supposed to be...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order!

Mr Oree: ... deeply concerned about the aging population, employment of foreign labour, indebtedness and excess outflow of capital. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, let me tell you the scenario is the same in both developed countries and members of G7. The recruitment of Foreign Labour is highly desirable.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Members, please allow him to make his speech.

Mr Oree: Since living standard is rising in the country, people do not like to do menial or manual job. This has been the case in America, France and England. But why this is not good in Mauritius? Employment of foreign Labour is not a sign of economic downfall but this must be regulated.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Duval!

Mr Oree: Indebtedness is very often intentional ...

The Deputy Speaker: Hon.Oree, please resume!

Mr Oree: Indebtedness is very often intentional so as to secure reserves and wealth, so I reassure hon. Uteem that this is not a problem for our country.

Mr Deputy Speaker Sir, concerning the budget, let me start by thanking the hon. Prime Minister for carefully listening to our suggestion and grievances and coming up with appropriate solutions. The hon. Prime Minister has tailored this budget very cleverly by considering the past, present and future in order to eradicate poverty in this country, which is in line with the aim, mission and vision of this Government. This budget is historic in itself. It is gearing Mauritius towards a high income country and at the same time catering for low income earners. This budget is laying the foundation stone for several mega projects and at the same time bringing development to our doorstep. This budget is boosting up newly formed economic pillars and at the same time re- engineering our traditional economic sectors. It is paving the way for massive infrastructural development and at the same time bearing in mind sustainable development.

I also express my satisfaction regarding the fact that this Budget, like never before, has announced important projects for Constituency No. 4, drains at Chitrakoot, the reconsolidation of Marjolin Bridge, the Cité La Cure Bridge, the construction of Jadoo Bridge and other projects at Long Mountain. These long awaited priority projects will benefit thousands of people particularly the victims of flood and landslide.

The measures taken to compensate our artists are highly appreciated since local talent must be promoted, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. There are thousands of local artists who work as freelancers and play prominent role in the tourism sector. While the Budget provides to give allowances to artists who perform at the MBC and encourages local production and conditions to create freelancers to become professionals, to get employment opportunities in hotels where they perform. Our artists cannot remain lifelong part-timers, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. I can also notice that some newspapers or news reporters and certain hon. Members of the Opposition are trying to create doubts in our population by spreading fake news that our Government is handing over the sovereignty of Agalega to India. This is absolutely false and demagogical.

Members of the Chagos community can attest the commitment of this Government to defend its territorial sovereignty. The hon. Prime Minister has clearly explained the India-

Mauritius partnership for the development of Agalega. History recognises that Indian civilisation is the most ancient one and India has never invaded any country though it has always been looted and invaded by others.

No one can deny that this Government since its swearing-in is struggling to find means and ways to address the complex conditions of extreme poverty. Several measures have been taken. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I admit that the hon. Leader of the Opposition is, in fact, a hard worker and gentleman. Let me remind him that we supported him when he was first elected in Constituency No. 4 in 1987. But, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, after listening carefully to his speech, I cannot prevent myself to say that I totally disagree with some issues. First, during several visits I made in the compound of the University of Mauritius and MIE, I came across many African students. I also know many Indian students pursuing medical studies at Anna University. So, how come he say that our universities are not performing or among the worst in Africa? And more, many of his own sitting Members are pure products of these institutions.

He also mentioned that the public gallery was empty because the Budget is uninteresting. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, people can now watch us direct live from the TV. Also, it is not in our culture to bring supporters and guests in the gallery. The hon. Leader of the Opposition always brings documents and evidence to support his arguments. Allow me to quote what he said, I quote –

“When you look on streets, what has happened? Heroin same price! No increase! Same price for *gandia*! While for synthetic drugs it has fallen by half.”

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, how this can happen? Economically this cannot happen. Whenever there is scarcity, the price must grow up. If he is really serious, if this is not *menti*, *menti* and if this is true, I will challenge him to table some documents.

(Interruptions)

If he knows exactly what is the price, what is the sources of supply, I challenge to do it or else he can divulge everything to the Commissioner of Police. I am not telling that he is misleading the House, but I am sorry to say that he is not leading us towards the truth also.

He also stated that the problem of squatting in Mauritius originates in Rodrigues and that people are poorer over there. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, how can the hon. Leader of the

Opposition blame our brothers and sisters from Rodrigues for the problem of squatting? Maybe he forgot that Rodrigues forms part of Mauritius. These people are most respectful and generous.

(Interruptions)

Rodrigues is cleaner and greener than Mauritius. Rodrigues introduced the closing season for octopus. They banned the use of plastic bags before Mauritius. Their bio-farming is well advanced and a model in itself.

The number of arrivals of tourists has been steadily increasing since the last two decades and even this year. This increase is not due to hon. Leader of the Opposition, but changes in macro-environmental factors namely instabilities and terrorism threats in other parts of the world compared to our peaceful island, its lovely people and stable Government.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, all projects must follow normal procedures, designs, consultancies, tendering, procurement and so on. We don't want to see other Ring Road and Terre Rouge-Verdun blunders. Hon. Members, on the other side, want us to plant a tree today and then makes them taste the fruit the next day. How can this happen?

(Interruptions)

Hon. Roopun, rightly said that Rome was not built in one day.

Before concluding, I also want to step in the game. I equally agree with the opinion of hon. Koonjoo that: "truth is endless, truth is divine". Truly speaking, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, let me tell you I just admire hon. Roshni Bhadain.

(Interruptions)

I am sure and I know what I am telling. He is a symbol of truthfulness. He did exactly what he said and he said exactly what he intended to do. Several times, more than six or seven times, I heard from his mouth: "*Mo finn vinn dan politik, zis Pravind Jugnauth vinn Premier minis dan sa pays la!*" *Parole donnée, parole sacrée!* His mission is over, I think now he has reached the fulfillment level and he wants to go for other religious activity. So, I sincerely congratulate him and wish him good luck.

To conclude, I wish again

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order! Hon. Member, please resume your speech!

Mr Oree: To conclude, I wish to, again, express my deepest appreciation to our hon. Prime Minister for having had compassion for the developmental needs of Constituency No. 4. Once all these long-awaited projects would be realised, the inhabitants of the region will no longer feel neglected. Once again, our hon. Prime Minister has demonstrated his will and determination to eradicate absolute poverty and improving the well-being of citizens of this country. I am proud to be a Member of this Government whose mantra is work, work and only work.

We are not afraid of late-night sittings or full-night sittings because, in fact, we are not sitting, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. I also appreciate the courage of the hon. Members of the Opposition for coming with suggestions and criticisms, but let me remind them that in this forthcoming digital world every second counts. Therefore, I will request them to control their emotions and come up with constructive motions.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order!

Mr Oree: Finally, I sincerely thank hon. Members from both sides of the House for morally supporting me at the time when I needed them the most. I understand how challenging and risky the work of journalist is, and very often, they are not well paid. However, I have something very important to share with all the news reporters of this planet including my friends in the gallery. Sometimes by concentrating so much on the dark side and exciting part of any matter, they go far away from the reality.

(Interruptions)

But me reassure them and tell them the following – first: news reporting is about information and not manipulation. Second: news reporting is about communication and not character assassination. And for the last one, I will close my both eyes, so it will be from a sleeping position...

(Interruptions)

News reporting is about sense and not sensation. Thank you all for your attention.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Bhadain.

Mr S. Bhadain (Second Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes): Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. For one minute, I believed that the Theatre of Plaza had already been renovated and we have a few actors playing already.

Mr Deputy Speaker, the Budget presented by the hon. Minister of Finance last year, did create a feel good factor. Of course, that Budget included the Rs12.7 billion that we obtained from India as a grant. The money had gone into that Budget. Of course, it allowed to balance the books and also to provide measures to eradicate absolute poverty and also to lower down the price of cooking gas and so on.

The hon. Minister of Finance then predicted a GDP growth rate of 4.1%. But let me start, Mr Deputy Speaker, by saying that when I went to India and when I negotiated the grant of Rs12.7 billion with the hon. Minister of Finance of India, Mr Arun Jaitley, there were a few arguments which we had put forward.

The first of those arguments, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, was the line of credit that had been granted to Mauritius by his Excellency the Prime Minister of India, Mr Narendra Modi, when he came here in this House, actually in March 2015. That line of credit of 500 million dollars could not be used. *C'était inutilisable.*

Why? Because it was going to push up our public debt to such an extent that we would not be in a position to deal with the aftermath of it, especially in the light of the limitations that the IMF had imposed on Mauritius. And those limitations in those days, the IMF insisted that Mauritius passes an Act of Parliament, the Public Debt Management Act, to take a commitment that we were going to reduce our public debt to 50% of GDP and the deadline for that is in 2018. So, that was the first argument that we used to explain that, look we need assistance to do this projects and we need grant money not debt, not line of credit.

The second issue, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, was currency risk and we explained to the Minister of Finance of India that if we were to take 500 million dollars as line of credit, debt, then of course, we would have to repay those dollars and when you look at what was happening to the dollar rupee rate, if only we take from 2011 when the current Minister of Finance was Minister of Finance, the dollar was around Rs29 and now, five, six years later, we are talking about Rs35 plus. So, we are talking about Rs6 on one dollar. Imagine what happens when you take 500 million US dollars as debt and you have to repay it in dollars and

the risk that our country would have to face in terms of the depreciating currency. So, these were the arguments that we put forward and we explained that we needed funds to do development projects in our country, but these funds, we must be able to use them and we needed them as equity, not as debt.

Now, I will come back to the Rs12.7 billion grant later, but suffice to say, at this stage, that the grant that was negotiated at that time in India was for 9.2 billion dollars which they agreed and when I came back to Mauritius, I duly informrf the then Prime Minister that Rs9.2 billion is what we have obtained which was 253 million US dollars for specific projects. Then, of course, we had to go for a full process of sending those project documents to the authorities in India so that they could sit down, look at the feasibility, the viability of all these projects before deciding to give, of course, their tax payers money because that what it was, money from tax payers of India.

Now, at that time Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the then Prime Minister told me, what about this Metro project. There was a line of credit of 100 million US dollars which had been given by the Government of India to the previous Government. Couldn't we talk to them so that we could convert that into a grant, into a donation? And I told him: well this was not discussed, but I will certainly take up the matter and I can say that during the negotiations, of course, continued when I came back from India, we sent all the documents across and, of course, we interacted with the Indian High Commission also. And then the Prime Minister of India sent his special handboy to Mauritius, Mr Jaishankar, who was also a Foreign Secretary.

Mr Gayan: Mr Deputy Speaker, the debate is on the Appropriation Bill, and...

(Interruptions)

I am referring to Standing Order 73(2) where it says that after the motion for the Second Reading of the Bill has been made and seconded, the debate thereon should be adjourned until the next sitting and, when resumed, shall be confined to the general principles of Government Policy and administration as indicated by the Bill and the Estimates.

What the hon. Member is doing, he is giving details about things that he did when he was Minister and he is departing from the provisions of the Standing Order. That is out of order and I urge you, Mr Deputy Speaker, to give a ruling that he has to confine himself to the general principles of Government policy and administration and nothing else.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Minister, on which Standing Order are you relying?

Mr Gayan: Standing Order 73(2).

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Members, I shall take some time and give a ruling on the issue. The House is suspended for...

(Interruptions)

The House is suspended for half an hour.

At 7.41 p.m. the sitting was suspended.

On resuming at 8.36 p.m. with the Deputy Speaker in the Chair.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Members, the hon. Minister of Tourism raised a point of order under Standing Order 73 paragraph 2 to the effect that the debates should be confined to the general principles of Government policy and administration as indicated by the Bill and Estimates.

It has been the practice that debates on the Appropriation Bill cover a wide range of issues. In their respective interventions, all hon. Members have been given much latitude to debate on a variety of issues namely, social, economic and political precisely in line with the provisions of Standing Order 73 subparagraph (2).

I am comforted with the rulings of former Speakers of this Assembly namely on 21 June 2002, namely, hon. Ramnah who held –

“We all know that the scope of speeches are very wide when there are debates on the Budget Speech and on the Presidential Address.”

And he goes on to say –

“However, I leave it to Members to see what is relevant. There are certain standards to which they have to abide.”

Along the same line of 10 August 2010 in this House the then Speaker, hon. Purryag had this to say –

“Let me remind the House that there are two occasions: one while the Presidential Address and second when the Budget is being discussed that a Member can travel outside and address wide range of issues.”

I therefore rule that the point of order is not well taken!

(Interruptions)

But, however, I wish to remind hon. Bhadain that he cannot and will not be allowed to disclose any matter which came to his knowledge as a former Cabinet Minister of the Republic of Mauritius and which may prejudice diplomatic relation with another friendly State and this is in line with the Oath of Allegiance as has been provided by the Constitution which is the supreme law of this land.

Hon. Bhadain, please resume your speech!

Mr Mohamed: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, on a point of clarification of your ruling, I am not challenging your ruling...

(Interruptions)

I am not challenging your ruling. I only wanted to draw your attention to a very important aspect of what has just been pronounced by yourself. There was a point of order by hon. Gayan which was point wrongly taken by him. However, at no time has any of the Members of this august Assembly raised any point of order with regards to the confidentiality issues happening in Cabinet.

(Interruptions)

So, why is it that you are raising it?

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Mohamed, we are bound by the supreme law of the land and the Standing Orders that govern the business of this House. Hon. Bhadain, please resume!

Mr Mohamed: No one raised it, why did you raise it?

(Interruptions)

Mr Bhadain: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Mohamed, please!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Mohamed, please!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Bhadain, please resume your speech!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Members, allow hon. Bhadain to resume his speech!

(Interruptions)

Mr Bhadain: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Mohamed! I am warning you!

(Interruptions)

I am warning you, hon. Mohamed! Hon. Bhadain, please resume your speech!

Mr Bhadain: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I was referring to the Estimates 2017-2018 where in annex there is mention of...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Sinatambou, please!

(Interruptions)

Mr Bhadain: ... financing from India and that is to be...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Mohamed, this is your last warning!

Mr Bhadain: And this is to be found, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, at Table 14 Financing from India which is Appendix I: Capital Projects and mention is made that a grant of USD350 m. was obtained and I was explaining to the House that the USD353 m. which is 12.7 billion Mauritian Rupees was obtained when I negotiated with the Minister of Finance of India, Mr Arun Jaitley and it was finalised in Mauritius.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Bhadain, I told you that you will not be allowed to reveal things which came to your knowledge in your capacity as a former Cabinet Minister!

Mr Bhadain: With great respect, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am not revealing anything, this is all what has been published in the Press anyway.

The Deputy Speaker: I am not concerned with the Press.

Mr Bhadain: And there is no secret.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Bhadain! My ruling is that one cannot breach his oath of allegiance under the cloak of Parliamentary Immunity. Right!

Mr Bhadain: There is nothing to do with any secret or any confidential information. This is what has been published in the press. Now, out of the USD 353 million, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it was agreed that the line of credit of USD 100 million, which was obtained by the former Government for the Metro-Leger project as it was then called, after successful negotiations had been converted into a grant for USD 100million, and that was part of the USD 353 million which was obtained the MUR 12.7 billion.

Now, then the Minister of Finance decided that this money was going to be used to do a number of things. In his last Budget, it is also repeated in this Budget, in the Estimates, the Metro-Express project was going to take Rs9.9 billion out of the 12.7billion, nearly 10 billion. And then he went on to say that there was going to be a new building for the Supreme Court, 1.1billion plus he went to say that he was going to build a new ENT hospital for Rs500 million. Social housing, according to the Marshall Plan, Rs700 million was allocated. Then, of course, he came up with the tablets: grade 1 and grade 2 students were going to receive tablets, and the amount which was allocated was Rs500 m.

So, when we look at all these projects which were said that they were going to do, none of these has actually been done Mr Deputy Speaker. Of course, we heard the Minister of Finance, during his Budget speech, he informed the House that the great GDP growth rate of

4.1%, that he had predicted, had not been achieved. If we were to go by his own figures, he stated that, this year, the revised estimate was 3.9% GDP growth rate. Of course, the Leader of the Opposition has mentioned that, according to the World Bank estimate, we are talking about 3.5%, Statistics 3.4%, Statistics Mauritius refers to 3.8%, but he says 3.9%. It does not matter because, at the end of the day, we will go by his figures, 3.9. So if you predicted 4.1 and you have achieved 3.9, it means that something has gone wrong. Something which was meant to happen did not happen.

When we look at the estimates document at page 14, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we see understatement of Government Operations, Total Public Sector Investment. That was predicted to be 34.9 billion. So the Minister of Finance had stated then that he was going to spend 34.9 billion to basically develop the economy. But when we look at the Revised Estimate 2016-2017, it fell short of Rs10 billion. Now it has gone to 24.17 billion. So, I mean, to state that this is underperformance would be an understatement in itself. Now, Mr Deputy Speaker, Total Public Sector Investment went down, fell short by Rs10 billion, GDP Growth Rate was predicted at 4.1%, but then it was 3.9%.

We know that all these projects that were mentioned, you are probably a lawyer yourself, you go to Supreme Court, there is no new building. There is no ENT hospital; none of these has been done. Then, of course, we have the Metro-Express. So what has happened for one year? For one whole year, it was stated that the Metro-Express project, in last year's Budget, was going to go ahead and Rs9.9 billion was allocated to that. Even that did not happen. So, the classic explanation,

I remember hon. Sinatambou mentioning the other day, that there is a problem with the procurement process, that there is a problem with public officials because public officials *sont en train de mettre des batons dans la roue*. But all of these Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, are lame excuses as to why this Government could not go ahead and do what they decided to do in the Budget last year. It was a good Budget; it created a feel-good factor, but the implementation did not happen. Why the implementation did not happen?

We have had Committees which were set-up. I remember hon. Seeruttun was put in charge of the economic side of the Budget Implementation Committee. I heard hon. Sinatambou state that 132 measures had been implemented, and 142 measures were left to be implemented. But I have put the questions to hon. Sinatambou, how much money was

actually spent in terms of the 132 measures which were implemented and today we have the answer. When we look at Public Sector Investment...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Gayan please!

Mr Bhadain: When we look at Public Sector Investment, it fell short by Rs10 billion. So this Government has not worked. Why? Why is it, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that after having come with a Budget which is a plan, a statement of intent, none of these was done? Now, the answer to all of that is because Government stopped working at some point in time, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, since October 216, because we had the Geppetto- Pinocchio deal. So, everybody was worried about how the *passation* was going to be implemented not how the budgetary measures were going to be implemented in this country. But when we look, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, at the real GDP Growth Rate - I am going to refer to the estimates of the Minister of Finance where the real GDP Growth rate is mentioned, if I can find it, it is predicted that this year 3.9% growth, then next year, 4.1%. So, he anticipates what is going to make 4.1% again next year.

But Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, if you are saying that now the real GDP Growth Rate is 3.9, and next year it is going to be 4.1, you accept that it is going to grow by an incremental 0.2%. Now, when you look at the prediction for 2018/2019, again he is telling you that it is going to go from 4.3 to 4.1 - again, an incremental Growth Rate of 0.2%. When you look at 2019/2020 what he is predicting...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Roopun!

Mr Bhadain: Again he is telling you 0.2%. So when you look at what is being achieved here, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the real GDP Growth Rate - the incremental amount will be 0.2%. Over 3 years, if you add it up, it is going to be 0.6%. Now, the question, and I put that question to everybody in this House, including the Government Ministers and MPs who are here. In order to achieve 0.2% GDP Growth Rate in one year you need to take debts of Rs22.4billion? I am not saying those figures, these are the figures of the Minister of Finance. In three years, you are going to achieve 0.6% real GDP growth and you are indebting this country and the future of all the kids of this country by Rs22.5billion, how can

that be? How can that be and this is where this whole Budget is flawed. Why is it flawed? Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we all know that when you basically invest money into projects, these projects have, of course, to be implemented. Last year, 12.7 billion of donation, of grant, was obtained, when I negotiated and obtained that.

This year, this Minister of Finance, has gone and taken debt of USD500 m. which is Rs18 billion, plus he has disbursed another line of credit which dates back to 2012 for USD130 m., which makes the total debt amounts to Rs22.5 billion. When he has disbursed those lines of credits, he is putting in jeopardy not only the financial soundness of our whole system, but basically he is putting in jeopardy the lives of our citizens in terms of how they will be able to manage and how will this debt will be repaid. He is telling you: what is this budget all about? He is telling you: "I am going to do a series of projects." We have heard all the speakers before. This piscine in Curepipe! The Plaza renovation! The Municipal Hall! Let us have a look at what is he is going to do with this money. If I may refer to ...

(Interruptions)

That's Mentor!

If I may refer to Table 14 - Financing from India. We look at the line of credit of USD130 m. which was obtained by the previous Government, back in 2012, but which was never disbursed. Why? Because our country can't afford to raise the level of debt to such an extent that is going to compromise everything else. He goes and disperses that money now. USD130 m.! Let me tell a few things that is going to be done with this money -

- National Archives, library project Rs465 m. How is this going to boost the economy? You are going to do a library.
- accelerator for Victoria Hospital Rs150 m.;
- equipment for cancer hospital Rs285 m.;
- construction of Medi clinics Rs250 m.;
- construction of traffic centres Rs320 m.;
- renovation of Plaza theatre Rs285 m.;

And it goes on and on.

- acquisition of 25 fire fighting vehicles for Rs215 m., and
- acquisition of six incinerators to burn people who are dead.

Is this going to generate revenue? Is this going to enable Mauritius to get sufficient money to repay the debt by acquisition of six incinerators? It goes on - construction of a new building for printing department Rs390 m. I can go on and on. It is all in the annex here. The question is this: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, when you come as Minister of Finance ...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Members, please!

Mr Bhadain: ... and you say that the real GDP growth rate is going to be 0.2% for next year, incremental from 3.9% to 4.1%. When you say that the year after that, you are going to make 0.2% and the year after that, you are going to make another 0.2% making it 0.6%.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Members, please!

Mr Bhadain: It means that you are fully aware that this economy will never grow with the measures that you are implementing. There are no sectoral measures, nothing in financial services and nothing in ICT! Even on the manufacturing side, when you look at it because these are our contributors to GDP. Financial services represent 12.2% of GDP. At the end of the day, there are so many challenges that have to be addressed because if you do not grow these sectors ...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Leader of the Opposition!

Mr Bhadain: ...the economy is not going to grow.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Leader of the Opposition, please!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Bhadain!

Mr Bhadain: I thought I have had heard a Chihuahua, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Henry!

Mr Bhadain: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, ...

(Interruptions)

It is not a kangaroo! It is a Chihuahua!

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this USD130 m. basically is going to be spent in projects which are not going to generate any revenue. We know that. We know when you are doing the renovation of Plaza and all these different things, it is not going to happen.

Now, when we look at the second amount, the amount of USD500 m., which the Prime Minister of India, - this is no secret, it was done in this House - he delivered a speech here and he stated that -

“India was making available to Mauritius a line of credit of USD500 m.”

When, he, the Minister of Finance, a couple of weeks before this Budget went to India, he disbursed that USD500 m. Let me tell you one thing, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. If that money could be used, it would have already been used since two years back. The reason as to why this money cannot be used is because when you look at what the IMF has put as limitations on Mauritius, we were going to go in breach of all those IMF agreements. We even passed a law to that effect, the Public Debt Management Act, which says that we are going to reduce the debt and we cannot push it up.

Now, he went ahead, three weeks before and he decided to disburse that amount. He came back to say in his Budget Speech that this money, Rs18 billion, is going to be used for the Metro Express Project. He mentioned fully financed - Rs10 billion of grant money had already gone into Metro Express. Now, he is telling you Rs9,260,000,000 is going to go into it as debt which has to be repaid.

Then, he is going to replace 150 km of water pipes - the DPM has gone - but basically this was a promise which was made to the people of this country that they were going to get water 24/7. It never happened! Now, they are telling you that they are going to replace 150 km of water pipes - Rs1,790,000,000 of debt money! You are taking money as debt to go and replace water pipes. Then, of course, you have got things like battery energy storage for CEB:

Rs360 m.; new Administrative City Project: Rs3.5 billion and Social Housing Project Rs2.8 billion. Now, all these items I have just listed, any O Level/Form V Economics student would tell you that none of these projects generate revenue. None of these projects create a multiplier effect in the economy! None of these projects are going to create jobs! He has mentioned 24,000 jobs in his last budget. None of these projects are going to boost the economy of our country so that GDP would increase and that is why he, himself, has told you the real GDP growth rate is 0.2% for next year; 0.2% for 2018/2019; 0.2% for 2019/2020 and 0.6% for the next three years! He's telling you that he is going to change the destiny of Mauritius. How can that be? You are taking loans!

Let me explain, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. A father in his house decides to go to a bank in Mauritius and to take a loan. He gives his dwelling as a security. He gets the loan money. He comes home and what does he do? He says: I am going to extend a bedroom. I am going to do a garage. I am going to build a terrace on top of my house. I am going to have a swimming pool - talking about the swimming pool in Curepipe – and then, I am going to buy some chocolates for my kids. I will call these social measures and I will tell these people that they will get 10 cents on a loaf of bread. This is how it was done, this budget. This is how it was done. Taking loans and extending, like this father is extending his house and then telling his kids: I have brought you a few chocolates along the way. Eat them! Then, at the end of the day, do you know what? I have jeopardised our whole existence by putting the house as guarantee, but my salary will stay the same. I do not know where I will get additional money to repay the loan. How is the loan going to be repaid? Rs22.5 billion! Is this in this document? Does it show how this country is going to repay this huge, massive amount of money? There is nothing in there which shows how the money is going to be repaid. I will tell you what the Minister of Finance has said.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Bhadain, I will have to interrupt for diner!

(Interruptions)

Mr Bhadain: Mr Deputy Speaker, I cannot be interrupted in my speech all the time. The whole people of Mauritius are watching this.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Bhadain!

(Interruptions)

Mr Bhadain: This is being done deliberately.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Bhadain, the hon. friends have been waiting for diner. I suspend the sitting for an hour.

At 9.03 p.m. the sitting was suspended.

On resuming at 10.04 p.m. with the Deputy Speaker in the Chair..

Mr Bhadain: Mr Deputy Speaker, when we look at the GDP growth of 40% over 3 years, it makes 0.6%, but then the Minister of Finance has chosen to take Rs22.5 billion of debt to create over 3 years 0.6% of GDP.

Mr Deputy Speaker, with regard to the debt position, I would also refer to the Estimates 2017/2018, at page 14, where under statement of Government Operations, there is an item which is known as Government Borrowing Requirements. Now, Mr Deputy Speaker, over and above the Rs22.5 billion from India, the line of credit which has been disbursed, it is interesting to note the level of massive debts that this Government is planning to take over the coming years. If we look at the figure for Government Borrowing Requirements for 2017-2018, it is a staggering of Rs20.9 billion.

For 2018/2019, that is another staggering amount of Rs22.7 billion and when we look at 2019/2020, we are talking about Rs17.4 billion. If you add up, Mr Deputy Speaker, Rs20.9 billion for 2017/2018; Rs22.7 billion for 2018/2019 and Rs17.4 billion for 2019/2020, it comes to Rs61 billion of debt over the next three years. These are the figures of the hon. Minister of Finance, the Government Borrowing Requirements. So, the debt ceiling is going to go well above the Rs300 billion threshold.

If we are going to take the figures as they are now, it has already come to Rs296 billion. Now, we add for the next three years, another Rs61 billion, we are talking over Rs340 billion of debt. We are not even talking about the line of credit from India because this is off-balance-sheet. This is not even in the Budget Estimates. Can you imagine this country is heading for bankruptcy, Mr Deputy Speaker!

There is no other way; this budget is a recipe for bankruptcy, that's what it is. Any accountant looking at those figures will tell you that it is not sustainable to have over Rs300

billion of debt when you have an economic like ours. On top of that, you owe Rs22.5 billion to the Government of India.

Now, when I mentioned before the break that all these projects that have been so well acclaimed by so many Members, on the other side, they have been talking about swimming pools. Swimming pools, swimming in debt! You are not swimming in water, it is like Bagatelle Dam. I hear that there is a leak today in Bagatelle Dam. Somebody said it was solid, solid, solid. Yes, it was like a Chihuahua barking! But, basically, when you sit down and when you look at all these projects: buying incinerators, Mr Deputy Speaker, how are you going to generate revenue from dead people? Buildings: in terms of the Supreme Court building, in terms of the Printing Office and all of these different things, renovation of Plaza, municipal halls, fire fighting vehicles. When you use loan money, debt money, line of credit money to buy these vehicles, I mean, is this going to generate revenue? Is this going forward?

When you sit and you look at all of these, this budget is a massive, massive risk for this country. I would make an appeal to all the Members of the Opposition not to vote for this budget, Mr Deputy Speaker, because this is the budget which is going to take our country down, which is going to send us into oblivion. Now, Mr Deputy Speaker, the hon. Minister of Finance has said he has taken Rs22.5 billion debt from India and then he has said: "I am going to do all these projects which I have just mentioned, the buildings and the swimming pools and what not, the renovation of Plaza."

But then, in this Budget it is not stated how he is going to repay this money and this is the key, this gives the lie to everything that he has said in front of this House and the jeopardy he is putting everybody into, because how are you going to repay this debt? He has explained a structure. I heard the PNQ of the hon. Leader of the Opposition also today and the evasive answers which were given to his questions.

Now, he basically stated that there is going to be a structure and Exim Bank from India is going to loan money to a company called SBM infrastructure Ltd. Now, SBM infrastructure Ltd is not even a bank. It does not have a banking licence, it is a company and the money is going to be disbursed by Exim Bank into this SBM infrastructure Ltd. Now let us understand what is going to happen next. Then, you would have many companies, he calls them SPV's which are going to be set up and these companies then will issue shares. What shares are they going to issue?

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Members, please, allow the hon. Member to make his speech.

Mr A. Duval: On a point of order, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, hon. Gayan is not even in his seat. He is making noises and is mocking hon. Bhadain.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Duval!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Duval! Come on, hon. Duval!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Bhadain, please resume!

Mr Bhadain: Thank you Mr Deputy Speaker, but I do agree with the hon. Member. I mean I am deliberately being prevented from speaking in this House.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order!

Mr Bhadain: Mr Deputy Speaker, I have not even spoken about our darling Samputh. We have not forgotten about Choomka. I am speaking about the Budget.

(Interruptions)

Now, Mr Deputy Speaker ...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order!

(Interruptions)

Mr Bhadain: Mr Deputy Speaker, when we...

Mr Gayan: Mr Deputy Speaker, on a point of order!

(Interruptions)

On a point of order, Mr Deputy Speaker!

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Bhadain! Allow the hon. Member to take the point of order!

(Interruptions)

Mr Gayan: Mr Deputy Speaker, in this House, hon. Members who are called honourable, I expected to live up to a certain standard and when people's names are being attacked, people who are not here, it is undignified and people must withdraw. The hon. Member must know that. Of course, it is the first time, he is in the Assembly. Maybe he does not know what the Standing Order provides for.

(Interruptions)

The point is that the hon. Member has to restrict himself, confine himself to what is contained in the Budget...

(Interruptions)

I will start with this ...

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Bhadain, please resume!

Mr Bhadain: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. I am deliberately being interrupted by people who are here just to do this. Samputh limited! Now, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, when we look at the SBM Infrastructure, I will take it up again, the debt which has been taken by the hon. Minister of Finance and Economic Development which is basically going to hang in the neck of the kids of this country is going to come from EXIM Bank into a company SBM Infrastructure which is not even a bank. It is a mere company with no banking licence. And this money, when it comes into SBM Infrastructure Ltd. is going to then being disbursed to several companies which he calls SPVs which are going to undertake projects. Now, those companies, the SPVs, are apparently going to issue shares which they are issuing to SBM Infrastructure will be purchased. The money will come into the SPV and then he says, out of his own fallacy, that these companies will then do these projects, will generate revenue and will use this money, the revenue will give profits which will then be used to buy back the shares, the redeemable preference shares.

Now, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we have seen the projects, we have seen they are not revenue generating. Where is the money going to come from for these SPVs which are purchasing incinerators, which are actually going to renovate Plaza, which are going to do so swimming pools in Curepipe, which are doing multisports complex halls? Where are these companies going to get the revenues to be able to buy back those shares, give money to SBM Infrastructure? And then SBM Infrastructure is supposed to take that money and repay the debt to EXIM bank. I mean, even a CPE student will tell you this Budget is fraud. Completely fraud! And I say again, do not get misconceived by the *10 sous on dipain* or the Rs1,000 which was said was being given to people who are earning below Rs10,000 because we all walk out of here believing that Rs1,000 is going to people who are going to earn less Rs10,000. A blatant lie! When you look at the annex, it is people who earn less than 5,000 who are going to get Rs1,000 and they must be in full time employment and their employers must be paying NPF for them. How many persons in Mauritius are earning Rs5,000 on a full-time job and their employers are deducting NPF/NSF and paying over for these people to benefit for the Rs1,000 now. How many people?

Now, when you sit and you look at it, I am representing these people, the holistic programme under YEP. The hon. Minister of Education will know. These people are being asked to teach Grade 1 to Grade 6 and they are being paid Rs6,000 a month. And these people, those youngsters, the transport they have to pay out of their own pocket and when they do not go to work one day, their salary is deducted. One person actually got a cheque for Rs1,000 a month. They call it stipend under YEP. These issues are not being addressed by this Government by this Budget! You are bringing debt into the country, hanging it into the necks of the future generation and then basically you are saying you are going to do projects which will generate revenue and you have created a sham structure using SBM as a *cobaye*.

In the SBM Board we know who sit there, Prakash Maunthrooa, Mr Ballah and all these people who sit on the SBM Board. It is actually Government itself and if they continue like that, they are going to bring SBM down. It nearly happened when hon. Lutchmeenaraidoo decided that Bramer Bank was going to go under SBM; the share price crashed. Then, he created the National Commercial Bank and now MauBank with Rs6.4 billion of taxpayers' money already injected into MauBank. This is the management of this Government and they are trying to blame it on other people.

Now, we look at this Budget, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that structure, these companies: are they going to fall within the Procurement Act? Are these companies going to be accountable for the money that we are going to be spending, the debt money which has been brought here and which is going to go and jeopardise the lives of all the kids? They are not even in the Procurement Act. And these companies, do you know who is going to chair their boards? Do you know who is going to be in there? You are going to have people like the ones we have seen so far who have been doing all this nonsense business in those boards. None of that is known! And we are saying that money is going to be generated to repay the debt. There is nothing in this Budget which explains how this Rs22.5 billion is going to be repaid to India. Nothing in there! Plus we have the currency risk because I say that the dollar, if you take 2011 when Pravind Jugnauth was Minister of Finance, the dollar was Rs29.

Now, today it is Rs35. Imagine what it is going to be going forward and every single rupee on Rs22 billion! Imagine, USD500 m. with one rupee swing will create a Rs500 m. debt in addition. And we are talking about USD630 m. which has been disbursed. And people here, in this House, who all represent their constituencies, they are all clapping and acclaiming, we are going to do this project, we are going to do that project, we are going to do this in my constituency. We will build this building, we will do this, we will do that. And you are doing all of that with money which you do not even know today how you are going to repay. And who is going to repay that money? Even the next Government which is going to replace this one is already indebted! Now, they tell you they are going to go ahead with the Metro Express project. I am going to come on that now, but I will just ask a question. The hon. Minister Bodha, one of the sensible Ministers in this Government, I must say because it is always nice to talk to him.

(Interruptions)

Because he knows that I have always complained about the Metro going on the road. He knows! I have told him so many times. And if he had a choice, he would have done it the proper way. I know his hands are tied. I know why this is happening. It is because hon. Pravind Jugnauth has already stated publicly that Rs17 billion is what the project would have cost and he did so before when we were in the Opposition. He had stated that Ramgoolam was doing abuse and it would be Rs24 billion which is an exaggeration. With Rs17 billion, you can do this project. Now, because of his word, because of that, this Government is stuck that they have to do this project into Rs17 billion, but let me tell you one thing, Mr Deputy

Speaker, Sir. If you look at the answer to the PNQ which my friend, hon. Bodha gave to the Leader of the Opposition. He stated, and I quote -

“With regard to part (a) of the question, the estimated project cost is Rs17.7 billion.”

We were all here in this House. Rs17.7 billion! Now, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, look at what hon. Pravind Jugnauth said in his Budget. If you are to look at the figure that he has mentioned for the Metro project. This is to be found in his 3-year strategic plan and if you are to look at page 89: Metro Express project -Rs20,904,000,000. How come! How come you have a Minister of this Government who is handling the file, who is responsible for public infrastructure, who comes to this House and says this project is going to cost Rs17.7 billion and not even a few weeks later you have the Minister of Finance, the hon. Prime Minister who comes and says Rs20.9 billion. How does it go up by Rs3billion? Is this file being handled by my friend hon. Bodha or is this file being handled by the Codies sitting in the Prime Minister’s Office and how come this goes up by Rs3 billion? Where is this Rs3 billion going to come from? And what about all the feasibility study? Because my friend, hon. Bodha mentioned that there is a cost optimisation report. He said and I quote -

“(...) that at the request of the Government, the Singapore Cooperation Enterprise submitted a cost optimisation report with a new reference designed on 26 October 2016 (...)”

But if that cost-optimisation report showed that the total project cost is Rs17.7 billion, I mean, what happens now? Why are we not being shown the cost-optimisation report, which is redundant, because it has already gone to about 3 billion? How much more will it go?

Now, that’s in the financing side of the metro. You take this whole Budget, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, you remove all the gimmicks. I will tell you one thing, there is only a debt of Rs22.5 billion from India, and there is a Metro Express Project of Rs20.9 billion. That’s the only substantial thing you have in this Budget. These two things are going to take this country down. And it is being done by a Prime Minister who has not even been elected as Prime Minister of this country and he has no moral stand to basically take this forward, because if he wants to take this forward, he needs to have the blessing of the people. He needs to go back to the people, give the people the right to vote, give the people the right to choose, give the people the right to say: ‘yes, we believe in you, we trust you, you are the leader of this country and whatever you are going to be committing us to, we will accept.’

The Metro project, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, you go on Internet, on Facebook, you will see so many videos of hon. Lutchmeenaraidoo, of what is known as Minister Mentor today, Geppetto, father of Pinocchio. Now, you go and see his video, you know what he is going to show you, what he says to Nawaz Noorbux, interviewing him? He says: 'Metro, *non.*' Why do people in the rural areas, all the MPs sitting - I see my friend hon. Rughoobur there, in Constituency No. 6, and hon. Callicurn in Constituency No. 5 - how are they going to justify to the people in their constituency that these people are going to be indebted, their kids are going to be indebted? But the Metro runs from Curepipe to Port Louis and they will have to pay. Not only they will have to pay, these MPs will have to go and explain that to their people there. Why the taxpayers' money is being used, Rs22.5 billion, to go and finance Rs20.9 billion. I wish them good luck!

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, let us look at what my hon. friend Bodha said about the Metro project.

(Interruptions)

Well, I still call him a friend because he is a sensible person whom I very much believe will look at the Metro Project again and make other people come to their senses. Because he would not want to be like Bachoo after the *inondation!*

The Deputy Speaker: Yes, please address to the Chair!

(Interruptions)

Mr Bhadain: *Non, la cuisine met li dehors. La cuisine met dehors longtemps li.*

(Interruptions)

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, hon. Bodha mentioned to this House that the financial model for this project is based - I am quoting from his answer - on an average daily ridership of 80,000 passengers in each direction. I believe, he is mentioning 160,000 people who are going to be travelling, back and front, in the Metro every single day. Every single day, 160,000 people! Let me tell you, I went on the net, and I have done a lot of research in terms of how many deaths Metro has caused on the road. Everybody in this House can go and check, in Denver, in Houston, in New York, in so many places, in Victoria, Australia, they are removing the whole thing from the road now. But the most important one is Detroit.

If you go on Google and you type “Detroit people mover”, you are going to see videos of how in Detroit, in the USA, they planned that there would be 60,000 travelling, not 160,000, but 60,000. But, in actual fact, there were only 6,000 travellers. And you know what happened to Detroit? Detroit, as a city, had to file for bankruptcy, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. File for bankruptcy because of the Metro project, which was put there.

The same thing happened in so many cities. If you look at the number of accidents where cars actually hit those trains. I have mentioned about Quatre Bornes. Hon. Bodha knows very well that, as an MP for Quatre Bornes, I always complained that on St Jean Road, it would be completely nonsensical to take away the two middle lanes and to put the rails on that road, from St Jean to where the Municipality of Quatre Bornes is, in the centre of Quatre Bornes.

Just imagine, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am sure you know the road also. If you take from St Jean, you are going to La Louise, and the middle lanes are now going to be the rail track for the Metro. It leaves you with the two small lanes, which were previously car parking space, but which have been made into a second lane, or only those two small lanes which now will be where all the vehicles will drive, including the buses.

So, if you have a bus which is going on the left lane and it has to stop to take passengers or to offload passengers, or if you have a car which breaks down on the left lane - I had put the question - what happens then? What happens to the traffic behind? And you know what the answer was! The answer was: it can overtake and drive on the rail track. And I said: are you saying that cars are going to be driving on the rails where the trains are going to come at such peak? And I asked what the frequency of those trains coming is? And I was told every three minutes. Every three minutes, you have a train coming. I even said: But if somebody gets sick and has to rush to Candos Hospital, how do you drive on St Jean Road going to Candos Hospital in a SAMU vehicle if you have trains coming?

You take what is happening on the other side in terms of Victoria Avenue, the whole promenade is being taken out and you have people’s houses, you have religious buildings there, *il y a une grotte*, you have a small *kovil*, and what is happening next to that promenade, you are taking away the promenade and putting it in front of these houses.

Let me get to Belle Rose! There, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, they have decided to take the whole of Bazar Belle Rose out. Where people are going to go to buy their vegetables and everything else they buy in that market place, God knows!

Some suggestions have been made for Palma, some other suggestion is next to Cité Giraud, but when you look at people in Belle Rose, they walk from there to go to these places to buy vegetables and come back. And not only that, when you have a train coming on what is now Bazar Belle Rose, you have Avenue Ollier which is perpendicular and the train is going on the road, how is it going to cross over Avenue Ollier to go on the other side? By having those ‘STOP/GO’s, the barriers, you will stop traffic on both sides and you have all the traffic lights and all the other things which are there.

When you reach a little bit further, the same problem for Boundary Road because it is perpendicular, so the train will have to stop all the time. I can’t see the hon. Minister for Energy, but I would want him to explain how much energy is going to be consumed by this project. It runs with electricity?

And in terms of those trains going and crossing those roads, I said it to people in my constituency, what if you have a small *Chihuahua* which is crossing the road, the driver will have to brake because *Chihuahua* might get killed with the way they are putting this on the road.

(Interruptions)

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, when you sit and you look at everything which is being done with this Metro project, I looked at this three-year strategic plan. And when I looked at that section, which the Minister of Finance who believes that this is the project which is going to show his *bilan*. His *bilan* will be the number of people who have died on the streets because of this Metro project. His *bilan* will be the bankruptcy in which he has put this country, with this level of debt. That will be his *bilan*, and then he will have to come and explain to people like other people who have basically led to all these people dying in the flood in this country.

When you look at page 51 of the three-year Strategic Plan of 2017-2018 2019-2020, under the heading Public Infrastructure, rail and road. I am going to quote from that Mr Deputy Speaker-

“Government will be investing massively in inland transport infrastructure over the next three years, including 13 km of new commuter rail Metro Express.”

I will stop here. 13 km? But everybody knows that from Curepipe to Port Louis it is 28 km! How come it has gone down to 13 km now? How come in this Budget, in the three-year plan, we are talking of 13 km and the price is going up from Rs17.7 billion announced by hon.

Bodha to Rs20.9 billion announced by Pravind Jugnauth? But, how come Rs3 billion up but then the kilometre goes down? Port Louis- Curepipe 28 and now he is saying 13 km! I was talking to the hon. Leader of the Opposition and I asked: is this right 13 km? Basically, I then found out that, at the bottom of the page, he was telling me maybe it is a misprint, maybe they made a mistake. They are used to making mistakes but maybe they have printed wrongly 13 km.

But, when you look at the diagram down there, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, under the heading 'Rail' and it says increase of, again, 13 km up to 2020 and then do you know what they say, there is a little diagram there, this is the Budget of Pravind Jugnauth! 30 km by 2030! Come on! 13 km by 2020, Rs20.9 billion and then you are saying 30 km by 2030! Does he think that everybody in this country is fool and is going to believe this? This Metro Express project is going to take this Government down and there are no two ways about it. There are no two ways about it! Why? Firstly, because the financial aspect does not make sense; secondly because it is financed by debt; thirdly because it is going to kill people on the road and fourthly because it is going to disfigure all the towns.

It does not stop with Quatre Bornes by the way, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. When I told you that what is going to happen at Belle Rose, Ollier and Boundary Road, he continues and the whole of Arab Town disappears. And, when we get into Rose Hill then it goes through that roundabout in the middle of Rose Hill and the whole of the promenade along Vandermeersch Street is taken away. There are houses there. Queen Elizabeth College is on the other side. It gets to Beau Bassin when you get to where Gool and all these places are, then it goes on the road again. That little garden Promenade Bijoux disappears. Then it goes to Barkly. The jardin sportif of Barkly disappears.

The point was taken here as to why there is no EIA report on this project, why it has been exempted after the Leader of the Opposition raised the issue, then basically a few weeks later Cabinet decides. If you look at the Cabinet decisions on the Web, Cabinet decides now that we are going for an EIA and we are asking the Singaporeans to do it. How come you already did *la pose de la première pierre*? How come you have already spent all this money into the virtual nonsense that has been shown to all the people of this country? How come you have already spent Rs10 billion? How come you have already paid the Singaporeans? When you add up all the costs, it has already reached Rs1 billion. Now you are looking at the Environmental Impact Assessment of the Metro Express project after having done all of that.

People in this country are too tolerant, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. In another country there would have been riots already!

Now, when you sit down and look at what is going to happen after that, you go from Barkly then it has to come to Port Louis. So, you have this huge precipice from Balfour all the way to Coromandel, Richelieu which I am told is about 109 metres deep. Now, they say there are going to build a bridge which is going to take it from Coromandel to go to the other side of the Motorway and then go alongside the Motorway to get into Port Louis through Pailles and all that. But that bridge, is that in the cost? We don't know! Total opacity! How long is that bridge going to take to build? I have not seen any bridges here, in this document presented by the hon. Minister of Finance and Economic Development.

This Metro is taking everybody for a ride. Everybody is being taken for a ride, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. This Government does not have anything to show to the population and they want to stick to that Metro Project which is going to bring the whole country down, not only because of the level of indebtedness, not only because we have already reached bankruptcy stage with that level of debt which is going to basically bind the next Government and probably the Government after that. When we are looking at how they are stubborn to go ahead because of political ego, that is why I say hon. Bodha is the only sensible Minister I know who can raise issues, but then again he is not in the kitchen so I don't know what is going to happen.

So, basically, when you look at that situation can this country afford to have that kind of a project jeopardising the lives of all the future generations, of the kids? We have so many problems. Have a look at the figures in here. I am not going to detail it all out but if you look at youth and employment it is going up. It is going up, 24% of people unemployed are youth. When you look at graduates, my friend, hon. Callichurn knows. When he started with the Youth Engineer Training Scheme, if I remember correctly, there were 783 people who registered. 150 got posted. What happened to the other 600? Doctors - what is happening with doctors in Mauritius? On the financial services side when I was there I created the Financial Services Institute to match all the graduates who have been studying law,

finance, administration and all that and linking them up with those companies which FSPA was bringing in like Old Mutual, Axa, Lloyds and all of that so that the Palm Captive Insurance to train these people and employ them. Do you know what they did? They got rid of FSPA! They sent it to Mr Sanspaur under the Minister of Finance. I do not know whether the Minister of Financial Services has an institute under him now apart from the regulator, the FSC. FSPA is gone, FSI is gone. Why do we have a Minister of Financial Services? Put the whole thing under the Minister of Finance!

When you sit and look at the FSI, they have stopped it. 1500 graduates had registered in the space of two weeks. The hon. Leader of the Opposition came up with that PNQ on UTM the other day. When you look at all these people who are coming out of the system be it the UoM, be it the UTM or Charles Telfair or Middlesex University, all these distance learning plus you have all these people who have gone and studied abroad. With Brexit now they can't even work over there, they have to come back here. What is going to happen in three years' time? Has this been catered for in this Budget? They are going to buy incinerators with India's money? This has not been catered for. This country is heading for a crash in terms of employment.

You look at pension. I don't know who is the Minister for pension is now.

(Interruptions)

Okay, hon. Sinatambou. When you look at the pension have you seen the measure relating to that investment authority, the MNIA? For years and years, the NPF has been managing the funds, investing the money. If you look at the Statistics Mauritius website you will have all the investments and how much has been generated as returns, but when you sit and look at what they are doing now, they are getting rid of the NPF Investment Committee. Now it is going to be this Investment Authority and what is this Investment Authority going to do? Take that money and start investing overseas, taking more risks.

We all know what is the relation between risk and return. If you want more return you will have to take more risks and the moment you start doing that with Rs106 billion of pensioners' money in this country, you are taking this whole country in a direction where it is going to be risky again. Whether it is on the debt side, whether it is on the pension side, in terms of youth employment, in terms of graduates coming out of universities, there are no

plans! This Government has no plans! I know that very well, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir - the only thing they are saying: okay, we have reached two and a half years, three years or whatever of our mandate, we need to have something.

We have had a change in Prime Ministership, the *passation* was the most important thing, the biggest con of this century. And now, what we have to do is we have to show to the people that we have one project which has been done so that we can tell everybody to go and vote for us. But let me tell you one thing, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. In Belle Rose/Quatre Bornes, I wish them all the luck. Come there, I will be waiting there, and we will see how many people are going to vote for you! We will see that!

Now, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, they are going...

(Interruptions)

Well, Chihuahuas are not allowed to be candidates! Now, when you look at what they are planning to do, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it is, basically, finishing with one project in their mandate - well starting, work-in-progress - and then saying to the people: "look, we are the people who have brought the Metro Express to Mauritius." But the bottom line is that they are going to crash the country. It is already crashed. With this budget, it is already crashed. I am making an appeal, again, not only to the Members of the Opposition, but to all the MPs who have been elected in all the other constituencies, whether they are from the rural areas, like hon. Rughoobur from Constituency No. 6 or hon. Callichurn from Constituency No. 5. They will have to go and answer to your mandates as to why their money is being used in a project which is going to crash the country. They will have to explain that.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, when we look at the whole situation, if this budget goes through, there is no way back because I am told - I do not know, hon. Bodha can confirm later on - that both AFCONS and the other company's bids are actually much higher than Rs20.9 billion. Much higher! I hope that the hon. Minister will break his chains and stop operating in the opacity which has been shielded on him by this Government and come in full transparency as a honest patriot, and tell everybody how much money is this going to cost this country because if this contract is signed, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, then you are into Betamax territory. Then, what is going to happen? Even the next Government which is going to replace those who bankrupted the country will not be in a position to stop anything. It is irreversible because the contract would have already been signed. And then, Mr Deputy

Speaker, Sir, you would still have a debt situation, and you would have to go and repay all those Rs22.5 billion debts.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have said before that all the Opposition Members have to be united in this, because this is not some small projects which the Government is going to undertake, this is something which is going to bankrupt our country. This budget is going to take the whole country down. I have explained the structure, I have explained there is no revenue to repay those loans. I have explained that at the end of the day, the Metro is a fallacy. It is something which is coming out of political ego and we cannot afford that. Mauritius has to compete intentionally. We have to be able to take decisions today which are going to give the youth a chance, and it is not the Metro Project which is going to do that.

So, I have asked and I am making an appeal again for all the Opposition Members to be united in this, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, to stop this project because this project is not something which this country can accept. I have also said, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that if Government is to go ahead with the Metro Express Project in my constituency in Quatre Bornes, then I will resign my seat from this Parliament. I have said, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that the people of Belle Rose/Quatre Bornes will have the opportunity to vote on a referendum basis for the whole of Mauritius, to decide whether this Metro Project is something which is acceptable or not acceptable. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I can tell you that I have already gone door to door in all the streets of Belle Rose/Quatre Bornes, whether it is in La Source, in Candos, in Belle-Rose or in Sodnac. I can tell you, I was explaining to these people how dangerous it is for the Metro to be on the roads. I referred to St. Jean Road, to Belle-Rose, Ollier and Boundary, but I can tell you what I have been told is that it is not a question of elevated structures.

People of Quatre Bornes/Belle Rose are saying 'No' to the Metro Project itself! It should not happen because this will bankrupt this country. The financing is completely flawed. The hon. Minister Bodha knows about that. Now, they are talking about 13 km, all the projections, all the figures are flawed. The Indian companies are not agreeable to them. He gave dates that he was going to come and submit those Cost Optimisation Reports, none of that has been given, and at the end of the day, people are not stupid, people are not silly, and certainly not in my Constituency No.18. These are the people who voted for me, these are the people who put me here, in this National Assembly, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. I can tell

you that I owe it to them, to be standing here before you today. If I have to resign my seat, I maintain...

(Interruptions)

Do not worry! Listen to the rest! I maintain that I am resigning from this National Assembly. I have spoken lengthily to the Leader of the Opposition on this issue, who is also my *colistier* in Belle Rose/Quatre Bornes and he has asked me to wait one week for him to come with a PNQ on the Metro-Express Project.

(Interruptions)

But I can tell you that I am not convinced at all that this Government is going to change anything or there is going to be any new information or any new data, or there is anything which is going to come which is going to show to the people of Mauritius that this project has to go ahead. I have told the hon. Leader of the Opposition that come what may, I am resigning from this Parliament next week after the Committee of Supply, after I have put questions to all these Ministers, after all what they have done today! And then, I will wait for you in Quatre Bornes - all of you - and I will show you what is going to happen with your deal *papa-piti*, with everything that you have done to this country. Mr Gayan is talking a lot. Vijaya Sumputh will be hanging in Quatre Bornes on the ropes there. You can go and see her.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir,...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order!

Mr Bhadain: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we are going to show to this Government that it is time for them to go!

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Allow the hon. Member to conclude his speech!

(Interruptions)

Mr Bhadain: ...to Geppetto and Pinocchio, what the people of Belle Rose/Quatre Bornes think about them! We are going to show to this Government that what they have done

for two and a half years, it is time to give back to the people of Mauritius the right to vote. It is time to give back to the people of Mauritius their fundamental right!

The Deputy Speaker: Order!

Mr Bhadain: It is time for this abusive Government to go away! It is time for them to stop all this abuse! The *courtiers*, the mafia and everything they are doing to this country! All the money they are stealing, it is going to be disclosed in the electoral campaign in Quatre Bornes! I am waiting for all of you there! You can also inform the hon. Minister of Finance, Pravind Jugnauth that the Fraud Office in the UK is investigating on him, the hon. Prime Minister of this country! This is going to be disclosed in Quatre Bornes! Tell him I am waiting for him there!

Thank you!

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Members, Madam Speaker will now preside over the sitting.

At this stage Madam Speaker took the Chair.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Rutnah!

Mr S. Rutnah (Third Member for Piton & Rivière du Rempart): Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, we heard a lot about growth, about Metro Express, about indebtedness and a lot of bluffs and I am going to call the bluffs off straightaway.

Madam Speaker, every Government ...

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Order, please!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Rutnah!

(Interruptions)

Order! Hon. Rutnah!

Mr S. Rutnah: Madam Speaker, I would have anticipated that hon. Roshi Bhadain would have extended the courtesy of listening to what I have to say in order to call the bluff off. But unfortunately, some people have courage others do not have! Because some people think that they are above everyone else. Full of arrogance! Full of themselves! Those who have this habit of thinking that they know it all is a very dangerous thing. History has proved it. Do you want to know what Shakespeare said in Troilus and Cressida about arrogance? In fact, it is a story about the 'City of Troy'. If anyone wants to know about this piece of Shakespeare, I would advise them to watch a film called 'City of Troy.' This is what Shakespeare said in Troilus and Cressida to Thersites and Achilles –

“The man's undone forever; for if Hector break not his neck i' the combat, he'll break 't himself in vain-glory.”

Hon. Bhadain cannot afford to break his neck here in combat, but he wants his neck broken in his Constituency should there be one day a by-election so to say. Today, many journalists who were up there are disappointed because they thought that it would be announced today that he is going to resign. But, he does not have that courage.

Madam Speaker, life is neither a tempest nor more a midsummer night's dream, but take it as you like it. Take it easy. We are here, all hon. Members, whether from this side of this House, or the Opposition, to serve our country, our people. Here, we may disagree with one another, but at the end of the day, we have to have that measured intellectual exchange in the House. Not the kind of language that we heard, exaggeration, arrogance that we heard coming from hon. Roshi Bhadain.

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Hon. Gayan, please!

Mr Rutnah: Madam Speaker, let me start with growth. The Leader of Opposition spoke a lot about it. Hon. Bhadain spoke a lot about it. Members of this side of the House spoke a lot about it. My very good friend, hon. Uteem, spoke about it. I must say one thing. Out of the many of the Opposition, hon. Members, who took the floor, the only measured intellectual argument came in relation to the Budget Speech from hon. Uteem. Although, I don't agree with many things that he has said that I am going to reply in an intellectual manner. I am not going to strike below the bell and I am not going to make any personal attacks.

Madam Speaker, let us firstly look at what the hon. Finance Minister said about growth in his Budget. At paragraph 5, on page 1, he stated –

“The thrust of last year’s Budget has allowed us to build a strong framework for economic revival. It has propelled our economy to a higher growth rate of 3.9 per cent in 2016/17, compared to 3.2 per cent in the previous year.

We are expecting the growth rate to rise further to 4.1 per cent in 2017/18.”

Now, let us look at what firstly, hon. Xavier Duval, the Leader of the Opposition said about growth. In doing so, he referred to the World Bank. He said this –

“(…) I see that the Minister of Finance has estimated the growth for this finishing financial year at 3.9%. Why oh why has the World Bank, Madam Speaker - *s’il vous plaît, une institution respectée* - estimated our growth for this year to be 3.4% and last year 3.5 %? Why? It has to be explained, Madam Speaker! We know that the debt figures *ont été trafiqués*.”

“But, Madam Speaker, would you believe the World Bank or would you believe, in these circumstances, the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development?”

Let us look at what was the World Bank projection for 2016. It is an official document. For Mauritius, it was estimated to be 3.5% for last year, that is, the financial year. But we achieved 3.7%! Yes, it is a respectable institution, but it can only forecast because this is what budget is all about, any Chancellor of Exchequer of the world when makes an estimation, it makes an estimation based on figures and data available to the Government during a particular financial year available. We do not know when, which month the World Bank carried out its statistical analysis in relation to our economic affairs to come to what the hon. Leader of the Opposition purport to be the World Bank figure.

Now, let us look at what the MCB, the Mauritius Commercial Bank Focus post Budget Outlook June 2017 says on growth. They measured the growth for 2016/2017 to be 3.7% and for 2017/2018: 3.8%. It is very interesting what they say thereafter –

‘That said, the country’s economic performance for 2017 would be supported by another upturn in national investment levels following the line-up of several undertakings, even if related expenditures are, as hinted above, on course to be marginally lower than initially planned. Thus, in spite of factoring in execution lead times, a notable growth is foreseen in public sector investment. For its part, after the

pick-up registered in 2016, private sector investment is likely to post a resilient outcome this year, mainly underpinned by the execution of identified ventures by operators, notably related to the tourism and residential segments. From a sectorial perspective, it is worth discerning that real GDP growth should, in 2017, be underpinned by the notable performances of the financial and business services, ICT and tourism industries on the back of their harnessed market and competitive breakthroughs, in addition to benefiting from a noticeable upturn in construction, after a lacklustre trajectory of recent years’.

So, this is what the MCB Focus says about growth in our country. Now, Madam Speaker, let us look at the historical background of the growth that we have achieved and comparing and contrasting with the growth that was achieved when the hon. Leader of the Opposition was the Finance Minister. But before I go there, if I may remind everybody in the House that, in fact, last year during the Budget Speech at page 3 paragraph 24, the Finance Minister said the following –

“We must therefore lift up the growth path before the 3 to 3.5 per cent growth trend of recent years becomes a ‘new normal’.

And at paragraph 14 -

“The GDP growth rate for the year 2015/16 would be 3.4 percent”.

Now, Madam Speaker, if we look at the Budget Speech of 2012/2013, the growth rate was anticipated by the then Minister of Finance, that is, the actual Leader of the Opposition, he anticipated that he would achieve 4%, but unfortunately, he achieved only 3.2%. In 2013, the SADC countries on average achieved 4.2% and in 2014 when the hon. Leader of the Opposition was Finance Minister anticipated a growth of 3.8% to 4% then SADC countries were anticipating 4.6%.

Total investment when he was Finance Minister fell from 23% in 2012 to 21.2 % in 2013. Private investment was 7.5 % in 2012 and it fell in 2013 to 16%. And then the MCCI (Mauritius Chamber of Commerce and Industry Report) said this –

« Le *Business Confidence Index* est un indicateur synthétique du climat des affaires à Maurice et permet de transcrire l’état d’esprit et le moral chef d’entreprise depuis quatre ans, le moral est aujourd’hui plus bas. »

This was the comment of the MCCI and if we compare the comments of the MCCI then and what we got as a result of the presentation of this Budget by the current Finance Minister, if I can now turn to our local papers. If we go to le Défi for example, any newspaper. They start by saying this –

« Selon l'économiste, le Budget 2017-2018 contient des mesures pour booster la consommation comme le remboursement de la Taxe sur la Valeur Ajoutée (TVA) pour les Mauriciens qui voyagent. «Les Mauriciens dépensent R 17 milliards à l'étranger. S'ils dépensent R 4 milliards de plus à Maurice par an, on gagnera 0.5% de croissance du Produit Intérieur Brut (PIB) », explique etc. ».

And then they went on to say, they made several analysis simply to say that we are doing very well in terms of our economic growth. Business Mauritius also on le Defi, good reviews from business –

« Le secteur privé sort satisfait de la présentation budgétaire. Réunissant la presse à l'issue du discours du Grand argentier pour une réaction à chaud, des dirigeants de Business Mauritius ont indiqué que leurs appels lors des discussions pré-budgétaires ont été entendus. Ils ont salué les mesures prises pour relancer les exportations et la facilitation des affaires, de même que celles portant sur le social. «Nous avons demandé des mesures pour relancer le secteur des exportations. Nous avons constaté qu'une des décisions clés prises est la baisse des taux d'imposition de 15% à 3% sur les bénéfiques réalisés sur les exportations. La facilitation des affaires a aussi été améliorée avec l'extension du recrutement des travailleurs étrangers pour tout le secteur de l'économie», a expliqué Arnaud Dalais, président de Business Mauritius (BM).»

So, these are the reviews that we get now in the 2017/2018 Budget compared to what we got when the current Leader of Opposition was Finance Minister. And if I may refer to a newspaper Le Mauricien of 2012 –

« BUDGET 2012: Bérenger déplore le contenu des discours de la majorité. Le leader de l'opposition critique l'absence du ministre des Finances dans l'hémicycle. »

Do you see the Minister of Finance *dans l'hémicycle* during the debate? He is never there to listen, No, the then Minister of Finance, and even today he is barely there. He is part-time.

« Le contenu des discours des parlementaires de la majorité a fait peu de cas au Budget 2012 pour se concentrer sur des attaques d'ordre politique, a déploré samedi le leader du MMM. Paul Bérenger a soutenu que son discours avait été entièrement consacré au budget qu'a présenté le ministre des Finances Xavier-Luc Duval. »

So, this is a habit of the hon. Leader of the Opposition not to be in the House.

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Excuse me, please sit down! If you continue with cross-talking, then that will create disorder in the House! It is already late and we want to work in serenity.

Mr Rutnah: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, now let us look at the content because we have been criticised that we have done nothing by the hon. Leader of the Opposition. Now, let us look at the content of his 2012-2013 Budget. I am going to just take a few points from there. He promised the people of Mauritius in 2012 that he is going to be bridging the digital divide: online Government. Did he do it? He didn't do it. He did zero! And who did it? The current Prime Minister only very recently, 350 hotspots were provided to the people of Mauritius. Internet price has gone down. The public sector getting digitalised. And not only that, there is an electronic portal so that people can voice their concerns! Just look at what he said, just a few at paragraph 113 –

“Mauritius is rapidly developing into a world class destination for ultimate kite surfing adventures. And kite surfing is also becoming increasingly appealing to our youth. We are thus providing for the creation of a fully equipped training centre and will rehabilitate the One-Eye site at Le Morne.”

But then we know in the name of ‘*démocratisation de l'économie*’ who runs the kite surfing business in this country.

(Interruptions)

We know! And then we get criticised. Now, listen to what he said about Rodrigues in 2012-2013 at paragraph 119 –

“Extend holiday package in Rodrigues.

At the request of the Rodrigues Tourism Industry, the Special Holiday Package to Rodrigues is being further extended for a year. The minimum number of nights to be spent in Rodrigues under the Package will be reduced from 4 to 3 to encourage traffic.”

This is what he said. And when we provide extra facilities in Rodrigues and we give Rs4.4 billion in Rodrigues, develop Rodrigues, then we get criticised here because it is not enough, he said.

Let us look at what he said about recruitment of doctors at paragraph 180.

“Next year, Government will recruit 25 specialists, 75 general practitioners and another cohort of nurses.”

My foot!

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker, just like he said! Madam Speaker, when we took power in 2014, doctors were unemployed. Those doctors, when they finished their ‘A level’, the Labour Party and the PMSD was in power. When they went to study for Medicine, the Labour Party and the PMSD were in power. When they returned after having graduated as doctors, the Labour Party and the PMSD were in power. When they finished their pre-reg, the Labour Party and the PMSD were in power. How many doctors did they recruit? Zero, like he said! Zero! But what did we do? When hon. Gayan was hon. Minister of Health and Quality of Life, he recruited around 200 doctors. Only about a few weeks ago, we recruited 319 doctor; in total, almost over 500 doctors. In which country where there is 1.3 million population, Government recruits of the 500 doctors in less than three years?

(Interruptions)

And I am not going to go to how many nurses we have recruited; how many specialists have been promoted when hon. Gayan was Health Minister and now when hon. Husnoo is Minister of Health.

Madam Speaker, I have a very soft corner for the judiciary in our country because I always thought that I can help, I can assist, I can fight to modernise our Judiciary. I am still fighting. I am still in a *combat* mode to bring reforms to our Judiciary, to our Police, to our law enforcement authorities. It will take some time, but look at what hon. Duval said when he was Chancellor of Exchequer.

“The Attorney General will introduce a Judicial and Legal Provision Bill to ensure judgements are delivered expeditiously”

My foot! Zero!

(Interruptions)

The provision of the Judicial and Legal Provision Act was enacted in 2000 and is still intact. These are only a few, Madam Speaker.

Hot meals: I better don't talk about because they do politics with poverty. Housing: what he promised about housing and today we are being criticised about housing. He is the one who introduced the CIS, Corrugated Iron Sheet and today, when that corrugated iron sheets are rotting...

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Continue with your interruptions, hon. Jhugroo!

(Interruptions)

Mr Rutnah: ...and he blames it on us. So, wrong, Madam Speaker!

Now, let us look at what he said about a few things in his 2013-2014 Budget. In 2013-2014 Budget, he basically lied to the people of Mauritius, and this is what he said.

(Interruptions)

No, I said ...

Madam Speaker, without them taking a point of order...

Madam Speaker: You have to withdraw the word 'lied'. Put it in some other way!

Mr Rutnah: Madam Speaker, I withdraw the word 'lied'. Let me say, Madam Speaker, he was economical with the truth.

(Interruptions)

And this is what he said.

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: No, hon. Mohamed, you can't...

(Interruptions)

This is not acceptable! It isn't! I tell you it is not acceptable because you can't make comments on the way a hon. Member pronounces the word.

(Interruptions)

That is not acceptable!

(Interruptions)

Mr Rutnah: Madam Speaker, I am not going to involve into a personal debate with hon. Shakeel Mohamed although he has the habit of interrupting all the time. I better concentrate on what I have to say constructively about the debates in the House.

(Interruptions)

He said –

“As we create new dynamics for growth we expect to do better in 2014 and achieve a growth rate between 3.8 per cent to 4 per cent. We are expecting all sectors to grow except construction which should fully recover by 2015 as a result of the measures in this Budget.”

But it didn't happen!

Growth did not reach that level. Madam Speaker, he spoke about a Master Plan at paragraph 64, and this is what he said-

64. Government will develop a Master Plan which will focus on the following four main segments -

- A passenger hub;
- A cargo hub;
- A regional training centre for maintenance technicians and eventually pilots, and
- A centre for Maintenance Repairs and Overhaul for aircrafts.

None of these happened. None of these took place. Paragraph 65-

‘In the meantime, Airports of Mauritius Ltd will expand the Cargo and Freeport facilities at the Airport for a total amount of Rs525 m. over 72 hectares.

Paragraph 66 –

‘This project scheduled for completion in July 2014, and together with the new airport hotel, should prepare the ground for the Aviation Hub.’

Zero, Madam Speaker. Then he promised a Sea Change in Port Development, the extension of the quay at the Mauritius Container Terminal, a Marine Services Hub, a Petroleum Hub. Nothing was done. Securing water - we are being criticised. Hon. Collendavelloo, the Deputy Prime Minister, is being constantly being criticising because he said that he is going to use his best endeavours after that action to provide water 24/7 and I know it takes time. But look at what they say: Securing Water Sustainability. The other day, when he was on his feet, he was criticising about water supply, about pipes.

‘116. Government will enlist the services of an international scheme of experts to assist in the merger exercise and the operations of the new institution.

117. I am providing an additional Rs1.3 billion to continue the programme of replacing old pipes and introducing state-of-the-art technology to operate and monitor the water supply system in upper Mare-Aux-Vacoas. The project should be completed in 2016.’

My foot!

And then a lot of things had been said. Hon. Mahen Jhugroo is here. Let’s forget about other things and I was just trying to illustrate how a lot of things were not done when he was Minister of Finance. Agaléga now!

(Interruptions)

‘We also need to invest in the economic and social development of Agaléga, so that the inhabitants can be empowered to achieve a higher quality of life and standards of living.

‘Government is providing for Rs750 m. over the next three years for improving air and sea connectivity as well as the living infrastructure in Agaléga.’

(Interruptions)

‘Mr Speaker Sir, I am pleased to announce that Agaléga will also be connected to internet at an estimated capital cost of Rs5 m. and an annual running cost of Rs4 m.’

‘I am also providing an additional amount of Rs23 m. this year for shipping costs to improve safety and security on the transportation of materials and people in Agaléga’

Even I am jogging the memory of my very good friend hon. Bhagwan, I see him scratching his head and none of these happened.

Madam Speaker, he has developed a habit of using the word *urinating* and a few Members of the Opposition as well have started to use the word *urinating on the population*. I will never forget the day when he asked the Private Notice Question to hon. Boodha on Metro Express and this is what the hon. Leader of Opposition said -

‘Madam Speaker, if I want to be nasty, I would say that the Minister is urinating on public opinions’.

But I am not going to be nasty. I am not going to use the word *urinating*. When you listen to the Leader of Opposition, the arguments that he brings; he does politics on the back of poor people. I am not going to say *urinating*, perhaps he should doing a *shoushou* on the people of Mauritius. The other day, I saw a number of agents who were brought to the House...

Madam Speaker: Hon. Rutnah, let me just say. These words have been used in Parliament, but I think it is high time for me to say that any Member in this August Assembly is entitled to use severe language but so long as he remains within the bounce of order.

Mr Rutnah: That's why I have tried not to be vulgar, Madam Speaker. I am never going to be vulgar.

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Hon. Jhugroo, if you continue this is the last time. Last time, I am warning you.

(Interruptions)

Mr Rutnah: Madam Speaker, I promise that I am not going to use cheap vulgarity in the House, it's not in my blood. It's not how I have been brought up with in life.

Now, Madam Speaker, I am going to say a few things indeed on what hon. Bhadain spoke about the Metro Express...

(Interruptions)

Yes, hon. Nando is friend with everybody else, he has no enemies. He has got only opponents in politics.

Now in his Budget intervention, last year, this is what hon. Bhadain said about metro express –

‘Revamping our towns and villages requires a durable solution to traffic jams and better town and country planning. The previous Labour Government would have spent Rs24 billion on what they called a “*Métro Léger*” project, which seemed more like a “*Métro Lourd*” project, (...) conceptualise their project, with excessive elevations and stations which were not priorities and therefore, like the Labour Government, not required’.

‘Madam Speaker, our “Metro Express” will be implemented at a much lower expenditure level than what the Labour regime had envisaged. The grant obtained from India will provide Rs7.2 billion to the “Metro Express” which will include a network of modern integrated urban terminals with appropriate provision made for parking facilities, food courts, commercial spaces, dedicated hawker areas and green spaces.’

Today he has spent more than 40 minutes criticizing the metro express project. And now his apparent *démission*, his apparent resignation is going to come in about a week time after the

Committee of Supply. Now why did he not speak about his Heritage City project? Heritage City would not have indebted this country?

When he spoke earlier on, it is as if for the first time Mauritius has been indebted; as if Mauritius has never been indebted before, and, as if Mauritius will never be indebted again. But, had he become the Finance Minister of this country, Sir Anerood Jugnauth would have said: okay, hon. Bhadain you take the post of Finance Minister. I would have been sitting there. For him, then everything would have been okay.

He would have been defending the Metro Express, he would have been implementing his sham Heritage City Project today and indebting the children of this country for the rest of the future generation that would come. And listen to what he said about Heritage City...

(Interruptions)

Yes, I am coming to the kissing!

(Interruptions)

“With regard to Heritage City, Madam Speaker, need I say more!”

Listen to the arrogance!

“With regard to Heritage City, Madam Speaker, need I say more!”

And I am sure hon. Mohamed, when hon. Bhadain was saying it from there, was very critical about him and rightly so because eventually we discovered what was underneath the Heritage City Project.

“The hon. Leader of the Opposition had gone on record previously to say that this landmark project will not go ahead.”

And quite rightly so, hon. Bérenger is not here today, he was quite right we did not go ahead.

“Well, I must say, Madam Speaker, that he was not the only one to be skeptical, there are many others.

Well, Madam Speaker, I can reassure all the doubters not only the project is going ahead full steam, but as stated by Government, it will be completed within the mandate of this Government. Rs2.7 billion has been allocated in the Budget for Phase

I, which includes the public buildings, while the private side which includes the residential and commercial parts, termed generically as Phase II, will be undertaken by private developers.”

And he goes on like that. He talks about the CEB development etcetera substation and today hon. Bhadain pretends to be clean, pretends to know it all. He stands there to as if give us lessons about how to run the affairs of this country!

Now, basic economics he does not know. He has criticised the Budget but on what? Chancellor of Exchequer's in all countries, Minister of Finance when drafting his Budget he makes provision for economic policies which include monetary and fiscal policies, macroeconomic policies, microeconomic policies and social policies. And, when you invest in social policies you never get returns.

For example, when the Government undertakes to build a swimming pool which hon. Toussaint was speaking about earlier on and yesterday hon. Ms Sewocksingh spoke lengthily about her dream but that dream will be accomplished by this Government thanks to the help in that Constituency of hon. Toussaint who made lots of efforts convincing the hon. Minister of Finance to bring that project to Curepipe. But, of course, that is not the kind of project that is going to bring multiplier effect in the economy because this is a social policy for the benefit of the society.

(Interruptions)

What is going to bring money? Let me now say a bit on what is going to bring money into the country.

(Interruptions)

I am not going to read it all but there is a provision in the Budget for -

- fostering higher growth for more and better jobs;
- building innovative Mauritius;
- investing in skills development;

Then, we have -

- doing more to facilitate business, and

- In line with this part of the Budget we have recently enacted the Business Facilitation Act;
- stimulating growth and employment in key productive sectors;
- Agro industry: adapting and modernising;
- the policy on sugar cane,

The policy on a number of things -

- boosting growth and employment creation in non-sugar agriculture;
- encouraging the revival of tea export;
- expanding livestock production;
- lowering cost of production;
- helping out with the financial production;
- boosting bio-farming;
- Ocean economy, building a future pillar;
- Tourism, building on the regained growth momentum;
- the financial services; and you go on like this,
- nurturing the creative industry;
- supporting micro, small and medium enterprises and cooperatives;
- investing massively in infrastructure of the future;

Madam Speaker, except the last one, all the other measures that I have stated are measures, if implemented and which are going to be implemented, are going to generate income, are going to create what in economic terms is called the multiplier effect.

Madam Speaker, the Finance Minister has said that he is setting up an Economic Development Board and the job of the Economic Development Board is exactly that, to ensure that cumbersome procedures, red tape are over. Those days are over. The new Board is going to ensure that policies are implemented fully and without any delays.

Madam Speaker, let me go to page 43 of the Budget Speech which deals with the issue relating to poverty. At page 43, Madam Speaker, Ushering a New Social Paradigm –

“Last year, I introduced a historic measure to combat absolute poverty. I am pleased to report that more than 8,000 families are now benefitting from subsistence

allowance that was introduced in last year's budget under the Marshall Plan Against Poverty.”

Now –

“This Budget makes a leap forward.”

Madam Speaker, we know that there are a number of *poches de pauvreté* in Mauritius and when we talk about *pauvreté* in Mauritius it is relative poverty. It is not real poverty. If you want to see real poverty just go to Bangladesh, Pakistan, some parts of India, to Madagascar. There you will see poverty. But, here we have got relative poverty and we have got a good social security infrastructure, good social security structure in place in Mauritius to deal with relative poverty. But, our problem is that until we will have Social Security benefits available relative poverty will be a continuous cycle. I would suggest the day should come that we should say ‘no’ to social security. If people can come from Madagascar, Bangladesh, India, Sri Lanka to come and look for jobs in Mauritius and work and earn their living and support their families, why the so-called *poches de pauvreté* don't go to work? Why many people in those *poches de pauvreté* stay at home?

What I suggest Government should do is, firstly, those who are unemployed should go and find employment and if their income is below a certain threshold then Government should provide them with social security and help them. But, if we continue to make people live on social security we are going to be breeding relative poverty in this country. We are going to be trapped in a situation where you will see teenagers getting pregnant and by the time they are 20 they are pregnant with several partners like hon. Gayan said the other day. But we cannot continue to breed poverty. We have to give those people the facilities to go and fish for their own fish and feed themselves. We cannot continue to do that.

We have to devise ways and means to ask people to go and find job and work, because foreigners are coming and finding work and working in this country. Go and work, and if that wage threshold is not enough, then Government is going to help you. So, instead of Government investing billions per year on building houses, on providing social security, use half of the money to empower those people so that they can build their own houses, like people in villages do. I know labourers, I know the working-class people who work hard and buy 3 or 4 perches of *terrain* and they build their houses slowly but surely. Their children are today lawyers, doctors, engineers, accountants, professionals; because they chose to come out

of the poverty cycle. But, the way we are handling, I hope one day we will give with lesser money, power to those people to come out of that relative poverty.

Madam Speaker, now I will speak a little bit about how we were criticised by the Leader of Opposition in relation to the non-disclosure of the interim report on horse racing. A lot has been said by the Press. The other day, hon. Duval Jr., when he was on his feet, he made a duty to table to the Assembly an e-mail in which he referred that one Mr Perry will come and testify that such a report was given to someone.

But, in any event Madam Speaker, anyway this is the interim report - a copy which was tabled by hon. Leader of the Opposition - which purports to be the interim report, I am not sure of its *provenance*. But let us see what is written in it at least at paragraph 19 –

“The Commission is firmly of the view that as the Mauritian Police lack experience of leading a major investigation into serious horseracing related criminality, an experienced investigator from abroad should be appointed as senior advisor to the investigation. Initial thoughts on the composition of the investigation are as follows”

And they make some recommendations.

But then, the operative paragraphs, at paragraph 21-

“The investigation should be carried out with the upmost confidentiality and security as the Commission accepts that there is a real concern of collusion in and interference with the investigation by those suspected of criminal offences. There is a strong perception and possible reality that the suspected persons have powerful connections within Government and Judicial circles and they may try to use such connection to prejudice or disrupt the investigation.”

This is an interim report which is referring to the previous Government. Why on earth the current Prime Minister or anyone from this side of the House is going to hide this report when it has nothing to do with the present Government? Why? And when I hear the propaganda in some next day cheap rattled style paper about this and what they write, they give a perception that this Government is involved in this scam. And they support these kinds of contention in the House! So, sometimes I wonder where is the level of journalism gone in this country! Why can't they tell the truth to the people of Mauritius? Why I have to stand here and tell the truth? Why, when this was tabled, the truth was not revealed as it should have been to the people of Mauritius?

And quite rightly, my good friend, hon. Gowkaran Oree, pointed earlier on the Press is not supposed to sensationalise, they are supposed to report news, facts to the people. So, please, correct this because we have got nothing to hide and we are going to smoke out the Mafias who are hiding behind the MTC. The Drug Commission has been set up, those who are involved in drug trafficking and in laundering money will have to pay the consequences sooner than later.

Madam Speaker, when hon. Bhadain spoke earlier on, he made reference to the Betamax territory. He referred to the Betamax. I suggest that he goes and listens to what he himself said about the Betamax on YouTube. People of Mauritius should know this, everybody knows that Betamax, the inception took place in May 2007. The State Law Office, on various occasions, advised that the contract with Betamax contained flaws. It was not in the public interest, it was not in the interest of the people of Mauritius, it was not in the interest of our children, it was not in the interest of our future generation. But they played hide-and-seek, they changed regulations, they tried to trick the people to enter into a contract which, as far as I am concerned, Madam Speaker, is a contract against public order.

A company formed on the same day, certificate granted, everything was done within 24 hours simply for that Betamax company to get a contract. And Members of the Board, company Members, family sit in Cabinet. No disclosure in Cabinet that there is a conflict of interest while decision is going on. Why are we going to be held responsible today for Rs4 billion which...

(Interruptions)

Yes, of course, we are going to the Court.

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker, the Government is right to make an application to the Supreme Court of Mauritius to set this arbitral award aside. If I will invite lawyers and ordinary people in this country to look at Article 2060 of *Code Civil Mauricien* –

« On ne peut compromettre sur les questions d'état et de capacité des personnes, sur celles relatives au divorce et à la séparation de corps et plus généralement dans toutes les matières qui intéressent l'ordre public. »

So, forget about the divorce, forget about the *séparation*; the operative word of this little section is –

“On ne peut compromettre (...) dans toutes les matières qu'intéressent l'ordre public.”

There is a point of Public Order. You cannot bind Government to actually give up its assets so that Betamax one day has free reign to seize Government's assets. That cannot be possible in any jurisdiction!

Now, let me remind everyone in this House what hon. Bhadain said about Betamax. I am going to say it in Creole -

« L'état mauricien – *this is what he said, word for word* – ine revandike so souveraineté inkondisionelment et irrevocablement. Accepter ki lin fin redwir en un antikite komersial et lin rentre dans un kontra kot demain so ban assets de l'île Maurice, état souverain kapav être sujet a un saisi par ène compagnie Betamax. Kot éna ban actionnaires ki ou koné kisanla éna ladans ki li choquant, sa li montrer ou exactement ki kalité kontra zone faire dans l'intérêt kisanla et kote l'intérêt la, population éna ladans. Encore plus important et ceki ki quantité casse fine paye Betamax éna ban chiffres erronés fine publier. »

Madam Speaker: Hon. Rutnah, you can quote from any newspaper, but you cannot quote extensively.

Mr Rutnah: Madam Speaker, I am quoting exactly what hon. Bhadain had said.

Madam Speaker: So! But not extensively!

Mr Rutnah: This is very important. Then he goes on to say –

« In paye 121 millions dollars à Betamax dans les trois années et demie. Faire ou plus de trois milliards roupies et kan ou guet coût du bateau ki coûte la motié 64 millions, li fine fini tire tout so casse bateau. »

These are what he had said.

If people are watching me today from their home, I invite them to go to YouTube and type 'Roshi Bhadain/Betamax' and again hear that video for over 30 minutes and what he has said about Betamax.

Madam Speaker, now let me say a little bit about what has happened and what is going to happen in my Constituency so far because I have to tell the people of Mauritius how this Government has worked for my Constituency.

A number of projects have already been achieved, for example, resurfacing of roads in Amaury, l'Amitié, Gokoola, Rivière du Rempart (a number of places), Cottage, Plaine des Papayes, l'Espérance Piton. There are works that are going to be continuing. The projects in Rivière du Rempart in one segment amounted to over Rs6 m., in another segment over Rs13 m., in another segment over Rs4 m. and construction of drains that is ongoing at the moment is over Rs8 m. There are some other projects that are still being awaited. In relation to this Budget, Madam Speaker, the people of Piton are rejoicing because finally a traffic centre is going to come to Piton. This has been said at page 37 of the Budget Speech at paragraph 245.

Madam Speaker, there are also a few more projects in Rivière du Rempart. There is going to be a Multipurpose Complex at Rivière du Rempart that is going to be built. We are very happy about it, but of course, these kinds of projects are not going to bring income into the country, but these are social policy of this Government.

Madam Speaker, the Budget which has been presented in this House by hon. Pravind Jugnauth is a Budget that is going to lead this country into the future where people, tomorrow, are going to speak about it and are going to reflect upon it because it marks the very basis of all the promises that we made during the Government Programme in January 2015.

Madam Speaker, I seize this opportunity to extend my gratitude to the hon. Prime Minister and Minister of Finance for having put so much of effort in this Budget and, in particular, for having heard Members of Parliament, for having heard all the PPS, all MPs, all Ministers and various stakeholders in preparing this Budget.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Yerrigadoo!

(11.57 p.m.)

The Attorney General (Mr R. Yerrigadoo): Madam Speaker, allow me to start where my friend, hon. Ravi Rutnah left and congratulate the hon. Prime Minister and

Minister of Finance for the presentation of the Budget that will help the country rise to the challenge of its ambition.

Last year in his Budget Speech, hon. Pravind Jugnauth, spoke about his vision of a new era of development and this new Budget reflects its deep resolve to lead our nation to realise its ambition. My friend, hon. Rutnah, earlier was just showing from different excerpts and extracts, quoting from Members who have been in this House for some time. He was quoting from the actual hon. Leader of Opposition who was then Finance Minister and he was until last year on the side of Government about the different things he said about different issues. This is precisely the situation.

Just earlier, we had hon. Bhadain as well, discoursing about so many things, so many projects and the vision of that one same Government of which he formed part until earlier this year. They were all elected together with us on a same platform on an electoral manifesto. The Presidential Address bears testimony to that.

It is so easy for anyone preparing a speech on this Budget just to go to Hansard and to take out from whatever those hon. Members would have said. Let me just say something without going against the ruling of the Deputy Speaker earlier on and without divulging things which would be under the purview of the Official Secrets Act or privy to discussions or negotiations between two friendly States, India and Mauritius.

Now, it is a truth, Madam Speaker, I was also part of the delegation who went to India with other people to allude to what hon. Bhadain was saying earlier. As I said, I will not be divulging State's secrets. What is the truth, Madam Speaker? The truth is about the Rs12.7 billion help from India. The truth is, true we had gone to India on another purview and on another purport, but what is the truth? The truth is that it is hon. Pravind Jugnauth who when he was Minister of Finance had a State visit India between the 13 and 18 September 2016 and there and then had discussions with hon. Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi Ji, with Arun Jaitley, the Minister of Finance and it is there and then where this grant of Rs12.7 billion was finalised and approved and India accepted to fund the Metro Express Project, the tablets for the school children, the construction of a new Supreme Court building, the construction of social housing and the construction of a new ENT Hospital, which were all mentioned in last year's Budget Speech and would you believe on 28 November 2016, a first part of that payment, the sum of USD52.95 m. which represents then Rs1.9 billion, *la première tranche*

was paid at a ceremony here at the Ministry of Finance between Shri Abhay Thakur Ji and hon. Minister of Finance.

This is a truth, Madam Speaker. *Je ne vais pas polémique.* It is my duty as an hon. Member of this House and I am so sad that depending from where one sits or stands or speaks, one can leave room for innuendos in one speech. I am really, really, very saddened by this fact. *Je ne vais pas polémique.*

Hon. Rutnah told us earlier, the now Leader of the Opposition, as I said, was then the Minister of Finance, and was until very recently DPM and what did he have to say on Pravind Jugnauth's previous Budget last year. Alors, le leader de l'Opposition qualifiait ces mesures budgétaires qui ont été améliorées dans ce présent budget, je cite de complètes, novatrices et inclusives.

Aujourd'hui, Madame la présidente, ces mêmes mesures pour lui sont devenues un *joke*. Ce changement drastique de position, malheureusement, je laisse tous les gens qui nous regardent, c'est du clientélisme politique, Madame la présidente. Et l'honorable leader de l'Opposition a profité de son intervention pour faire le *marketing* de la presse à scandale. Ce que mon ami, l'honorable Etienne Sinatambou appelle le phénomène '*narien pas bon.*'

Il a ainsi passé plus de 80% de son intervention à commenter les allégations gratuites au lieu, à mon opinion sincère, livrer une analyse pertinente de ce budget Madame la présidente, certains nous accuse de vendre du rêve et décrivent ce budget de fade, de confettis, entre autres. Je voudrais leur dire ceci oui, Madame la présidente, c'est vrai nous avons un rêve, nous rêvons d'une île Maurice plus juste, plus égale, plus libre, plus généreuse et plus prospère. Nous rêvons d'un pays qui rayonne comme notre soleil sur le plan international et qui ne courbe pas l'échine devant les grandes nations.

Je voudrais ici, Madame la présidente, lancer un appel solennel à tout un chacun pour que nous soutenons à l'unisson la cause chagosienne. Je suis confiant que tous les efforts consentis par tous jusqu'ici pour le vote du 22 juin aux Nations unies seront couronnés de succès under the able Leadership of our Minister Mentor Sir Anerood Jugnauth.

Madame la présidente, nous rêvons d'un pays où la justice et l'équité prônent. Toutes les grandes nations ont été bâties sur les rêves de leurs pères fondateurs mais, Madame la présidente, ne faisons pas que rêver. Ce budget en est la preuve tangible, nous sommes à

l'aube du 50^{ème} anniversaire de notre indépendance et ce rêve devient réalité grâce à la vision soutenue et éclairée de notre Premier Ministre.

Ce budget se veut rassurant pour les acteurs économiques qui s'accordent tout sur le fait qu'il donnera une nouvelle impulsion aux piliers traditionnels et à l'économie locale à travers une série de mesures visant à encourager l'investissement et à redynamiser l'exportation. Ainsi, Madame la présidente, les secteurs porteurs seront renforcés afin d'assurer une croissance économique soutenue sur le court terme.

This budget has paved the way for the country to rise to the challenge of our ambitions. The measures in this budget will help achieving a greater growth improving our quality of life, ushering a new social paradigm, increasing investment in the key economic sectors, in one word consolidating our economic. Furthermore, the negative income tax for low income employees has been accompanied by a new Solidarity Levy of 5% for high income earners and this is a step, Madam Speaker, towards mitigating income inequality.

Madam Speaker, allow me now to talk a little bit about the financial services sector. This sector which contributes 12% of our GDP, this sector is facing numerous challenges from international community and those issues have been addressed in this budget. Hence, to consolidate this sector, a blueprint will be elaborated by the Ministry of Financial Services, Good Governance and Institutional Reforms in collaboration with EDB with Economic Developing Board which is going to be created, the Bank of Mauritius, the financial services commission and all stakeholders in the financial services sector.

Madam Speaker, in the wake of the new challenges that face the financial services sector in the forthcoming years, Government cannot remain insensitive to the changing international tax landscape. I am here referring, Madam Speaker, to the advent of the OECD multilateral convention to implement tax treaty measures to prevent base erosion and profit shifting (BEPS) also known as the multilateral instrument (MLI). I know my hon. friend Uteem is fully conversant with this.

Now, the MLI, Madam Speaker, is a game changer in the field of international taxation and tax treaties because it is the single legal instrument to implement the OECDs 15 BEPS recommendation which came out in October 2015. The MLI is multilateral treaty that was allow jurisdictions to quickly incorporate the results of the BEPS project into tax treaties worldwide to address tax avoidance by large multinational companies

Now, the OECD finalised its texts in November last of the negotiation involving more than 100 jurisdictions and Mauritius participated in those negotiations in the *ad hoc* group and joined last year the inclusive framework group of countries committed to combat undesirable tax avoidance and comply with the BEPS minimum standards. The MLI has been opened for signature us from 07 June in Paris just now, it has already been signed by the first batch of 68 countries.

Now, sensitive to the representations made by the industry because what is the huge challenge facing us. Especially in the new wake of the position of G20 of the fact that the European Union and the OECD *font cause communes*. We are sensitive, of course, to representations of the industry. Mauritius has not joined yet the first batch of countries but Mauritius is committed to sign the MLI and as announced in a public communiqué by the MOFED that it would do so by 30 June and after having completed this impact analysis. Well, the impact analysis has been completed.

And it's very important to put our heads together because we have no choice we have to sign the MLI, Madam Speaker. It's only once we sign once we are inside that we can fight for our uniqueness. Because Mauritius has a long pathway of building our offshore sector and we are all moving towards substance. And what is the risk of not signing the MLI? We know what the risk is. The risk, Madam Speaker, is being blacklisted by the OECD and the EU and we cannot afford that risk.

And for the children of this country, for the love of industry and the Republic, we cannot take such a risk, Madam Speaker, so, we will have to sign the MLI. And we will all have to brace up together with the Industry, together with all of us to brace up and face that new challenge. When we were renegotiating the India Treaty, so many fears. But we have to look at opportunities as well. Treaties we are still under the umbrella of the grand fathering clothes, but we have to think ahead.

Just like the tourism industry, just like the textile industry, you know we are nation of believers and entrepreneurs. Treaties that the textile factory started from people from Hong Kong but then our entrepreneurs got the knowledge and took us higher in textile sector. Each time we face challengers with the end of the Cotonou Agreement, sugar protocol, we are reinventing so many things. Some people say you know when we market high-end rum, for instance, and we fight for it to get on European Markets ad you know sometimes, European Courts can be very creative in definitions, en appellation contrôlée. Recently there is a

judgment on cheese, there is a judgment on soya milk saying it's not milk, I wouldn't say intangible barriers to entry but let's come back. We've always braced up and I know the financial services sector. Brave people work in that sector, and I am confident that we all have the knowledge, the capacity and the resilience to rise to the occasion of the challenge and to make Mauritius stronger. Yes, it's a tough one but yes together we will achieve this, *ensam la main dans la main nou kpav et nou pour reussi.*

Now, the signature of this MLI follows logically the signature of another instrument on mutual administrative assistance in that matter which we already signed, which was jointly developed by the Council of Europe and the OECD. Now, this enables Mauritius to exchange tax information with over hundred countries party to this Convention on an automatic basis.

Now, Mauritius, as a fully collaborate and responsible international finance centre of substance, has always supported implementation of international best practices set out by the OECD and EU. We believe together, as I say it again, we will be able to meet these new challenges and that blueprint will help us together to go back forward into the years to come. The next decade is the *ambitions affichées*, but then there are so many challenges coming to help the financial sector achieving this great space and great aura.

Now, we have all talked about other measures to help us achieve jurisdiction of substance. Some of them bring us to another paradigm level, but again, as I said, we should not be scared. I have been hearing people in the industry about the six criteria established. We now have to fulfil one. With this Budget, we will have to fulfil two. I know people are saying: "Hey, it is getting tougher ". But you know gone are the days of treaty shopping, we are all legal practitioners, accountants, good companies' secretaries. We are all trying to move toward that end.

Madam Speaker, let me take some time to go on now the statistics of the Judiciary. You know, every year in June, the Judiciary produces an annual report which is tabled in this House. It has not being tabled yet, but it has already been published in the website of the Supreme Court, and I will take some time because there is improvement and statistics about crime and cases and litigations, *ça vous donne aussi le pouls de notre société.* It is important so, I will take a few minutes.

At the level of the Supreme Court, Madam Speaker, the total number of cases lodged excluding appeal cases increased by 8% to 9,810 cases in 2016, but the total number of cases disposed of excluding appeal cases at the Supreme Court decreased by 7% to 8,752 cases in 2016. A physical count of a total number of outstanding cases against excluding appeal cases showed that 9,166 cases were not yet disposed of at the end of the year 2016. Now, this represents an 18% rise from 2016. At the level of the Assizes, the number of criminal offences convicted at Assizes declined by 24% to 26 cases in 2016. However, the number of convictions at Assizes level for drug offences nearly doubled to 15 cases in 2016 from eight cases in 2015.

I will not go on the appellate jurisdiction let me go to the Family Division of the Supreme Court. The total number of divorce petitions lodged in Mauritius increased by 5% to 2,681 cases in 2016. This was due to a rise of 5% in Mauritius and a fall of 4% in Rodrigues so less people divorced in Rodrigues. Now, in 2016, 46% of the petitioners were women compared to 29% men. 68% were married for 14 years or less; 25% of divorces were pronounced on mutual consent and 66% had only one or no child from marriage.

What about Mediation Division, we all make a lot of efforts and try to mediate instead of litigate. The number of civil cases received at the Mediation Division of the Supreme Court was more than half to 97 in 2016. About 52% of these cases have been referred back to court, that is, they could not be settled. 22% were arrangement between parties successful and 7% were purely and simply struck out.

Cases at the Intermediate Court now - decrease by 2% to 3,107 cases and the number of cases outstanding dropped by 21% to 4,957. At Industrial Court, a 2% rise was noted. Bail and Remand Court; working well.

Now, the bulk of our cases are heard by District Courts. In 2016, only 38% of civil and criminal cases were lodged in urban areas, all the rest in rural areas. Now, there were decreases in certain regions of about 5% and the regions are the District Courts of Port Louis - Divisions 2 and 3, Rivière du Rempart, Lower Plaine Wilhems, Grand Port-Savanne, Rodrigues. The Court having the largest number of cases lodged is the court of Pamplemousses. From 2015 to 2016, total number of civil and criminal cases disposed of increased by 3% - *tenez vous bien* - to 127,300. 127,300 cases, Madam Speaker! There is also small claim procedure *pour désengorger*.

Now, the number of cases lodged rose at the Small Claims Court by 38%. Often at Committee Supply, we are going to have questions. The State has debtors and often we are asked: “Oh, so much money outside . The MRA is not recouping its money or this Government department or the other Government department”. Well, you will be pleased to know that the number of cases lodged and disposed of for State debts shows significant increases to 900 cases lodged and 664 cases settled to the advantage of the State. Similarly the number of cases lodged under the Protection from Domestic Violence Act, Madam Speaker will remember, we voted tougher laws last year in this very House. The number increased by 29% to 2,288 cases. More than half of them were lodged in urban District Courts and half from the Lower Plaine Wilhems. From 2015 to 2016, the total number of applications received under the PDVA increased by 29% to 2,288 cases. We have noted rises for protection orders: 2,241; Occupation Orders from 34 to 43 and we have had no case of revocation of orders.

On the contrary, applications received for tenancy orders decreased from 6 to 4 in 2016. Now, one very important figure which led to a measure which will have a great impact in this Budget. 75% of the criminal offenses disposed in the Republic of Mauritius are road traffic contraventions - 75% of the workload in the District Courts, road traffic contraventions. How many contraventions convicted in 2016:84,449. More road traffic offences were paid via fixed penalty notices. These are either directly paid to cash offices, but you have to go there or send someone there. We all pay fines. I pay fines. It is only for the cases which are not settled that you have to go through court. We have among us lawyers, practitioners, former magistrates, we all know the amount it takes for District Magistrate in formal matters to do all these things.

This is where I say, we have to thank our Prime Minister because what does our Prime Minister say at paragraph 251 of this Budget Speech. Let me quote -

“I am earmarking Rs15 m. for a modern computerised system to better monitor payment of fines and other court fees and keep track of the progress of cases. Thus, fines and fees will be paid at any district court and even online.”

Now, Madam Speaker, one can easily imagine the relief online payments of road traffic contraventions will bring to the disposal of cases at the level of District Courts. We all know also that with the advent of a new Supreme Court, construction is going to start in this budget, *on va profiter un peu* to modernise the whole system.

Madam Speaker, let me come to something now *qui me tiens à Coeur*. I was not going to talk about the Indian Ocean Island Games, but then my learned friend inspired me, but I won't be long. We will be very blessed to host it in 2019, the tenth edition of those games. We have been blessed. In 1985 and last time in 2003, when I had the honour to be the Minister of Youth and Sports, we hosted those here. And it's a great moment of national pride Madam.

Now, I am convinced that again we will see our national flag fly very high in these games. As pointed out in the budget, Government is sparing no efforts to help our fleets achieving their ambitions, Rs18 m. provided in this budget for preparation. We have also made provisions to upgrade facilities, state-of-the-Art Sports Complex at Côte-d'Or city.

All these are very important, mais la mesure qui retiens l'attention madame. Vous savez le bien-être de nos athlètes a toujours été notre priorité. Nous avons constamment œuvré pour leur épanouissement. Il est bon de souligner que nous avons été dans le passé la cheville ouvrière de nombreuses réformes et des projets qui ont révolutionnés le sport local.

La préparation des jeux de 2003 n'avait pas été facile, mais nous avons relevé ce défi avec brio, et tout le monde se souvient de ces jeux ici. Maintenant, vous savez, lorsque j'ai été nommé ministre, le sport local était en agoni en 2000. Il n'y avait plus de football ici. Notre football était *banned* à la suite d'un incident, parce que l'alliance à l'époque, parti travailliste-PMXD, nous a légué, madame, un héritage désastreux. Il n'y avait pas de coq, il y avait un cheval à l'époque. Je tiens à rappeler que l'on ne pouvait même plus jouer les matchs de football à Maurice. On avait joué un match *home away*, parce que la FIFA ne nous avait pas autorisé à jouer un match et le Club M était allé à la Réunion jouer un match.

Lors de la campagne des élections 2000, on disait que les mauriciens devaient s'habiller, mettre leur short et s'asseoir devant la télé, regarder les matchs de l'étranger. Nous avons toujours été des bâtisseurs, Madame la présidente, et nous le serons encore car pour relever ce défi, je me souviens Sir Anerood Jugnauth n'avait dit : « tu peux gagner les autres médailles. Il faut gagner le football ». Et sortir d'une situation, il n'y n'avait pas de foot, il n'y avait plus de compétition. Pas de mise en jambe en 2000. Le gouvernement travailliste-PMXD n'avait rien fait pour rénover. L'honorable Quirin était Maire de Beau Bassin-Rose Hill. Il sait que pour rénover les infrastructures, remettre l'esprit d'équipe, aller dedans et tout le monde se souvient de ce fameux samedi où nous avons gagné coup sur coup la finale du foot au stade George-V, et juste après la final du volleyball contre Madagascar à Pandit

Sahadeo, juste après. Et le lendemain, c'était le dernier *round up* cycliste à la municipalité de Beau Bassin- Rose Hill, Maurice avait remporté pour la première fois le cycliste ici, sur son sol.

Donc, madame la présidente, les athlètes méritent toute cette attention. Le *High Level Sports Unit* qui a été très embryonnaire en 2000, nous l'avons façonné et je suis très content. Le *Trust Fund for Excellence in Sports* c'est notre créature encore une fois. Comment ça a été créé ? C'est toujours sourciller de l'après carrière, de la réinsertion des athlètes. Le brevet l'État du cadre sportif qui est aujourd'hui gratuit, on l'avait créé parce qu'on voulait, parce que nos sportifs, souvent ils n'ont pas été à l'école faire la SC et la HSC. Mais comment leur permettre de gagner leur vie, l'après carrière. On y avait pensé, et le brevet d'État du cadre sportif leur permet aujourd'hui d'être coach, et de travailler dans le circuit hôtelier et d'autres. On avait créé parce qu'on avait fait un profit de jeux. Il restait de l'argent. Il restait, je crois, un million et quelques, et donc nous avons, à l'époque, en 2004, créé. Pravind Jugnauth était ministre des Finances, Paul Béranger était Premier ministre. Le *Trust Fund for Excellence in Sports*, et j'avais dans un *National Sport Awards*, c'était en 2005, souhaiter qu'un jour nous puissions donner une pension, une après retraite, mais c'est chose faites. Pravind Jugnauth nous a comblé et je crois le Hall of Fame, la reconnaissance, aujourd'hui viennent démontrer tout ça.

Madame la présidente, en un mot, avant de terminer, nous aimons tous notre pays, nous sommes tous des patriotes, nous avons la chance inuit de pouvoir représenter les quatre coins de notre pays, tous nos mandants dans cette île Maurice arc-en-ciel, dans cette belle île Maurice, et de venir défendre nos idéaux ici dans cette Chambre, de venir parler sur des projets de lois, de venir donner notre vision sur un budget et de façonner l'avenir de notre pays. Nous croyons dans notre pays, nous croyons dans notre potentiel, ensemble *la main dans la main* encore une fois, *anou marye piké* pour réussir ce vrai rêve et ce vrai miracle mauricien.

Merci, madame la présidente. L'heure est tardive. Merci à vous tous et je ne dirai pas bonsoir, mais bonjour.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Dr. Husnoo.

Dr. Husnoo: Madam Speaker, I move that the debate be now adjourned.

Mr Gayan rose and seconded.

Question put and agreed to.

Debate adjourned accordingly.

ADJOURNMENT

The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Housing and Lands (Mr S. Soodhun): Madam Speaker, I beg to move that this Assembly do now adjourn to Monday 19 June at 11.30 a.m.

Mr Bodha rose and seconded.

Question put and agreed to.

Madam Speaker: The House stands adjourned.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Uteem !

MATTERS RAISED

Mr R. Uteem (First Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central): Madam Speaker, I have a question for the hon. Minister of Education and Human Resources, Tertiary Education and Scientific Research, but since she is not in the House, I will wait for her to be in the House to ask her because this is something that only she can answer.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Barbier !

GRNW & PORT LOUIS WEST – ABANDONNED CARS

Mr J. C. Barbier (Fourth Member for GRNW & Port Louis West): Madame la présidente, je voudrais soulever une question qui concerne à la fois le ministre de l'Environnement et aussi le ministre des Administrations Régionales. Ça concerne les voitures abandonnées, les voitures hors d'usage qui sont laissées dans ma circonscription en peu partout et depuis quelques temps, cela devient de plus en plus fréquent. Mon attention a été attirée par cet état de chose assez nouvelle. L'autre fois, il y en avait quelques cas ici et là, mais ces derniers temps, il y en a vraiment beaucoup et je pense qu'il va falloir qu'il y ait une certaine action au niveau du ministère pour que le service de la voirie, les superviseurs de ces services puissent répertorier tous ces véhicules abandonnés. Ils sont au bord de la route, ils sont dans des terrains en friche dans les localités. Donc, pour qu'il puisse y avoir une action étatique pour savoir quoi faire avec toutes ces voitures-là, je ne sais pas s'il y a actuellement des lois pour voir si on peut sévir déjà, mais s'il n'y en a pas, il va falloir, évidemment venir

avec des propositions au niveau de la loi pour pouvoir sévir dans ces cas-là. Mais il y a un cas en particulier que je voudrais attirer l'attention du ministre ce soir, c'est concernant l'Avenue Bengalie à Morcellement Raffray, Pailles. Que dans cette ruelle, il y en a douze actuellement. Donc, je voudrais demander au ministère de faire diligence par rapport à ce cas-là. Mais il nous faut quand même trouver un plan d'ensemble, une politique pour pouvoir s'attaquer à ce problème.

Merci, Madame la présidente.

The Minister of Social Security, National Solidarity, and Environment and Sustainable Development (Mr Sinatambou): Madame la présidente, c'est un sujet qui relève du portefeuille du ministre des Administrations Régionales. Mais je sais qu'un relevé a été fait pas plus tard que le mois dernier sur les véhicules abandonnés, donc je présume que la situation a été répertoriée. Mais maintenant que j'ai l'adresse précise qui a été mentionnée par honorable membre, j'en ferai part au ministre concerné. Merci.

At 00.30 a.m., the Assembly was, on its rising, adjourned to Monday 19 June 2017 at 11.30 a.m.