



SIXTH NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

PARLIAMENTARY

DEBATES

(HANSARD)

(UNREVISED)

FIRST SESSION

TUESDAY 24 OCTOBER 2017

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(Formed by Hon. Pravind Kumar Jugnauth)

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

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

PRINCIPAL OFFICERS AND OFFICIALS

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

MAURITIUS

Sixth National Assembly

FIRST SESSION

Debate No. 22 of 2017

Sitting of Tuesday 24 October 2017

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

The National Anthem was played

(Madam Speaker in the Chair)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

OBITUARY – NABABSING, DR PARAMHAMSA

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, it is with deep regret that we have learnt of the demise, on Saturday 21 October 2017, of Dr Paramhamsa Nababsing, former Member of Parliament and former Deputy Prime Minister and Leader of the Opposition, at the age of 76.

Dr Prem Nababsing, as he was commonly known, was born on 20 November 1940 at Camp Diable. He attended the Royal College of Curepipe for his secondary education and pursued his tertiary education in England and graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Chemistry. He also held a Master's Degree in Philosophy and subsequently became Doctor of Philosophy.

Dr Nababsing was one of the founder members of the MMM Party. From 1982 to 1983, he served as Ambassador in Paris.

Dr Nababsing stood as candidate for the first time in the 1987 General Elections under the banner of the L'Union MMM-MTD-FTS in Constituency No.13, Rivière des Anguilles and Souillac, and was returned First Member for that constituency. From 1987 to 1990, he was Leader of the Opposition. In 1990, the MMM Party integrated the Government and Dr Nababsing was appointed the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Health.

Dr Nababsing also stood as candidate in the 1991 General Elections in Constituency No.13, Rivière des Anguilles and Souillac, under the banner of the MSM/MMM Alliance and was returned Second Member to serve that constituency.

Dr Nababsing was Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Health from 1991 to 1993. He was subsequently Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Economic Planning and Development from 1993 to 1994, and Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Economic Planning and Development, and Minister of Internal and External Communications and Information from 1994 to 1995.

In 1994, Dr Nababsing founded the Renouveau Militant Mauricien (RMM) Party. He participated in the 1995 General Elections in Constituency No.13, Rivière des Anguilles and Souillac, under the banner of the MSM/RMM Alliance, but was not returned.

Madam Speaker, during his political career, Dr Nababsing had also been the President of Mauritius Telecom, the Chairperson of the Board of Investment and Special Adviser to the Prime Minister for the period 2000 to 2005.

Dedicated to service to the country and the people, Dr Nababsing had been a model of the perfect gentleman.

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

The Leader of the Opposition (Mr X. L. Duval): Madam Speaker, I associate myself with the tribute paid by the hon. Prime Minister to the memory of late Dr Prem Nababsing, former Deputy Prime Minister. I worked closely with him for almost a year in Government in 1995 and was impressed by his calm manner and his extensive experience. I also request you, Madam Speaker, to kindly convey our sincere condolences to the bereaved family.

Mr P. Bérenger (Third Member for Stanley & Rose Hill): Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madame, celui qui s'en est allé était quelqu'un d'intègre jusqu'au bout des ongles ; une personnalité politique toujours à cheval sur les principes ; quelqu'un qui n'a jamais fait honte - bien au contraire - à cette Assemblée, à l'Assemblée législative. Je perds, quant à moi, *Madam Speaker*, un vrai ami ; un ami de longue date. Et même au moment où nos routes politiques se sont séparées, nous sommes restés, jusqu'à la fin, de bons amis.

Ensemble, comme vient de le dire le Premier ministre, en 1969, avec son épouse Vidula Nababsing aussi et d'autres, nous avons fondé le MMM. Ensuite, il nous est arrivé d'être en désaccord et, comme je le disais, nos routes se sont séparées, mais nous sommes restés toujours de bons amis.

In those very sad and difficult moments, Madam Speaker, our hearts go to Vidula and her daughters, and I join with the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition in requesting you to convey our condolences to the bereaved family.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Members, I associate myself to the tribute paid to late Dr Paramhansa Nababsing by the hon. Prime Minister, the Leader of the Opposition and hon. Paul Bérenger, and I direct the Clerk to convey to the bereaved family the condolences of the Assembly.

OBITUARY – RAMSAHOK, MR LUTCHMEEPARSADSING

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, it is also with deep regret that we have learnt of the demise of former hon. Member Lutchmeeparsadsing Ramsahok on 20 July 2017 at the age of 69.

Late Mr Ramsahok was well-known in the political and the industrial relations fields. As a member of the General Workers Federation, he was committed to the cause of workers.

Mr Ramsahok first stood as candidate in the 1976 General Elections under the banner of the MMM Party and was returned Second Member for Constituency No.12, Mahebourg and Plaine Magnien.

He contested the 1982 General Elections under the banner of the MMM/PSM Alliance and was returned First Member for the same Constituency No.12, Mahebourg and Plaine Magnien. From April to August 1983, he held the portfolio of Minister of Local Government.

In 1983, Mr Ramsahok joined the newly created MSM Party, under the leadership of Sir Anerood Jugnauth. In the same year, he ran for the General Elections under the banner of the MSM/Labour Party Alliance and was returned First Member for Constituency No.12, Mahebourg and Plaine Magnien.

In 1991, Mr Ramsahok founded his own political party, the '*Parti Action Liberal*'. Under the banner of his party, he contested the 1991, 1995, 2000, 2010 and 2014 General Elections in Constituency No. 12, Mahebourg and Plaine Magnien, but was not returned.

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

The Leader of the Opposition (Mr X. L. Duval): Madam Speaker, I once again associate myself with the tribute paid by the hon. Prime Minister to the memory of late Lutchmeeparsadsing Ramsahok, and also request you, Madam Speaker, to kindly convey our sincere condolences to the bereaved family.

Mr P. Bérenger (Third Member for Stanley & Rose Hill): *Madam Speaker*, ainsi Ram, *as we all knew him*, s'en est allé sans crier gare, subitement, nous prenant tous par surprise.

Madam Speaker, il y a 47 ans de cela, lui, moi et d'autres, nous avons commencé à organiser et nous avons réussi à organiser, ce qui n'avait pas été tâche facile, les travailleurs de l'industrie du thé. Et lui-même en était un. Il était un travailleur de l'industrie du thé, un *foreman* dans l'industrie du thé dans des moments où les conditions d'emploi dans l'industrie du thé étaient terriblement difficiles. Des années plus tard, il devint président de la *General Workers' Federation* - simple travailleur qu'il était - et il mena une lutte dure, difficile, y compris à travers des grèves de la faim, de longues grèves de la faim avec moi-même et d'autres, pour défendre les travailleurs, pas seulement de l'industrie du thé, mais de tous les secteurs membres de la *General Workers' Federation*. Nos routes se sont séparées là encore, mais nous avons toujours gardé de bons rapports et il me rendait régulièrement visite.

We all remember him, Madam Speaker – now he is gone – as Ram, a good joker to the end. I therefore request you, Madam Speaker, as the hon. Prime Minister and Leader of the Opposition have done, to convey our deepest condolences to the bereaved family, his son and the other members of the family.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Members, I associate myself to the tribute paid to late Mr Lutchmeeparsadsing Ramsahok by the hon. Prime Minister, the Leader of the Opposition and hon. Paul Bérenger, and I direct the Clerk to convey to the bereaved family the condolences of the Assembly.

PAPERS LAID

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

A. Office of the President

- (a) The Public Service Commission (Amendment) Regulations 2017. (Government Notice No.134 of 2017)
- (b) The Annual Report of the Ombudsperson for Children for the year 2016-2017.

B. Prime Minister's Office

- (a) Certificate of Urgency in respect the National Employment Bill. (In original)
- (b) The Audit Report on the Financial Statements of the National Habitat Fund for the period 01 January to 10 November 2015.

- (c) The Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism (Amendment of Schedule) Regulations 2017. (Government Notice No. 130 of 2017)
- (d) Digest of Education Statistics 2016.
- (e) Mauritius in Figures 2016.
- (f) The Civil Aviation (Hadj 2017 Pilgrims) (Exemption) Order 2017. (Government Notice No.148 of 2017)
- (g) The Companies (Prescribed Certificates) (Revocation) Regulations 2017. (Government Notice No.161 of 2017)
- (h) The Public Procurement (Amendment of Schedule) (No.2) Regulations 2017. (Government Notice No.163 of 2017)
- (i) The Finance and Audit (Amendment of Schedule) (No.2) Regulations 2017. (Government Notice No.169 of 2017)
- (j) The Finance and Audit (Food Security Fund) (Revocation) Regulations 2017. (Government Notice No.170 of 2017)
- (k) The Finance and Audit (Local Development Fund) (Revocation) Regulations 2017. (Government Notice No.171 of 2017)
- (l) The Finance and Audit (National Habitat Fund) (Revocation) Regulations 2017. (Government Notice No.172 of 2017)
- (m) The Finance and Audit (Maurice Ile Durable Fund) (Revocation) Regulations 2017. (Government Notice No.173 of 2017)
- (n) The Investment Promotion (Film Rebate Scheme) (Amendment) Regulations 2017. (Government Notice No.174 of 2017)
- (o) The Value Added Tax (Amendment) Regulations 2017. (Government Notice No.182 of 2017)
- (p) The Excise (Amendment) Regulations 2017. (Government Notice No.183 of 2017).
- (q) Digest of Public Finance Statistics 2015/16.
- (r) National Accounts of Mauritius 2016.
- (s) The Finance and Audit (National Arts Fund) Regulations 2017. (Government Notice No.186 of 2017)
- (t) The Finance and Audit (Amendment of Schedule) (No.3) Regulations 2017. (Government Notice No.187 of 2017)
- (u) The Investment Promotion (Mauritius Diaspora Scheme) (Amendment) Regulations 2017. (Government Notice No.191 of 2017)
- (v) The Investment Promotion (Invest Hotel Scheme) (Amendment) Regulations 2017. (Government Notice No.192 of 2017)
- (w) The Investment Promotion (Property Development Scheme) (Amendment) Regulations 2017.(Government Notice No.196 of 2017)

- (x) The Customs (Amendment) Regulations 2017. (Government Notice No.197 of 2017)
- (y) The Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement (Republic of Cabo Verde) Regulations 2017. (Government Notice No.198 of 2017)
- (z) The Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement (Republic of Ghana) Regulations 2017. (Government Notice No.199 of 2017)

C. Ministry of Energy and Public Utilities

- (a) The Radiation Protection (Licensing and Registration) Regulations 2017. (Government Notice No.153 of 2017)
- (b) The Waste Water (Miscellaneous Waste Water Services) (Fees) (Amendment) Regulations 2017. (Government Notice No.194 of 2017)
- (c) The Annual Report of the Central Electricity Board for the year ended 31 December 2014.

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

- (a) The Audited Accounts of the Chagossian Welfare Fund for the fiscal year 2015.
- (b) The Rodrigues Regional Assembly (Allowances and Privileges) (Amendment to Schedule). (Government Notice No.166 of 2017)
- (c) The Maritime Zones (Economic Activities) (Amendment) Regulations 2017. (Government Notice No.157 of 2017)

E. Ministry of Technology, Communication and Innovation

The Annual Reports 2014 and 2015 of the Mauritius Research Council.

F. Ministry of Public Infrastructure and Land Transport

- (a) The Annual Reports of the Construction Industry Development Board (CIDB) for the period 2009 to 2014. (In Original)
- (b) The Road Traffic (Driving Schools and Instructors) (Amendment) Regulations 2017. (Government Notice No.193 of 2017)

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

- (a) The Annual Report 2015 of the Rajiv Gandhi Science Centre Trust Fund Board.
- (b) The Annual Report 2015 of the Open University of Mauritius.

H. Ministry of Health and Quality of Life

- (a) The Dental Council (Medical Institutions) (Amendment No. 3) Regulations 2017. (Government Notice No.131 of 2017)
- (b) The Audited Financial Statements of Ex-NATReSA (National Agency for the Treatment and Rehabilitation of Substance Abusers) for the 18 months period ended 30 June 2016.
- (c) The Medical Council (Medical Institutions) (Amendment No.7) Regulations 2017. (Government Notice No.154 of 2017)
- (d) The Medical Council (Medical Institutions) (Amendment No.8) Regulations 2017. (Government Notice No.168 of 2017)
- (e) The Medical Council (Medical Institutions) (Amendment No.9) Regulations 2017. (Government Notice No.195 of 2017)
- (f) The Medical Council (Medical Institutions) (Amendment No.10) Regulations 2017. (Government Notice No.206 of 2017)
- (g) The Medical Council (Medical Institutions) (Amendment No.11) Regulations 2017. (Government Notice No.207 of 2017)

I. **Ministry of Arts and Culture**

- (a) The Annual Report 2013 of the National Library.
- (b) The Annual Report of the Mauritius Marathi Cultural Centre Trust for the period January to December 2013.
- (c) The Annual Report 2014 of the National Library.
- (d) The Annual Report 2014 of the Tamil Speaking Union.

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

The Audited Financial Statement of the Maurice Ile Durable Fund for the period ended 08 October 2015.

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

- (a) The Food (Amendment) Regulations 2017. (Government Notice No.155 of 2017)
- (b) The Food (Amendment No.2) Regulations 2017. (Government Notice No.188 of 2017)
- (c) The Annual Report and Accounts of the Mauritius Cane Industry Authority for the period 01 January to 31 December 2015.

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

- (a) The Rodrigues Consumer Protection (Control of Price of Taxable and Non-taxable Goods) (Amendment No. 24) Regulations 2017. (Government Notice No. 126 of 2017)
- (b) The Rodrigues Consumer Protection (Control of Price of Taxable and Non-taxable Goods) (Amendment No. 25) Regulations 2017. (Government Notice No. 132 of 2017)
- (c) The Rodrigues Consumer Protection (Control of Price of Taxable and Non-taxable Goods) (Amendment No.26) Regulations 2017. (Government Notice No.133 of 2017)
- (d) The Consumer Protection (Control of Price of Petroleum Products) (Amendment No.2) Regulations 2017. (Government Notice No.135 of 2017)
- (e) The Rodrigues Consumer Protection (Control of Price of Taxable and Non-taxable Goods) (Amendment No.27) Regulations 2017. (Government Notice No.136 of 2017)
- (f) The Rodrigues Consumer Protection (Control of Price of Taxable and Non-taxable Goods) (Amendment No.28) Regulations 2017. (Government Notice No.137 of 2017)
- (g) The Rodrigues Consumer Protection (Control of Price of Taxable and Non-taxable Goods) (Amendment No.29) Regulations 2017. (Government Notice No.138 of 2017)
- (h) The Consumer Protection (Consumer Goods) (Maximum Mark-Up) (Amendment) Regulations 2017. (Government Notice 145 of 2017)
- (i) The Consumer Protection (Maximum Recommended Retail Price) (Code of Practice) (Amendment) Regulations 2017. (Government Notice No.146 of 2017)
- (j) The Consumer Protection (Control of Sale of Imported Live Animals for Home Slaughter) (Amendment) Regulations 2017. (Government Notice No.149 of 2017)
- (k) The Consumer Protection (Control of Price of Taxable and Non-taxable Goods) (Amendment No.2) Regulations 2017. (Government Notice No.150 of 2017)
- (l) The Rodrigues Consumer Protection (Control of Price Table and Non-taxable Goods) (Amendment No.30) Regulations 2017. (Government Notice No.151 of 2017)
- (m) The Rodrigues Consumer Protection (Control of Price of Taxable and Non-taxable Goods) (Amendment No.31) Regulations 2017. (Government Notice No.152 of 2017)
- (n) The Consumer Protection (Export Control) (Amendment No.3) Regulations 2017. (Government Notice No.158 of 2017)
- (o) The Consumer Protection (Importation and Sale of Second-hand Motor Vehicles) (Amendment) Regulations 2017. (Government Notice No.159 of 2017)
- (p) The Consumer protection (Control of Imports) Regulations 2017. (Government Notice No.160 of 2017)

- (q) The Rodrigues Consumer Protection (Control of Price of Taxable and Non-taxable Goods) (Amendment No.32) Regulations 2017. (Government Notice No.164 of 2017)
- (r) The Rodrigues Consumer Protection (Control of Price of Taxable and Non-taxable Goods) (Amendment No.33) Regulations 2017. (Government Notice No.165 of 2017)
- (s) The Consumer Protection (Control of Imports) (Amendment) Regulations 2017. (Government Notice No.167 of 2017)
- (t) The Legal Metrology (Pre-packed Commodities) (Amendment No.2) Regulations 2017. (Government Notice No.175 of 2017)
- (u) The Rodrigues Consumer Protection (Control of Price of Taxable and Non-taxable Goods) (Amendment No.34) Regulations 2017. (Government Notice No.176 of 2017)
- (v) The Rodrigues Consumer Protection (Control of Price of Taxable and Non-taxable Goods) (Amendment No.35) Regulations 2017. (Government Notice No.177 of 2017)
- (w) The Consumer Protection (Control of Price of Taxable and Non-taxable Goods) (Amendment No.3) Regulations 2017. (Government Notice No.178 of 2017)
- (x) The Consumer Protection (Safety Requirements) (Amendment) Regulations 2017. (Government Notice No.200 of 2017)
- (y) The Rodrigues Consumer Protection (Control of Price of Taxable and Non-taxable Goods) (Amendment No.36) Regulations 2017. (Government Notice No. 201 of 2017)
- (z) The Rodrigues Consumer Protection (Control of Price of Taxable and Non-taxable Goods) (Amendment No.37) Regulations 2017. (Government Notice No.202 of 2017)
- (aa) The Rodrigues Consumer Protection (Control of Price of Taxable and Non-taxable Goods) (Amendment No.38) Regulations 2017. (Government Notice No.203 of 2017)
- (ab) The Rodrigues Consumer Protection (Control of Price of Taxable and Non-taxable Goods) (Amendment No.39) Regulations 2017. (Government Notice No.204 of 2017)
- (ac) The Rodrigues Consumer Protection (Control of Price of Taxable and Non-taxable Goods) (Amendment No.40) Regulations 2017. (Government Notice No.205 of 2017)

M. **Attorney General's Office and Ministry of Justice, Human Rights and Institutional Reforms**

The Revision of Laws (Revised Subsidiary Legislation of Mauritius) (Volumes 1 to 6) (Supplement – Issue 2) Regulations 2017. (Government Notice No.162 of 2017)

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

The Co-operatives (Annual Revenue of Society) Regulations 2017. (Government Notice No.156 of 2017)

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

- (a) The Merchant Shipping (National Maritime Search and Rescue Organisation) Regulations 2017. (Government Notice No.139 of 2017)
- (b) The Merchant Shipping (Preliminary Inquiries and Formal Investigations of Shipping Casualties) Regulations 2017. (Government Notice No.140 of 2017)
- (c) The Merchant Shipping (Classification Society) Regulations 2017. (Government Notice No.141 of 2017)
- (d) The Merchant Shipping (Registration of Submersible Craft) Regulations 2017. (Government Notice No.142 of 2017)
- (e) The Merchant Shipping (Training and Certification) Regulations 2017. (Government Notice No.143 of 2017)
- (f) The Merchant Shipping (Safe Manning, Hours of Work and Watchkeeping) Regulations 2017. (Government Notice No.144 of 2017)
- (g) The Merchant Shipping (Tonnage) Regulations 2017. (Government Notice No.147 of 2017)
- (h) The Annual Report of the Seafarers' Welfare Fund for the year ended 31 December 2015.

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

- (a) The Non-Citizens (Employment Restriction) (Work Permit) Regulations 2017. (Government Notice No. 128 of 2017)
- (b) The Non-Citizens (Work Permits) (Fees) (Amendment) Regulations 2017. (Government Notice No.129 of 2017)

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

- (a) The Local Government (Exemption from Building and Land Use Permit) (Amendment) Regulations 2017. (Government Notice No.127 of 2017)
- (b) The District Council of Black River (Cemetery/Crematorium) Regulations 2017. (Government Notice No. 179 of 2017)

- (c) The District Council of Flacq (renting parking places for vehicle) Regulations 2017. (Government Notice No. 180 of 2017)
- (d) The District Council of Flacq Auction Sale Regulations 2017. (Government Notice No. 181 of 2017)
- (e) The City Council of Port Louis (Paid Public Toilets) Regulations 2017. (Government Notice No.189 of 2017)
- (f) The Vacoas-Phoenix (Market) (Amendment) Regulations 2017. (Government Notice No.190 of 2017)

R. Ministry of Civil Service and Administrative Reforms

- (a) The Civil Establishment Order 2017 (Government Notice No.184 of 2017)
- (b) The Civil Establishment (Rodrigues Regional Assembly) Order 2017. (Government Notice No.185 of 2017)

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

METRO EXPRESS PROJECT – IMPLEMENTATION

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

- (a) latest feasibility study and financial forecasts therefor;
- (b) Environment Impact Assessment Report in relation thereto;
- (c) signed contracts with Larsen and Toubro and RITES Ltd, and
- (d) PricewaterhouseCoopers Report on the transport industry, and indicate the proposed changes to the bus routes and plan to prevent redundancies in the transport industry as a result of the implementation thereof.

The Minister of Public Infrastructure and Land Transport (Mr N. Bodha): Madam Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. Leader of the Opposition for his first PNQ addressing it on the issue of the Metro Express. We have a very clear vision and a very clear philosophy as regard to this project, Madam Speaker and as regard to the infrastructure projects.

This philosophy is couched in the following elements -

- Transparency;
- Value for money;
- The public and the national interest, and
- The positive overspilling effects on the overall infrastructural development to the country in the implementation of the new national transport network.

In reply to previous PNQs on the Metro Express I stated, Madam Speaker, that we would give all figures and details of the project once the contract has been awarded. In accordance with the MoU signed with the Government of India, which provides for contracts of works and consultancy in relation to the work to be awarded to Indian firms, the contract has now been awarded to Larsen and Toubro Limited for design and build and Consultancy to RITES Ltd.; the project is now progressing full swing. Larsen and Toubro has started mapping of utilities plus the main physical works are scheduled to start at various locations along the route between Rose

Hill and Port. Louis. The preliminary survey works are expected to be completed by December 2017 and heavy works are scheduled to start in January 2018 as provided for in the Action Plan.

Madam Speaker, with regard to part (a) of the question, I have, as I said, stated that for the sake of transparency, the feasibility report of the Metro Express Project will be tabled at the National Assembly when the procurement process is completed and the contract awarded.

I am pleased to inform the House that, following a transparent and rigorous procurement procedure under the technical supervision of the Singapore Cooperation Enterprise (SCE), Larsen & Toubro Limited has been awarded the Design and Build Contract on 31 July 2017. RITES Limited has been appointed as Project Supervision Consultant on 10 March 2017.

I am tabling, as promised, the updated Feasibility Report of the Metro Express project. The Report has been prepared by the same consulting firm, the Singapore Cooperation Enterprise, which carried out the first feasibility report for the project of the Light Rail Transport System under the previous Government in October 2013.

The new Financial Appraisal Update was carried out over the period July to September 2017 and is based on the final project cost, the adjusted business plan and a new financing structure.

Madam Speaker, this Report covers, *inter alia*, the purpose, evaluation approach criteria, parameters and data sources as well as the cost and revenue parameters such as the capital expenditures, operating expenditure, fare revenue and non-fare revenue and residual values. Furthermore, the evaluation exercise has been subjected to a sensitivity analysis.

The key findings point out that, in all evaluation cases and sensitivity analysis scenarios considered, the Project would be financially viable, with a positive Net Present Value, and a Benefits Cost Ratio of greater than one, and an Internal Rate of Return above the financial cost. The redemption of the preference shares debt within a 20-year operation framework is achievable in all the scenarios tested.

There are a number of key reasons which account for the positive results, Madam Speaker -

- First, as we are aware, the generous Rs9.9 billion Grant from India which has halved the financial cost of the Project.

- Second, the favourable financing cost of 1.9 per cent provides an interest rate that is significantly lower than the current 6 to 8.5 per cent prime lending rates offered by banks in Mauritius, the 4.7 per cent yield on the ten-year Government bond issued in August 2017, and the 5.5 per cent yield on the twenty-year Government bond issued in September 2017.
- Positive operating cash flow is expected from the first year of operation. Specifically, the total revenue estimated in the first year of full operation, Madam Speaker, is equivalent to Rs622 m. and that would surpass the operating cost estimated at Rs461 m. in the same year (i.e. a net operating surplus of Rs161 m. in the first full year of operation). The operating surplus may be used to redeem the preference shares, that is, repay the equivalent quasi debt and the interest incurred over the Rs8.9 billion which is the complement to implement the project.

It is noted that the above Financial Appraisal Update does not include the economic or social benefits associated with implementing the Project, which in the aforementioned feasibility study dated 2013 was estimated at around Rs15 billion. Some examples of the economic benefits associated with implementing the Project would include travel time savings, vehicle operating cost savings, accidents cost savings, reduced emissions, as well as positive impacts to industries, labour productivity, job creation and social development.

These economic benefits, when added to the updated feasibility study, will further improve the overall viability of this present project.

Madam Speaker, I wish to highlight that, comparing like with like, that is, excluding any economic or social benefits (that is from a purely financial perspective), the original feasibility study of 2013 showed a negative NPV ranging between Rs8 billion to 11 billion. In fact, there was a financial gap under all the scenarios and simulations considered by SCE then. In these cases, the financial Benefit to Cost Ratio (BCR) was considerably less than one implying that the financial benefits of the project was always going to be less than its financial costs.

Whereas in this present feasibility study, the project shows a positive NPV ranging from 2.9 billion to Rs15 billion in all the scenarios considered, with the most likelihood case to be a Positive Rs9.8 billion NPV.

The project IRR in the base case is 7.2% compared to the interest rate of 1.9% being charged to the project.

Madam Speaker, it is to be noted that, according to the information which has been provided to me, a new financial mechanism has been put in place by the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development and the State Bank of Mauritius to shock absorb and neutralise any fluctuations in the exchange rate of the dollar, thereby assuring that the project cost of capital will be 1.9% throughout the repayment period. This was very important.

Madam Speaker, I wish to add that Government of India has advanced a credit facility to SBM owned SPV which, in turn, has taken an equity or quasi equity position in the form of redeemable preference shares on the project. The interest rate payable by SBM to India is 1.8% p.a.

For arranging the funding and assuming any associated financial risks, SBM has charged a fee of 5.5% of the base interest rate of 1.8%, that is, $1.8\% \times 5.5\%$, giving a fee of 0.1% percentage point. Thus, the net project cost of capital to Metro Express is fixed at 1.9% irrespective of any currency fluctuations.

Madam Speaker, regarding part (b) of the question, let me reassure the House that, as stated before, all the environmental standards and parameters to be observed have been specified in the Request for Proposal and the mitigation measures have been included in the Environmental Management Plan already submitted by the Design and Construct Contractor, Larsen & Toubro Ltd.

I wish to highlight that although the project is not a scheduled undertaking under the Environment Protection Act 2002, Metro Express has entrusted Singapore Cooperation Enterprise with the task of carrying out an EIA Report to doubly assure on the mitigating measures. This EIA Report is expected to be ready by December 2017.

The key points of the Environmental Management Plan which has been submitted by Larsen & Toubro Ltd are as follows –

They wish to adopt good practices and clean technologies so as to prevent and minimise nuisances and adverse impacts of the works.

They want to take into consideration environmentally sensitive areas within the site and its surroundings.

Comply with all the laws, standards, guidelines and regulations, and exhibit environmental due diligence at the time as regards to air, ground, water.

Key Points of Environmental Management Plan

The Environment Management plan also includes measures. We have a series of nine different managements for –

- surface water;
- soil erosion;
- contaminated water;
- noise and vibration attenuation management;
- air quality control;
- wastewater management, and a long list of other surveys which are being carried out, and they provide also –
- periodic monitoring of air quality, water and noise level;
- periodic inspections and regular audits will be carried out by the Environmental Engineer;
- ensuring that measures are there to facilitate the achievement of the environmental objectives;
- compliance with the laws of environment, and
- wherever standards have not been specified, there are going to be Euro standards, Madam Speaker.

As regards part (c) of the question, Madam Speaker, the Design and Construct Contract for the Metro Express to the tune of Rs18.8 billion has been signed between two private companies, namely Metro Express Ltd and Larsen and Toubro Ltd. It is, therefore, commercially in confidence. Also, I wish to highlight that the Design and Construct Contract and the contract with RITES to supervise the works have been signed within the framework of a G-to-G agreement between the Government of India and the Government of Mauritius.

Madam Speaker, may I wish to point out that the Design and Build contract provides the following requirements –

- Quality Management Requirements;
- Environmental Management and Sustainability Requirements;
- Safety Management Requirements;
- Contract Programme Requirements;
- Engineering Design Requirements;
- Urban and Landscape Design Requirements;
- Rolling Stock Requirements;
- Investigations, Surveys and Condition Monitoring Requirements;
- Construction Requirements;
- Acceptance Testing Requirements;
- Traffic Coordination Requirements;
- Control and Monitoring Systems;
- Communications and Stakeholder Management;
- Integrated Transport, and
- Asset Management.

Moreover, the agreement between the Metro Express Limited (MEL) and the Consultant RITES Ltd provides for –

- (i) RITES to closely monitor with Metro Express Limited to ensure that the detailed design submitted to the Design & Construct contractor is in conformity with the requirements in the Request for Proposal dated 24 January 2017;
- (ii) to ensure that the Design & Construction programme is adhered to and maintain an effective project control framework covering all aspects of work such as costs, programme, risk, quality, safety;
- (iii) carry out supervision of the construction works and installation of infrastructure and electrical and mechanical systems;
- (iv) certify payments for approval by Metro Express Limited against the progress of works and key deliverables in line with any performance criteria as per the contract;

- (v) also to assist Metro Express Limited in defining safety, environment, quality and risk management reporting requirements and monitor compliance thereto during construction, and
- (vi) providing assurance to Metro Express Limited for the commissioning and testing phases and address any issues in relation to systems integration - and this is very important, Madam Speaker - and operations readiness.

The project, as I said, is progressing full swing, and I said also that the mapping of utilities is being done, site survey is being done. However, over and above, the fact that RITES is supervising the work, Metro Express will have its own independent verifying team with competencies and expertise, local and abroad, to see to it that the contract management, that the Design Management, the project direction is done in the best conditions.

Madam Speaker, with regard to part (d) of the question, Members of the House will recall that, in 2005, when the then Government introduced the Free Travel System, no appropriate mechanisms were put in place at that time to assess Government spending into the industry under the Free Travel System, and the payment was based on a current formula where compensation was paid to bus operators on normative values as far back as with the equation which dates back to 2005. So, we had to have a proper study and we commissioned a study which was financed by *l'Agence française de développement* and the contract was allocated to PricewaterhouseCoopers for the cost of Rs12 m., and the main Terms of Reference were as follows –

- to review and make forecast on public transport industry;
- to carry out a financial and economic analysis;
- to make proposals for technology driven strategy, and
- to review the operations of the National Transport Corporation.

The main objectives were to assess the existing mechanism of payment and to see that there is transparency and accountability and cost effective mechanism of control.

The main recommendations of the PricewaterhouseCoopers Report are as follows –

Administration of Free Travel Scheme Subsidy

The Consultant has recommended that the shifting from the formula as today from the number of licences held by the bus companies to the number of trips, that is, the number of people travelling, that is, pay per head.

Cashless/smart ticketing system

Second, for enhanced transparency and efficacy, the PricewaterhouseCoopers concurrently advocated the use of a cashless/smart ticketing system, a bit like the Oyster card, which can also be used for the Metro. The introduction of this system will reengineer the public transport sector in Mauritius. So, we are working with it with India and we are working also with the Ministry of Information Technology to see to it that everything in the computerisation process is done in the best manner.

Madam Speaker, I know that the hon. Leader of the Opposition is very sensitive, and I am also, as regards to the workers and the re-routing. But, before that, let me say that after the report was submitted, we organised two workshops with PricewaterhouseCoopers and the first workshop was conducted to gather information from stakeholders and my Ministry proposed to implement the following measures. My Ministry proposes to implement the following measures – so, the existing formula; how to go about the Key Performance Indicators. We had a workshop with all the trade unions, with all the workers, and the bus owners companies. We are going to have a second workshop with the private bus owners. I will table a copy of the Executive Summary of the report.

Madam Speaker, coming to the proposed changes in the bus routes to prevent redundancies in the transport industry, I have to inform the House that I have had several rounds of consultations with bus companies operating on the corridor of the Metro Express. A first meeting was held in August 2017 with trade union representatives. I, thereafter, met again with the bus companies, and the main concerns of the employees relate to their job security and the apprehension that their existing terms and conditions of work would be compromised with the coming into operation of the Metro.

The representatives of the Trade Union also pressed for a written Tripartite Agreement that would spell out the roles and responsibilities of each party in view to safeguard the

employment of the bus industry workers. This would also ensure that their employment rights would not be adversely impacted upon with the advent of the Metro.

According to the NTA, 39 routes would be affected by the operation of the Metro Express. In August 2017, Government has set up a Committee chaired by the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities to consider the impact of the implementation of the Metro Express, that is, after all the works that have been done I have had meetings with the workers. I have had a series of meetings with the bus companies, and now we will sit down together, the three of us, to see to it that we have a system where the Metro will not be implemented to the expense of the bus companies and not to the expense of the workers.

The NTA estimates that 45% of the ridership of the bus companies operating along the corridor, that is, United Bus Service Ltd (UBS), the National Transport Corporation (NTC), and the RHT Bus Services Ltd (RHT) would be affected.

This would lead to a significant shortfall in revenue and we have developed a Bus Reengineering Strategy and, according to the NTA, 344 buses which currently operate along the Metro Express corridor and involve 1,000 employees will be affected.

So, we have the Bus Reengineering Strategy, based on a median case scenario, that half of buses are going to continue to service the lines and the redeployment of 50% of buses operating along impacted routes, that is, we need to redeploy 172 buses, and we need to redeploy half of the 1000 people.

So, what we have done, we have created 34 new routes and we have created 31 feeder routes to be able to see to it that there is an on-time complementary transport system between the metro and the bus, that is, you get down of the bus and you get the metro; you get down from the metro you take the bus. For example, on the corridor between Rose Hill, Ebene and Bagatelle, you will have every five minutes a bus which will come and see to it that you don't have to wait.

We are creating 34 new routes, we are creating 31 feeder routes and also we are considering the cashless system. There has been some conversation about whether we can have an early retirement scheme, but I think I would leave this to the Trade Unions and to the workers. What I would like to say, Madam Speaker, is that our concern is that the Metro is implemented as a project in the best interest of the country with no cost overrun, no time overrun and quality

and, at the same time, it is not done at the expense of any stakeholder, on the contrary. The inter-Ministerial Committee chaired by the Deputy Prime Minister will meet up with the workers and the companies to see to it that we have a mechanism, to see to it that everybody is on-board.

What I am going to do Madam Speaker is that I am going today to lay on the Table of the National Assembly the Final Appraisal Update - I will keep it here just after the question. I will also submit the Executive Summary of the Report of 2013 because I think it is a good thing for comparison. I am also going to lay on the Table of the National Assembly the report of the PricewaterhouseCoopers and I am also going to lay on the Table of the National Assembly a report that we have done on the impact of rerouting at the NTA, where you have all the lines, all the buses and everything. I think this would be able to provide the information that the House needs and the country at large would need.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Mr X. L. Duval: Madam Speaker, I trust you will give me some additional time as the Minister has taken nearly 30 minutes just to reply.

Madam Speaker, my first question is: who is really in charge of the project, as I note that the Board of the Metro Express reports to the Prime Minister and not to him as Minister?

Mr Bodha: Well, the project, the way it is being implemented, is that we have a Steering Committee which is chaired by the Prime Minister, which is a Ministerial Committee, which meets as and when required, and there is a Technical Committee which I chair every Monday, with all the Ministries, all the departments RITES Ltd, and Larsen and Toubro, so that we see to it that we monitor all the issues, and we iron out all the hassles and then this meeting is held on Monday. I have the Minutes of this meeting on Wednesday, and I report to Cabinet on Friday. If need be then the Steering Committee is going to be chaired by the Prime Minister, if there is any significant question to be answered.

Mr X. L. Duval: The hon. Minister monitors and decisions are taken by the Prime Minister and the Deputy Prime Minister. This is what I understand.

Madam Speaker, I would like to ask the hon. Minister firstly, in the first feasibility of SCE, there was mention of two options for the Metro Express. One, the fast option, 37 minutes;

the other one, slow option, 40 minutes, and you have mentioned in the last PNQ, a very slow option – fast, slow and very slow of 43 minutes.

Firstly, which option is it? Is it a 43-minute, and why is that particular option which you mentioned much slower than what was recommended by SCE?

Mr Bodha: This is a technical question. There have been different options, but I must say that the request for proposal was made by SCE and both the Afcons and Larsen and Toubro came with this version of 41 minutes.

Mr X. L. Duval: The Minister chaired a Technical Committee, but he is not able to answer a technical question. Is it true that the engine of the trains will be less powerful, and I can show that, and that there are less elevations, *pilotis* than the fast option or even the slow option, and these two along with other amendments that you have made have resulted in the Metro Express, being about six minutes slower than the fast option proposed originally by SCE, and I will table, Madam Speaker, the first report by SCE, called the patronage report, where you will see this clearly.

Mr Bodha: No, Madam Speaker, in fact the trains are going to be better, they are the latest version. It's going to be better. I would like to...

(Interruptions)

They are going to be better.

Now, may I also say that we had elevated section. I have always mentioned that there is only one area where the elevated section has been brought to ground; nothing else has been done.

Mr X. L. Duval: Le résultat est que les trains vont être beaucoup plus lents que préconisé premièrement au début par SCE.

Madam Speaker, the hon. Minister must know full well that the ridership that he, himself, stated of 80,000 each way 160,000 was intrinsically based on a number of bus routes, 109 bus routes being either abolished or becoming feeder routes.

Now, *avec raison*, we support this. These bus routes have not been closed. 39 will be affected as he mentioned, but that must surely have an effect on the ridership, because this report quite clearly says, Madam Speaker, I will quote, if I may -

(...) that MLRT patrons which are current bus users will be forced (...)

And they used the word 'forced'...

(...) onto the MLRT owing to the removal of the current bus routes.

This is what SCE says. Now there will no longer be any forcing except for the reduction in capacity, so what is the ridership now? It must surely have been submitted to this Technical Committee.

Mr Bodha: Madam Speaker, this is the report that the hon. Leader of the Opposition, then Minister of Finance, approved.

(Interruptions)

Yes, you approved the report with 160,000 ridership.

(Interruptions)

Listen...

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Hon. Henry, please!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Leader of the Opposition!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Leader of the Opposition, allow the hon. Minister to reply. You will have the opportunity again to ask other questions, please!

Mr Bodha: Madam Speaker, there is no comparison with the project in the past and today. There is absolutely no comparison! There was a funding gap of Rs10 billion!

(Interruptions)

Yes, ridership! The ridership was based on 160,000 and that is what you approved! Do you know how you got the 160,000? You eliminated more than hundred lines! Where were the workers then?

(Interruptions)

And the other thing is...

(Interruptions)

...there is something else...

(Interruptions)

There is something else. Do you know what you did? If you go on the report, SCE says we should have a congestion fee, we should have toll and we should have parking rates to discourage people so that 160,000...

(Interruptions)

... so that 160,000 people would take the Metro.

(Interruptions)

This is what I am answering!

(Interruptions)

We have the ridership which is 53,800...

(Interruptions)

Yes!

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker, in order to make the former project viable, we needed to have 160,000 people and SCE explained how to get the 160,000 people, that is, cutting 100 lines bus routes; imposing congestion fee; imposing parking fee and a system so that we would discourage - they also mentioned the fact that we should put taxes so that people cannot buy cars!

(Interruptions)

So, all this was done. Why? Because the project was based on 160,000 people travelling. Without the 160,000 people travelling, the project would have gone bust. Now, even then with 160,000 passengers, Madam Speaker, the financial structure was such that there was a funding gap and Government would have had to subsidise the whole thing.

(Interruptions)

Now, to answer the question...

(Interruptions)

No, I am answering your question!

(Interruptions)

Today...

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Can I ask for some order in the House, please?

(Interruptions)

We have only 30 minutes for PNQ. I have allowed the hon. Minister 15 minutes and he has taken 16 minutes. I will give the hon. Leader of the Opposition some additional minutes for his question but, please be very strict with your questions also, do not make long introductions and I will ask the hon. Minister also to reply strictly to the question which is being asked!

(Interruptions)

Mr Bodha: What I am saying is that the project in 2013 was based on 160,000 travellers.

(Interruptions)

We had to do a number of things to force people to take the trip. This time...

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Hon. Minister, please! Are you replying strictly to the question which is being asked?

(Interruptions)

Mr X. L. Duval: On a point of order...

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Because we have to give time to both of you to ask your questions and for you also to reply.

Mr X. L. Duval: Can I ask the hon. Minister what was the ridership. That is all I asked in the question. He has given the figure 53,000 and now he is going on and on about some stupid report of which I was not ...

Madam Speaker: Don't lose the time of the House explaining, ask your question!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Leader of the Opposition, ask your question because we are losing the time of the House! Your time also we are losing! Please ask your...

(Interruptions)

Now, hon. Thierry Henry, let me tell you that it is not for you to give me instructions! Hon. Leader of the Opposition, please ask your question and be brief!

Mr X. L. Duval: Madam Speaker, the hon. Minister seems to swim under the disillusion that I approved some sort of report or that whatever mistake may have been made in the past gives him the blank cheque to make the same mistake.

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: No! But, these are comments! Hon. Leader of the Opposition...

Mr X. L. Duval: I am sorry I am going to make the comments because he is making comments!

(Interruptions)

No!

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: These are comments!

(Interruptions)

Order, please!

(Interruptions)

Order! These are comments! Please, don't make comments, ask your question because otherwise time is already over!

(Interruptions)

Mr X. L. Duval: I will ask the hon. Minister what is the expected effect on traffic congestion? How many people are supposed to be leaving their cars to join the MLRT? Can he tell us that?

Mr Bodha: We are expecting about 10 per cent.

Mr X. L. Duval: Is the hon. Minister aware that the vehicle park in Mauritius grows by 8 per cent annually? 8 per cent annually! The light vehicle and not the total. If you look at the cars only, it increases by 8 per cent. I can table that, it is not an issue for me. He should know his figures better. Now, over the four years, it means 36 per cent increase. So, is it not clear that the light rail will have no effect at all on traffic congestion?

Mr Bodha: Madam Speaker, the SCE Report already in 2013 said that the Metro is one of the measures to have fluidity of traffic in Mauritius, the other one is the Road Decongestion Programme, the other one asks a number of measures about safety.

The Metro goes in line with the Road Decongestion Programme. What we are trying to do, Madam Speaker, is to encourage people to take the Metro whenever it is appropriate and whenever it is practical. They can still keep their cars during the weekend to do whatever. What we want is to have a corridor where fluidity is fine and all the people will find it natural to take the train.

But to take the train, there is something that we call the first mile and the last mile. The first mile is from home to the station and the last mile is from the station to where you work or where you are going to. We are trying to see to it that we have a system that will encourage people for the first mile and the last mile, that is why we have this blending of buses and feeder buses every five, six, seven minutes so that when you get out of your train you do not have to wait.

Mr X. L. Duval: I think everybody knows that we have got road decongestion...

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Two additional questions...

Mr X. L. Duval: No, Madam Speaker, I will not accept!

(Interruptions)

I have hardly asked any question!

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: No!

(Interruptions)

Please, sit down!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Leader of the Opposition, please sit down!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Leader of the Opposition, please sit down!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Leader of the Opposition, I am on my feet! You know the regulations of this House...

(Interruptions)

Please, sit down!

(Interruptions)

Please, sit down!

(Interruptions)

Last time! Hon. Leader of the Opposition, I have said: I am on my feet, please sit down. You are a seasoned Member of this House, you know the rules and by continuing to stand up with me then you are confronting the Chair. I will have...

(Interruptions)

Order, please! Hon. Thierry Henry, please! And, on this side, hon. Rutnah, please!

(Interruptions)

Please silent!

(Interruptions)

No! Hon. Leader of the Opposition, I am making an ultimate appeal to you. You know the rules of this House. You know that when you continue to stand and confront the Speaker this is against the rules of the House. I am making an appeal to you not to confront the authority of the Chair otherwise I will have to take appropriate measures!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Leader of the Opposition...

Mr X. L. Duval: I have no respect for you, Madam Speaker.

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: If you don't have respect, I order you out!

(Interruptions)

I order you out first of all and I will come with the ...

(Interruptions)

I order you out!

(Interruptions)

I order you out because for what you have said it is too serious!

(Interruptions)

It is too serious! I order you out and if you continue, I will have to take action!

(Interruptions)

I order you out!

(Interruptions)

And, if you say no, I suspend the sitting!

(Interruptions)

At 12.22 p.m. the sitting was suspended.

On resuming at 1.42 p.m. with Madam Speaker in the Chair.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Leader of the Opposition, in view of your conduct towards the Chair, I am naming you.

MOTIONS

URGENT BUSINESS UNDER S.O. 17(3)

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, in view of your decision to name the hon. Leader of the Opposition, I beg, under Standing Order 17(3), to take the time of the House for urgent business.

The Deputy Prime Minister rose and seconded.

Question put and agreed to.

SUSPENSION OF S.O. 29(1)

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, having obtained your permission, I beg to move under Standing Order 29(1) to present a Motion without notice.

The Deputy Prime Minister rose and seconded.

Question put and agreed to.

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, in view of your decision to name the hon. Leader of the Opposition, I beg to move that the hon. Leader of the Opposition be suspended from the service of the Assembly for today's and the next sitting unless he tenders his unreserved apologies to the Chair.

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Order!

Question put and agreed to.

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: I suspend the sitting for one and a half hour. I suspend the sitting for lunch.

At 1.44 p.m., the sitting was suspended.

On resuming at 3.23 p.m. with Madam Speaker in the Chair.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Dr Sorefan!

SSR INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT - PASSENGER TERMINAL - REFURBISHMENT

(No. B/576) **Dr R. Sorefan (Fourth Member for La Caverne & Phoenix)** asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Home Affairs, External Communications and National Development Unit, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to the refurbishment of the old terminal of the Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam International Airport, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from Airport Terminal Operations Limited (ATOL), information as to where matters stand.

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, in the Budget Speech 2017-2018, I announced the renovation and refurbishment of the Old Passenger Terminal to cater for the current rapid growth in passenger traffic. The project allows connection of the old terminal to the new terminal with refurbishment of the boarding area.

In fact, Passenger Traffic growth has been averaging 9.3% per annum over the last three years, which is well above the forecasted traffic growth of around 5%.

This substantial increase in traffic is due to the start of operation of new airlines and the development of new routes. This project will increase the passenger handling capacity of the Passenger Terminal from 4 to 4.5 million per year, to cater for the anticipated passenger traffic increase until Year 2021/2022.

I am informed by the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Airport Terminal Operations Ltd (ATOL) that the project timeline is as follows -

Design/Tender Stage	July 2017 - March 2018
Construction Stage	April 2018 - December 2018

I am also informed by the CEO of ATOL that the project is currently at tender stage.

Madam Speaker: Questions addressed to hon. Ministers! Hon. Lesjongard!

FESTIVAL INTERNATIONAL KREOL - TOTAL COSTS

(No. B/591) Mr G. Lesjongard (Second Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Minister of Tourism whether, in regard to the *Festival International Kreol*, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Tourism Authority, information as to the total costs of the 2014, 2015 and 2016 editions thereof, respectively, indicating in each case the –

- (a) procurement procedures followed for the provision of goods and services therefor, indicating the -
 - (i) names of the suppliers, and
 - (ii) total cost thereof
- (b) total labour cost incurred, indicating the quantum thereof in terms of overtime costs, and
- (c) total cost incurred for the renting of equipment.

The Minister of Agro-Industry and Food Security (Mr M. Seeruttun): Madam Speaker, with your permission, I am going to answer to this PQ.

Madam Speaker, I wish to inform the House that in view of the information sought for the last three years, same is currently being compiled and will be placed in the Library of the National Assembly.

Mr Lesjongard: I thank the hon. Minister for replying to this question. I understand that the information is being compiled and will be placed in the Library of the National Assembly. But can I ask the hon. Minister whether Government is envisaging a change in policy with regard to the organisation of the *Festival International kreol*, so that it adheres or is in line with the concept of the rainbow nation and allow a broader spectrum of the population to participate in the organisation of the festival?

Mr Seeruttun: Madam Speaker, with regard to this year's festival, I have been told that the all night concert which usually used to be held in one particular place, this year is going to be held in, at least, four different places. It is going to be held on Saturday 25th of November between 1800 hrs and midnight, and it is going to be held at the Mont Choisy Public Beach, the

Flacq Centre, Bambous Stadium and the City Council of Port Louis Esplanade whereby opportunity will be given to more local talents to be allowed to express themselves in those different concerts.

As to whether it is going to be opened to allow for a more rainbow nation, I take note of that and I will get back to the hon. Member once the substantive Minister is back.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Rutnah!

Mr Rutnah: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Can the hon. Minister enlighten the House in relation to the amount of money that has been paid to different contractors who provided services on that day, in particular security services?

Mr Seeruttun: Madam Speaker, unfortunately, I do not have that particular information. If the hon. Member could come up with a substantive question on that particular issue, maybe I will be able to inform the House accordingly.

Madam Speaker: Last question, hon. Lesjongard!

Mr Lesjongard: Thank you, Madam Speaker, a last question. Will the hon. Minister see to it that this year's organisation, that is, for the provision of goods and services, will be done in full transparency?

Mr Seeruttun: Madam Speaker, this Government has been promoting the good governance ever since we have taken office. I can reassure the hon. Member that this time this exercise will be carried out in full transparency.

Madam Speaker: Next question, hon. Lesjongard!

LA CHAUMIERE - COMPOSTING PLANT - CONTRACT

(No. B/592) Mr G. Lesjongard (Second Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the composting plant at La Chaumière, he will state –

(a) the daily amount of -

(i) municipal waste being delivered, and

(ii) compost being produced thereat, and

- (b) if Government is supplying the amount of waste and the operator producing the amount of compost as per the terms and conditions of the agreement and, if not, why not, indicating if Government is envisaging a termination of the said contract.

The Minister of Social Security, National Solidarity, and Environment and Sustainable Development (Mr E. Sinatambou): With your permission, Madam Speaker, I will reply to this question.

Around 50% of our Municipal waste composition is of organic nature and the promotion of composting is used as a major resource recovery activity. In this respect, in October 2009, an agreement was signed by the Ministry of Local Government and Outer Islands, then responsible for Solid Waste Management, for the supply of 300 tonnes of unsorted municipal solid waste daily to a private company, Solid Waste Recycling Ltd. for composting purposes. This agreement was later reviewed in 2012 by the aforementioned Ministry to increase the waste supply from 300 tonnes to 600 tonnes daily.

I am informed that according to the Waste Supply Agreement, no tipping fee is payable to the company for the supply of waste while the Ministry has to take back the rejects from the composting plant to the nearest transfer station.

It is to be noted that the quantity of compost to be produced has not been mentioned in the agreement. The Solid Waste Recycling Ltd. operating the composting plant at La Chaumière was granted a preliminary environmental report in 2006 and since its coming into operation in 2011, the composting plant has been able to take an average of 160 to 180 tonnes of municipal solid waste daily and to produce around 6,000 tonnes of compost annually.

I am informed that in April 2017, a major fire broke out following the composting plant at La Chaumière and same is currently unoperational and no waste is being delivered thereat. A termination of the operator's contract without an immediate alternative is not favoured. The investment incurred in such a composting plant is quite heavy and there is a need to find ways and means to make use of the composting plant so that the investment made therein or be it by private promoter is not wasted.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Lesjongard!

Mr Lesjongard: Yes. Thank you, Madam Speaker. From the figures that the Minister has given to the House, it shows that the production of compost at the La Chaumière facility is well below expectations. Do I understand that this situation will still prevail in the coming months because the main problem, Madam Speaker, is that of the smell that is present there on the site and it affects the inhabitants of the region, especially in the Bamboo area when they do not produce enough compost and the waste is stocked there? Is the Minister aware of this situation?

Mr Sinatambou: Madam Speaker, I am informed by the Inspectorate of my Ministry that they are closely following the situation so as to take the right decision at the opportune time.

Madam Speaker: Next question, Hon. Lesjongard!

RIVIÈRE NOIRE ROAD - SOLAR STREET LIGHTING

(No. B/593) Mr G. Lesjongard (Second Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure and Land Transport whether, in regard to the Rivière Noire Road, he will state if consideration will be given for the Road Development Authority to be requested to install solar street lighting thereat, from its junction at Casela to the Tamarin Bridge, having regard to the frequent occurrence of road accidents thereat at night.

Mr Bodha: Madam Speaker, I would like to refer the hon. Member to the reply I made to Parliamentary Question No. B/466 on 24 May 2016 where I informed the House that the Street Lighting System concerns several bodies namely the Road Development Authority (RDA), the Local Authorities and the Central Electricity Board (CEB).

Local Authorities are responsible for the provision and maintenance of the street lighting for all roads around the island. The CEB has been given the responsibility for the maintenance of the street lighting system on Motorways along M1, M2 and M3 for this financial year.

The RDA for its part caters for the street lighting only for new projects.

New lighting possibilities on existing classified roads such as the Rivière Noire Road fall under the responsibility of the relevant Local Authority.

The District Council of Black River has been consulted and I am informed that the installation of solar lighting system along the subject stretch of the Rivière Noire Road would

cost around MUR18.4 m. Due to lack of funds the Council is not in a position to implement the project for the time being.

Madam Speaker, as regards accidents along the junction at Casela and Tamarin, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that the number of accidents that have occurred during the past five years is as follows –

Year	Number of accidents
2013	: 19 and 7 at night;
2014	: 26 and 3 at night;
2015	: 26 and 5 at night;
2016	: 15 and 5 at night, and
2017 (till date) :	17 out of which 5 occurred during night time.

In view of the above, I have asked the Traffic Management and Road Safety System to implement, amongst others, a number of measures to calm the traffic -

- (i) provision of raised reflectorized road studs, (cats eyes);
- (ii) provision of hard shoulders where required for safety of two wheelers;
- (iii) replacing old warning traffic signs by new diamond grade retro-reflectorised ones, and
- (iv) carrying out further studies.

Madam Speaker, in order to address the issue of lack of lighting along classified roads, I am proposing that the RDA carries out a survey to identify priority areas where we have major road safety concerns and I will give due consideration to this stretch of road.

Madam Speaker: Yes. The Table has been advised that the following PQs have been withdrawn: B/598, B/599, B/602 and B/603.

PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE – ADVISER – ALLEGED ISSUE OF MAURITIAN PASSPORT

(No. B/600) Mr S. Rutnah (Third Member for Piton & Rivière du Rempart) asked the Rt. hon. Minister Mentor, Minister of Defence, Minister for Rodrigues whether, he will, for the

benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to if any hon. Member has reported a case against a very Senior Adviser of the Prime Minister's Office for allegedly being involved in issuing, selling or facilitating the issue to nationals of the Malagasy Republic of a Mauritian passport in exchange of Rs6 m. per passport and, if so, indicate if an inquiry is being carried out thereinto and if so, where matters stand.

Sir Anerood Jugnauth: Madam Speaker, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that as at to date no such case has been reported to the Police.

Mr Rutnah: Madam Speaker, I am grateful for the answer. But may I draw the attention of the Rt. hon. Minister Mentor that on 04 July 2017 in a question No. B/462...

Madam Speaker: Ask rather a question...

Mr Rutnah: Yes.

Madam Speaker: ... than drawing the attention of the Rt. hon. Minister Mentor.

Mr Rutnah: So, I refer Minister Mentor to that question where hon. Bhagwan stated that certain people from Madagascar have Mauritian passport in exchange for Rs6 m. one passport. And then he went on to say that a very Senior Adviser at the Prime Minister's Office is involved, a very dangerous person. So, in the light of this kind of allegation made by a hon. Member of the Opposition, can I ask the Rt. hon. Minister Mentor that is it not something that the hon. Member is duty bound in the name of public interest and for the sake of national security to provide all requisite information in relation to these transactions if they really exist within the PMO?

Sir Anerood Jugnauth: The hon. Member might have taken some Lysol at that time.

(Interruptions)

I must say that everything that you have just stated depends on him, he must make the complaint for an enquiry to start.

Mr Rutnah: Madam Speaker, if I may, if the Rt. hon. Minister Mentor does not have the information on the question that I will be asking, perhaps he can provide them at a later stage. But can he, as a matter of record, state that since 2016 as at today's date how many Mauritian passports have been issued? How many Malagasy citizens have been naturalised and became Mauritian citizens in the last two years?

Sir Anerood Jugnauth: Come with a specific question!

Madam Speaker: Anyway, hon. Rutnah, may I draw your attention to the fact that this question should have been addressed to the hon. Prime Minister. The question that you have just asked should be addressed to the hon. Prime Minister and I would advise you next time to come with a substantive question to the hon. Prime Minister.

Mr Rutnah: I am grateful.

Madam Speaker: Next question, hon. Rutnah!

POLICE AND CRIMINAL EVIDENCE BILL - INTRODUCTION

(No. B/601) Mr S. Rutnah (Third Member for Piton & Rivière du Rempart) asked the Attorney-General, Minister of Justice, Human Rights and Institutional Reforms whether, in regard to the proposed introduction of a Police and Criminal Evidence Bill in the House, he will state where matters stand, indicating if provision will be made for the setting up of a disclosure regime to give full effect to the spirit and intendment of such a legislation.

Mr Gobin: Madam Speaker, Government has taken a policy decision with regard to the introduction of a Police and Criminal Evidence Act. Commitment of Government is clearly set out in the Government Programme 2015-2019.

As the House is aware, Government has retained the services of Sir Geoffrey Rivlin QC to assist Mauritius in the drafting of the Police and Criminal Evidence (PACE) Bill. The services of Sir Rivlin QC had been put at the disposal of Government by the Commonwealth Secretariat. Funding of the Commonwealth Secretariat was secured. At this stage, the funding is over, has been spent but Government is now funding the continuation of the work of Sir Geoffrey Rivlin QC.

So, Sir Rivlin had a first visit to Mauritius in July 2016 during which he held consultations with my Office, the Office of the DPP, the Commissioner of Police, and the Bar Council. Sir Rivlin further visited Mauritius from November to December 2016 during which he had meetings with officers of my Office again, officers of the DPP's Office, Judges of the Supreme Court, members of the Bar Council and members of the Bar Association.

In addition, Madam Speaker, Sir Rivlin was in Mauritius again in August this year and had working sessions with the DPP, officers of his Office, senior Police officers and the work

focused on the draft Bill which, in view of its contents, is more likely to be called the Police and Criminal Justice Bill. During his visits to Mauritius, Sir Rivlin also worked on the Codes of Practice which will support and enhance the Bill and the criminal justice system generally. Sir Rivlin also had consultations with the Solicitor General and Parliamentary Counsel.

Madam Speaker, Government is serious about its commitment to come up with this Bill and, as has been the case so far, all relevant stakeholders will be consulted before such an important legislation for our criminal justice system is introduced in the House.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Rutnah!

Mr Rutnah: Madam Speaker, I have known Sir Rivlin as a judge in England and he is known to be a very efficient person.

Can I ask the hon. Minister whether he will now put a timetable in relation to this matter so that we know for sure by when such a Bill will come to the House because it is well long overdue?

Mr Gobin: Madam Speaker, I cannot put a timeframe at this stage. There are further consultations to be held. I have said it and I wish to re-iterate that we need to proceed with caution. Such a Bill, of course, will revolutionise the system; will bring a new system, and we need to consult all stakeholders which is being done, but there are some further consultations to be made. I wish to re-assure the hon. Member that I will, first of all, consult him personally, and secondly, I will keep the House informed of progress.

Mr Rutnah: Madam Speaker, in relation to the issue regarding disclosure of evidence at pre-trial stage; there are lots of difficulties for defence counsels these days to get disclosure. Can I ask the hon. Minister whether, in this Bill, there will be incorporated a section or whether Sir Rivlin is, during his consultations, carrying out an exercise to ensure that pre-trial and post-trial or during trial disclosure be included in that Bill?

Mr Gobin: Madam Speaker, I will rather take the question as a suggestion coming from the hon. Member, and we will pay heed to the issue of pre-trial disclosure and post-trial if need be, but it is a bit too early for me at this stage to say what will be the specific contents of the Bill.

RING ROAD PROJECT - IMPLEMENTATION

(No. B/602) Mr B. Jahangeer (Third Member for Rivière des Anguilles & Souillac) asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure and Land Transport whether, in regard to the Ring

Road Project, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Road Development Authority, information as to where matters stand as to the implementation thereof.

(Withdrawn)

CREMATORIUM FURNACES – GAS EMISSION

(No. B/603) Mr B. Jahangeer (Third Member for Rivière des Anguilles & Souillac) asked the Minister of Social Security, National Solidarity, and Environment and Sustainable Development whether, in regard to the newly constructed Light Petroleum Gas Fired Human Crematorium Furnaces at Laventure, Bois Marchand, Montagne St Pierre (Bambous), Chebel, Circonstance (St Pierre), Rose Belle, Plaine Magnien, Trois Mamelles, Beau Champ and Triolet, he will state the average quantity of gas emission at each incinerator during any cremation session.

(Withdrawn)

DIESEL/PETROL CARS AND VANS - ENFORCEMENT POLICIES

(No. B/604) Dr. R. Sorefan (Fourth Member for La Caverne & Phoenix) asked the Minister of Social Security, National Solidarity, and Environment and Sustainable Development whether, in regard to the proposed banning by European countries of the production and sale of diesel/petrol cars and vans with effect from 2040, he will state if Government proposes to follow suit and, if so, indicate the medium and long term enforcement policies that are being envisaged in that direction.

Mr Sinatambou: Madam Speaker, I am informed that, as at August 2017, the number of electric vehicles registered at the National Transport Authority stood at 38 which is indeed quite low compared to the overall fleet of vehicles which amounts to 523,667.

It is a fact that many European countries such as France and Germany amongst others have proposed the banning of the production, importation and sale of vehicles using diesel or petrol with effect from cut-off dates varying from one country to another. These proposals have been made mainly from an environmental perspective with a view to reducing greenhouse gas emissions from vehicles. As such, electric vehicles are the preferred option. It is to be noted that the proposal to ban petrol and diesel driven vehicles from being imported and sold would have no impact on those vehicles currently in use. Importation of diesel and petrol would be

maintained for a number of years after the banning date to enable in-use vehicles to continue to operate normally as is the case in other countries. A policy decision to ban the sale of petrol and diesel driven vehicles cannot however be viewed in isolation because there are a number of factors to be considered concurrently.

Firstly, we all know that electric cars do not have exhaust pipes and as such do not emit pollutants. However, renewable energy sources should be used to power this technology to avoid shifting pollution from car exhaust to power stations. Currently, the electricity grid in Mauritius is mainly fossil fuel based. Envisaging a ban in diesel and petrol cars and vans would need to follow a phased decarbonisation of the electricity grid.

Secondly, following a socio-economic study carried out by my Ministry in March 2017 on energy efficient vehicles, it was found that Mauritian citizens actually have an apprehension regarding the use of electric vehicles.

Thirdly, affordability for the general public to purchase electric vehicles would need to be considered. At this point in time, the price of an electric vehicle is relatively very high. Moreover, replacement batteries are also expensive.

Fourthly, the socio-economic impacts of banning petrol and diesel cars and vans will need to be evaluated. For instance, businesses such as filling stations, oil companies, mechanics will need to re-engineer their whole ways of operating.

Fifth, the whole charging and recharging infrastructure would need to be looked into since the charging time for an electric car is much higher compared to re-fuelling at filling stations which takes only a few minutes.

Sixth, there are also information gaps which might need to be covered before engaging into such a policy. For example, the total social and environmental costs of owning and running an electric car as compared to a conventional one over its life cycle might need to be looked into.

Lastly, the disposal of electronic waste generated such as end-of-life batteries from a whole fleet of electric vehicles would need to be looked at.

In the light of the above, Madam Speaker, Government has not taken any decision as at to date to ban the importation and sale of diesel and petrol vehicles. But should a ban on such

vehicles be envisaged, it is a critical pre-condition that a clean low carbon grid be available to charge electric vehicles.

Dr. Sorefan: Thank you, Madam Speaker. The hon. Minister has given a long list of problems that are associated for banning by 2040. The purpose of this question is to initiate and start thinking in 2040, when the problem comes, whether the hon. Minister and the Government are initiating studies to go on so as not to wait for 2035 to decide what to do. Will the hon. Minister, through his Ministry, look into the possibilities of the issue by 2040?

Mr Sinatambou: I must re-assure the hon. Member, Madam Speaker, that indeed the Minister of Public Infrastructure and Land Transport and myself have already started thinking about the process, but indeed all those qualifications I mentioned in my reply earlier do, however, constitute some difficulties to be addressed.

HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL – TRAINING GRANTS

(No. B/605) Dr. R. Sorefan (Fourth Member for La Caverne and Phoenix) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources, Tertiary Education and Scientific Research whether, in regard to the training programme by firms on which a levy is imposed, she will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Human Resource Development Council, information as the –

- (a) total amount received and subsidies paid for financial years 2015/16 and 2016/2017 respectively;
- (b) distribution of training grants by type of training;
- (c) amount of subsidy granted to large and small firms respectively;
- (d) targeted training subsidies, and
- (e) amount of surplus fund up to June 2017 and the alternate uses thereof.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Madam Speaker, with regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed by the Human Resource Development Council that the total amount of levy collected from firms for financial year 2015/2016 is Rs605.8 m. and for financial year 2016/2017, the amount stands at Rs612.1 m.

As for the total grant which has been disbursed, it is Rs202.9 m. for the year 2015/2016 and Rs256.3 m. for the year 2016/2017.

As for part (b) of the question, there are two broad categories of training grants by types of training as follows –

In the first category, there are three incentive schemes, namely -

- (i) the in house training scheme;
- (ii) the overseas training scheme, and
- (iii) the institutional training scheme.

Grants disbursed under these three schemes amount to Rs191 m. and Rs250.3 m. for the financial years 2015/2016 and 2016/2017 respectively.

In the second category, there are also three other incentives schemes namely –

- (i) the foreign expertise scheme;
- (ii) the multimedia facilities scheme, and
- (iii) the training needs analysis scheme.

The amounts disbursed for these three other schemes are Rs11.9 m. and Rs6 m. for the financial years 2015/2016 and 2016/2017 respectively.

I wish to inform the House that the total grants disbursed for the financial year 2016/2017 amounts to Rs256.3 m. and covers sectors namely agriculture and fishing, construction, financial services, information technology, manufacturing, tourism and others.

During the same financial year, some 2,587 firms have benefited from training grants and 55,233 persons were trained.

I am tabling the information on distribution of the training grants at Annex 1.

As for part (c) of the question, the amount of grants to large firms is Rs146 m. and Rs192.8 m. for financial years 2015-2016 and 2016-2017 respectively whereas for small and medium enterprises such grants stand at Rs45 m. for 2015-2016 and Rs57.5 m. for 2016-2017. It is to be noted that in year 2015-2016, some 586 large firms and 1,298 small and medium firms have benefited from the training grants.

With regard to part (d) of the question, on the targeted training schemes these fall into three programmes, namely the National Skills Development Programme, the Graduate Training for Employment Scheme and the projects emanating from sectoral committees.

Under the National Skills Development Programme an amount of Rs40.6 m. has been disbursed to date for 85 training courses involving 2,500 trainees who have been enrolled for training in sectors namely: ICT, Tourism, Construction, Financial Services, Nursing and Paramedicals.

As regards GTES, 263 graduates have benefited and the amount involved is Rs15.35 m.

The third category for the targeted training grant relates to projects emanating from sectoral committees. Under this component 524 individuals have been trained from 114 enterprises.

I am tabling the information and grants to large and small firms and targeted training schemes at Annex II.

Dr Sorefan: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Thank you, hon. Minister, for all the information.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: I have not finished. I am sorry I have not answered part (e).

Dr Sorefan: Sorry!

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: With regard to part (e) of the question, the balance of the National Training Fund stands at Rs1.2 billion and has been invested in the Treasury Bills at the State Bank of Mauritius Ltd. The amount collected as levy is also being used to finance the apprenticeship scheme of the MITD, Polytechnics Mauritius Ltd, HRDC Operational Budget, including Capital Expenditure, and HRD projects, the one that I have mentioned, NSDP, GTES and DTP. Thank you.

Dr Sorefan: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I do not have a supplementary question, but I would like to thank the hon. Minister for giving us all that information. I will move to the second question.

Madam Speaker: Usually, you have to use Question Time to ask questions. Next question, hon. Dr. Sorefan!

Dr Sorefan: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I think this is the last question of the day and probably my last question.

(Interruptions)

I will go into that question like you stated, Madam Speaker, B/606.

CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT BOARD ACT - AMENDMENTS

(No. B/606) Dr. R. Sorefan (Fourth Member for La Caverne & Phoenix) asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure and Land Transport whether, in regard to the consultant firms, he will state if consideration will be given for amendments to be introduced to the Construction Industry Development Board Act with the objective of making provision for a consultant firm which is registered for one specialisation to be allowed to offer its services as consultant in any one or two of the other specialisations without being required to pay any additional registration fee.

Mr Bodha: May I thank the hon. Member for giving me the honour of answering his last question, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, as the House is aware, any Consultant or Contractor offering his services in the construction industry has to be registered with the Construction Industry Development Board in accordance with section 19 of the CIDB Act 2008, as amended and the CIDB (Registration of Consultants and Contractors) Regulations, Madam Speaker.

Initially, the Act provided for six fields of specialisation for registration of Consultants, listed in the Second Schedule to the Act as follows -

- Architecture
- Civil Engineering
- Mechanical Engineering
- Electrical Engineering
- Project Management in Construction, and
- Quantity Surveying.

A Consultant applying for registration has to pay a fee of Rs10,500 per field of specialisation, including a non-refundable processing fee of Rs500.

Madam Speaker, following the last amendments made to the CIDB Act in December 2016, the fields of specialisation of Mechanical Engineer and Electrical Engineering were

merged into Mechanical, Electrical and Plumbing Services. Thus, the number of fields of specialisation has been brought down to only five.

However, it has been noted that there are other fields of specialisation which are not covered by the abovementioned five fields of specialisation.

Consequently, it is being proposed to amend the said Schedule to include other fields of specialisation such as Building Services Engineering, Contract Management, Interior Design, Offshore Engineering, Process Engineering, and Urban Planning.

In the circumstances, however, given the large number of fields of specialisation, it is not considered necessary to amend the Act to allow consultancy firms registered for one specialisation to offer its services as Consultant in other fields without the payment of any additional registration fee.

However, considering the possibility, if you have already registered for a core sector, the next time you register, you pay a lesser fee.

Madam Speaker: The Table has been advised that the following PQs have been withdrawn: B/611, B/612, B/613, B/614, B/615, B/616, B/617, B/624, B/625, B/626, B/627.

MOTION

SUSPENSION OF S.O. 10(2)

The Deputy 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 Rt. hon. Minister Mentor, Minister of Defence, Minister for Rodrigues (Sir Anerood Jugnauth) rose and seconded.

Question put and agreed to.

(3.58 p.m.)

Madam Speaker: Hon. Members, I have to inform the House that hon. Ganoo had today given me notice of his intention to ask leave to move a motion for the adjournment of the Assembly on a definite matter of urgent public importance regarding the issue of the hunger strike taking place presently with regard to the claim of women cleaners employed in the public primary and secondary schools.

Since I had already received, since this morning, a statement which the hon. Minister of Labour, Industrial Relations, Employment and Training will make in a few minutes, I have considered the request and I have come to the conclusion that the issue is not a definite matter of urgent public importance.

Moreover, the hon. Member would have had the opportunity, if he so wished, to raise the matter at adjournment at the conclusion of parliamentary business later today.

(4.00 p.m.)

STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS

UTILITY REGULATORY AUTHORITY – DIRECTOR - APPOINTMENT

The Deputy Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, with your permission, I wish to inform the House that following an international advertisement, the Utility Regulatory Authority Board has appointed Mr Alfred Byigero, a Rwandan citizen, as Director of the Utility Regulatory Authority. Mr Byigero is in post since 09 October 2017.

He has served at the Rwanda Utilities Regulatory Authority since 2003, including five years as Deputy Director-General. He is also a member of several regional regulatory associations.

I shall be circulating a copy of his curriculum vitae in the course of the day.

CEB - SAINT LOUIS POWER STATION REDEVELOPMENT PROJECT

I have a second statement, Madam. It is on the Saint Louis Power Station Redevelopment Project.

When I took office, one of the first files on my table was that of the Saint Louis Power Station Redevelopment Project.

The project was for the installation of 4 x 15 MW new medium speed diesel generating sets. It was to be financed by the African Development Bank in an amount of Rs3.5 billion.

On 24 July 2014, the Central Electricity Board had invited five prequalified bidders to submit their bids for the design, supply, installation and commissioning of these four units. Burmeister and Wain Scandinavian (BWSC) was the only bidder, but the Central Procurement

Board found that that bid was non-responsive. In November 2014, the CEB cancelled the bid exercise with the endorsement of the African Development Bank.

On 09 December 2014, BWSC applied to the Independent Review Panel for a review of that decision.

In its ruling dated 03 July 2015, the Independent Review Panel set aside the application for review.

BWSC applied for a judicial review of that ruling before the Supreme Court.

After taking cognizance of the decision of the Independent Review Panel, I requested the CEB to initiate a second bidding exercise. This was done in July 2015, and the Central Procurement Board approved the award of the contract to Burmeister and Wain Scandinavian Company (BWSC) for Rs823,922,094 plus Euros 85,185,000. Three aggrieved bidders applied to the Independent Review Panel for a review of that decision. Subsequently, one of the bidders withdrew its case, while the two other cases were set aside.

The contract was signed on 02 March 2016 and works started on 29 March 2016 with a project duration of 18 months.

I am pleased to inform the House that all four generating units are operational as scheduled since September, without any cost overrun.

Following the start of works, five cases were entered in the Supreme Court and before the Environment and Land Use Tribunal. One has been struck out and one set aside at the Supreme Court, while one has been set aside at the Environment and Land Use Tribunal. Two of the cases stand fixed for February 2018 before the same Tribunal.

The CEB has implemented an Environment and Social Management Plan, which is a mandatory requirement imposed by the African Development Bank.

The power plant is equipped with modern features optimised for low emissions, waste heat recuperation exhaust gas boilers, waste incineration and two 45-metre high exhaust stacks. The carbon dioxide emission is about 20% lower than the old Pielstick engines. The noise level has been reduced from 70 decibels to 55 decibels, which is within the environmental standards. The new installation comprises –

- (i) a Continuous Emission Monitoring System;
- (ii) sludge treatment technology consisting of a sludge holding tank, oily water separators to ensure that the level of oil in the effluent is below 10 PPM (Parts Per Million);
- (iii) powerhouse building walls of acoustic materials for noise abatement, and

A 10m high noise wall has been built on the eastern boundary of the site for further noise abatement.

The old Pielstick engines were decommissioned in August 2017.

The new St Louis Power Station has a total capacity of 67.4 MW, which will help to satisfy peak electricity requirement for coming years.

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

METRO EXPRESS PROJECT – DOCUMENTS - TABLED

The Minister of Public Infrastructure and Land Transport (Mr N. Bodha): Madam Speaker, with your permission, I am laying the following documents on the Table of the National Assembly –

- The financial appraisal update of the Mauritius Metro Express Project, which dates back to September 2017, which has been done by the Singapore Cooperation Enterprise.
- I am also laying on the Table of the National Assembly the executive summary of the feasibility study by the Singapore Cooperation Enterprise in 2013.
- I am also laying on the Table of the National Assembly the report of PricewaterhouseCoopers on consultancy services to re-engineer the public transport industry in Mauritius, which dates back to May 2017, and a comprehensive brief on the route re-engineering and other mitigating proposals on the impact of Metro Express Project on the bus companies in Mauritius and the workers.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MADAGASCAR - PLAGUE OUTBREAK

The Minister of Health and Quality of Life (Dr A. Husnoo): Madam Speaker, I would like to inform the House about the situation regarding the plague epidemic in Madagascar and

the preparedness programme coordinated by my Ministry to prevent its introduction and spread in Mauritius.

Plague has always been endemic in Madagascar, especially in the central highlands during the period from August to April every year. Plague can be classified into three types, namely bubonic, septicaemic and pneumonic.

Plague infection is caused by a bacteria which circulates in the blood of infected wild rodents and transmitted to man by the bites of infected fleas breeding on the rats. This form of plague is known as the bubonic type, which, when left untreated, leads to septicaemic and pneumonic types.

The pneumonic type is transmitted from man to man by cough through droplets and is considered most dangerous for the following reasons -

- It spreads through droplets and it is very difficult to contain.
- If treatment is not initiated in the first 24 hours, it is usually fatal.
- The incubation period is very short, that is, from a few hours to three days.

However, this year, we have noted that the outbreak of plague has been predominantly of the pneumonic type in densely populated areas contrary to previous outbreaks which have been of bubonic form.

On 13 September 2017, the Ministry of Public Health of Madagascar informed the World Health Organisation of an outbreak of pneumonic plague following the death of a 40-year old woman in a hospital in Antananarivo on 11 September 2017 due to respiratory disease.

The confirmation of plague from the case-patient at the “Institut Pasteur Madagascar” triggered a field investigation, which established that the current outbreak started on 23 August 2017.

In addition, on 04 October 2017, the World Health Organisation reported that the Malagasy health authorities confirmed the death of a basketball coach from Seychelles who was diagnosed with pneumonic plague.

As at 19 October 2017, that is, last week, the World Health Organisation reported 1,297 cases of plague with 102 deaths, out of which 65.2% were of pneumonic type. The mortality rate

is currently around 8%. Around two third (2/3) of the cases of pneumonic plague have been detected in the Malagasy Capital of Antananarivo.

As at now, Mauritius forms part of the nine countries identified as high risk countries for the spread of plague by the World Health Organisation.

In response to this threat, my Ministry has taken the following measures to prevent the introduction and spread of plague in Mauritius –

- (a) a communiqué was issued in the mainstream media advising people to take the necessary precautions when travelling to Madagascar and to travel only in case of necessity, and
- (b) surveillance at the Port and the Airport have been reinforced.

At the Port -

- all ships arriving from Madagascar with valid Ship Sanitation Control Certificates are inspected before permission is given for the ship to dock at the harbour;
- rat guards are placed on ships arriving and berthed at the quay;
- in case of evidence of rats on the ship, de-ratting of the ships are carried out;
- food cargo are being fumigated before release;
- ships without valid Ship Sanitation Control Certificates have to remain outside the harbour and allowed to enter the Port only after a de-ratting exercise has been carried out;
- rodent control activities have been intensified;
- inspections of all premises in the Port area are being carried out by Public Health Inspectors, and
- surveillance for crew members is being carried out as per protocol.

At the Airport –

- all planes arriving from Madagascar are inspected and disinfected;
- rodent control activities have been intensified;
- any passenger arriving from Madagascar and found to be suffering from cough and fever is referred to the Regional Public Health Superintendent;

- it is being ensured that all incoming passengers, including Mauritians, fill in the Health Declaration and Disembarkation Forms and are screened at the Health Counters. Their particulars are forwarded to the appropriate Regional Health Office for surveillance for 10 days, and
- all cases of illness are referred to the Regional Public Health Superintendent and any suspected case is admitted at New Souillac Hospital for investigation and treatment.

I wish to highlight that we have also taken appropriate measures at the hospital level as regard to preparedness for plague, namely -

- isolation facilities have been provided for 12 beds at Souillac Hospital;
- two wards each of 15 beds at Mahebourg Hospital have been converted into isolation wards;
- a stock of Personal Protective Equipment which includes gloves, gowns, goggles and masks, is available for use by the medical staff;
- provision of adequate stock of medication has been made;
- in view of the specific nature of plague and its high fatality rate, protocols and guidelines have been prepared, *inter alia*, for infection prevention and control, laboratory testing, clinical management of cases, handling of dead bodies and burial, management of clinical wastes and linen and laundry services, and
- staff and relevant stakeholders are being trained to ensure strict compliance to protocols and guidelines. Continuous Medical Education (CME) is being conducted in all hospitals on this subject.

On 11 October 2017, I undertook a visit at the Sir Seewoosagur International Airport to take stock of the preventive measures being implemented thereat. Following which, a Special Desk has been set up for passengers arriving from Madagascar for segregation and surveillance purposes.

I also chaired an intersectoral meeting on the 12 October 2017 with all the stakeholders where they were apprised of the situation of plague in Madagascar and the need for concerted actions and collaboration to be taken for the prevention and spread of plague in Mauritius.

In addition, the World Health Organisation, the Indian Ocean Commission (IOC) and the “*Institut Pasteur de Madagascar*” have offered their collaboration to the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life in an effort to prevent the spread of plague in Mauritius.

I wish to make an appeal to all stakeholders to collaborate closely with my Ministry in reinforcing the measures that we have taken to protect and safeguard the population from the looming threat of plague.

I would like to reiterate my appeal to the population at large to continue maintaining proper hygiene and to ensure environmental cleanliness.

Madam Speaker, thank you very much for your attention.

SCHOOL CLEANERS & TRADE UNIONISTS – HUNGER STRIKE

The Minister of Labour, Industrial Relations, Employment and Training (Mr S. Callichurn): Madam Speaker, I wish to make a statement on the hunger strike by school cleaners and two trade unionists which started on 16 October 2017.

I am informed that there were two categories of cleaners employed in public schools to perform cleaning duties, namely those employed by the Parent Teachers Association (PTA) for cleaning of toilets and those by private contractors for the cleaning of school yards. 299 cleaners were employed by the PTA and 333 by private contractors on a part-time basis or on split hours. The Employment Rights Act 2008 provides for part-time work and defines a part-time worker as “*a worker whose normal hours of work are less than those of a comparable full-time worker*”. There is, however, no provision for work on split hours in our legislation. On 12 May 2017, the State Law Office has advised my Ministry that the cleaners working on split hours fall within the definition of part-time workers.

The conditions of employment of workers employed in a cleaning enterprise are governed by the Cleaning Enterprises (Remuneration) Regulations 2013, which applies invariably to any full-time or part-time worker. The part-time workers are, therefore, entitled to the same rights and benefits as any full-time worker. However, their remuneration is paid in relation to the number of effective hours worked at the prescribed hourly rate plus 5 %.

Following the expiry of the contract of Mauriclean on 14 July 2012, it was decided at the level of the Ministry of Education that as from 16 July 2012, the services of cleaners would be

enlisted on an hourly rate basis and remuneration be paid by the Parents Teachers Association and refunded by the parent Ministry, that is, the Ministry of Education. These cleaners work on split hours and were paid remuneration ranging from Rs1,800 to Rs3,400, depending on the number of hours performed.

Following representations made by the *Confédération des Travailleurs du Secteur Privé (CTSP)*, it was decided at the level of the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development that the cleaners employed by the PTA be paid a monthly salary of Rs8,500 with effect from 01 January 2016 and they would be required to work full-time.

Out of the 299 cleaners employed by the PTA, Government decided on 06 October 2017 to -

- (i) recruit on establishment of the Ministry of Education and Human Resources, Tertiary Education and Scientific Research the cleaners who were below the age of 48 as at 2012 as from 01 January 2016;
- (ii) offer the cleaners between the age bracket of 53 and 65 a yearly contract by the Ministry of Education and Human Resources, Tertiary Education and Scientific Research, and
- (iii) offer a gratuity equivalent to 15 days per year of service to be paid by the Ministry of Education and Human Resources, Tertiary Education and Scientific Research, given that the public service cannot employ those persons as they were above the retirement age.

As from October 2016, the Ministry of Education and Human Resources, Tertiary Education and Scientific Research decided to award contracts for the cleaning of school yards on a month-to-month basis to private contractors. The contractors employed the cleaners on a part-time basis.

The officers of my Ministry inspected 177 workplaces and interviewed 220 out of the 333 workers employed by the private contractors in 2017.

The inspections revealed that 52 cleaners work on straight hours, that is, part time and 168 on split hours. Out of the 168 workers, 129 do not remain at their workplace when they are not

provided with work. The remaining 39 workers stayed on site. 37 did so on their own will and 2 at the request of their employers.

The inspections also revealed that the working time of part time cleaners range from 2 to 4 hours a day and that they were paid not less than the hourly rate prescribed in the Cleaning Enterprises Remuneration Order. It was, however, observed that some employers did not comply with some provisions of the Remuneration Order in respect of issue of payslip and protective equipment.

In that regard, my Ministry has instituted 10 criminal proceedings against two companies, namely: the Professional Cleaners Group Ltd and New Cleaning Services. These companies have been convicted and sentenced by the Court. Criminal actions for failing to comply with a provision of the Cleaning Enterprises (Remuneration Order) Regulations 2013 have also been entered against three companies, namely: Mauriclean Ltd, Clean It Up Cleaning Services Ltd and New Cleaning Service Ltd. I am informed that these cases have been scheduled to be heard by the Industrial Court in November 2017.

The CTSP has made representations to the effect that cleaners in service with private contractors be employed on a permanent basis by the Ministry of Education or any other parastatal organisation.

Madam Speaker, the demand of the union cannot be entertained as Government should not be seen as the employer of last resort following any industrial dispute in the private sector. It is most unfortunate that private enterprises lay off workers for a variety of reasons, including expiry of contracts.

Our Labour legislation amply provides for avenues to resolve such issues.

We have much respect for these workers and wish to do everything within the legal framework to assist them.

Thank you.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

NHDC – DRAWING UP OF DEEDS - NOTARIES

The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Housing and Lands (Mr S. Soodhun): Madam Speaker, with your permission, I would like to make a personal explanation with regard to the selection of notaries for the drawing up of deeds of sales of NHDC housing units since January 2015 to 11 July 2017, as referred to in PQ B/533.

Madam Speaker, by letter dated 02 July 2014, the NHDC Ltd requested the Chamber of Notaries to ventilate to its members information that the NHDC Ltd was launching an Expression of Interest from notaries for the drawing of deeds of sales for some 1,200 NHDC housing units.

The role of the Chamber of Notaries stopped there.

As at the closing date for the submissions of the Expression of Interest, on 11 July 2014, 22 Notaries have informed the NHDC Ltd of their interests. However, after the closing date, 4 additional Notaries informed the NHDC Ltd that they had not seen the Expression of Interest which had been issued to the Chamber of Notaries and requested that they also be considered for the exercise. Their requests were accepted.

Madam Speaker, the NHDC Ltd then created a database of all those Notaries who had expressed their interest to work for the NHDC Ltd. Thereafter this database is being updated as and when Notaries express their wish to work for the NHDC Ltd and they are included in the list. The services of these Notaries are retained depending on such factors as their availability, in order to give urgent attention due to constant pressure arising from the demand for NHDC housing units from potential buyers.

I am informed by the NHDC Ltd that, on a rotational basis, the Notaries on the database are being allocated sites upon completion of the construction of housing units.

The list of Notaries on the database of the NHDC Ltd will be placed in the Library of the National Assembly.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

(4.27 p.m.)

PUBLIC BILL

First Reading

On motion made and seconded the National Employment Bill (No. XII of 2017) was read a first time.

*Second Reading***THE NATIONAL EMPLOYMENT BILL****(No. XII of 2017)**

Order for Second Reading read.

The Minister of Labour, Industrial Relations, Employment and Training (Mr S. Callichurn): Madam Speaker, I move that the National Employment Bill (No. XII of 2017) be read a second time.

Madam Speaker, the introduction of the National Employment Bill marks the beginning of a new era in our endeavour to provide for comprehensive and integrated public employment services.

It will be recalled that at the time the country acceded to independence, the only structure available for the registration of jobseekers was what is commonly known as the Employment Service.

(Interruptions)

Do not worry, it is only 27 pages.

The Employment Service finds its origin in the Employment and Training Ordinance 1963. That was the legacy from our former colonial masters. This set up has remained unchanged unfortunately and is clearly an artefact other than anything else.

We recognised the need for change in the early days of our mandate and this was quickly followed by our vision for a modern legislative framework to address the needs of our labour market. Unsurprisingly, this has been included in our Government Programme 2015-2019.

Madam Speaker, in the Government Programme, we pledged for the creation of a National Employment Agency with wide ranging responsibilities and powers for employment promotion in the country. Today, with the introduction of the National Employment Bill, we are honouring this pledge.

Today, the statistics regarding unemployment are derived from the data collected by the Employment Service. To what extent these statistics are accurate is to all intents and purposes arguable and any argument on this matter can only be of academic interest. Indeed, argument on this issue would not serve any useful purpose.

Madam Speaker, our mission is to raise skill levels to help drive enterprise, create more and better jobs and promote economic growth. Our strategic objectives are to -

- Provide outstanding labour market intelligence which helps businesses and people to make the best choices for themselves;
- Work with employers to create sustainable employment which leverage on enhanced skills, and
- Maximise the impact of employment, skills policies and employer behaviour to support jobs and secure an internationally competitive skills base.

Madam Speaker, there is an inextricable link between skills and better jobs.

The introduction of this Bill is in response to the challenges and opportunities facing employers, individuals and stakeholders to enable those at risk of the labour market exclusion and those with low skills working in low paid jobs to achieve progression in the labour market. In this perspective, a long-term view is required to decide how best to support those who are vulnerable, to address employability barriers in the short-term; and prepare the individual to retain, and progress in employment.

Madam Speaker, the general philosophy which has guided us in drafting this Bill is the concept of career as a framework for progression: a combination of career guidance, a career or personal development plan and career management skills have been identified as tools to raise aspiration and enable individuals to take actions once they are in work to support their own progression.

The central elements of this Bill may be summarized in a few words: labour market information, career guidance, employment prospects, technology support and manpower planning and training.

Madam Speaker, today it is not possible to make an accurate prediction of the future of the labour market especially with the fast development of technologies. This is not in any way

sinister or alarming as with the uncertainties profiling on the horizon, there are challenges as well as opportunities.

Moreover, technology is already transforming our homes and lives in ways which we could not have dreamed of a decade ago. The same technologies are reshaping the workplace and how we work or interact. No doubt there are wide ranging implications for business models and the way work is generally organized.

The impact of technologies is much greater than we could have possibly imagined. The House may wish to note that this has been underlined by the International Labour Organisation which has forecasted that, in the near future, some jobs will be phased out and the demand for new skills will emerge. In this context, the ILO has proposed the concept of future of work initiative.

While we have the tendency to imagine the added comfort technologies have brought in our lives, we did not think that these technologies would one day be a threat to our jobs. In this context, individuals as well as employers will have to make a major decision about investment in skills as part of their career and business development.

Madam Speaker, at the national level, our ability to rebalance the economy and ensure sustainable development and prosperity have become pertinent issues which are dependent on the creation of a flexible demand led skills engine that would be able to respond rapidly to the transformational agenda.

We are alive to the fact that the era of a single education followed by a single career is nearly over. Over the next decade, our workforce is likely to become multi-generational or more international with the highly skilled pushing for a better job life balance while others could experience increasing insecurity of employment and income. It is more than ever clear that with the proliferation of technology and our increased global interconnectedness, local enterprises and businesses would become more vulnerable.

People will therefore look for jobs that give them the diversity of experience and skills that will enhance their personal mobility and opportunities.

Madam Speaker, we recognize that parents and families are the single and most important influence on young people's career decisions. They influence aspirations and motivation; provide

information and advice on educational and occupational opportunities; influence values and priorities about post-school choices, and provide practical, moral and financial support that allows their children to implement their decisions.

Parents and families may, however, be ill-informed; have only partial understanding and be out-dated, particularly with respect to the labour market information. Their influence can be deliberate, as when trying to motivate or encourage their children to get job information and contacts for them, it can be implicit through young people absorbing the values and the perception of their families. Those seeking to ensure young people are informed about opportunities; therefore need to work along with those who mediate such information to young people, particularly parents and families.

Madam Speaker, career decision, which is an intrinsic element of this Bill, is a rational process of gathering information and weighing up the costs and benefits of the different choices. Others might have been influenced by factors such as class, gender and the nature of opportunities available at a particular time. It is also true that some make choices against the advice of professionals and without adequate information gathering.

Madam Speaker, at the very outset, I must admit that the introduction of this Bill in the National Assembly today is long overdue. This Bill will be the stepping stone for the formulation of a National Employment Policy and also for a review of our immigration policies to make both of them responsive to the needs of our society in the medium to long term.

In the earlier part of my address, I have spoken about the transformation of our society through technological developments and how career decisions are taken. This has been the culture for a number of years. Very few people consult the statistics on labour market information and are therefore not aware of the demand of the market.

We have to recognize that, without proper labour market information, a successful job search or a career decision is compromised. This has very serious consequences both for the individual and for the community. Albeit that no one can predict the future with absolute certainty, it is worth considering the trends and the forecasts on the occupations in demand.

With these words, Madam Speaker, I shall now explain the salient features of this Bill.

Section 4, Madam Speaker, the National Employment Department is the institution that is being created to provide inter alia, comprehensive and integrated public information services. It will replace the Employment Service. The Department will operate under the aegis of my Ministry which has within its remit the subject of employment.

Government has deemed it necessary to set up an organization with a light and flexible structure which would be able to deliver in the most efficient and effective manner.

Most importantly, the need to ensure accountability has been the determining factor in selecting the status of the new organization. The House may rest assured that this new Department will operate in line with the best governance practices.

Section 5 of the Bill deals with the objects of the Department. First and foremost, the Department will be the vector for the promotion of employment in both the Public and Private sectors.

The second object is to facilitate the employment of job seekers and ensure that job seekers find employment consonant with their aspirations.

The third objective is to provide assistance and guidance with regard to employment prospects.

Another important object is to provide market information on the demand and supply of skills to local employers, job seekers and training institutions. As I have explained earlier, labour market information is crucial for employers in their manpower planning, production targets as well as succession planning.

For job seekers this is of prime importance to the extent that they would have access to real time and comprehensive information on employment opportunities which would enable them to understand and assess the demand of the market to make an informed decision on their career path.

No doubt for training institutions labour market information has an intrinsic commercial value through which they can have a more meaningful role in the preparation of job seekers for employment. Education and training providers need to be aware of the potential requirements of the labour market to make sure that they offer training to individuals to be competitive in the future.

The promotion of job placement and training of job seekers will provide a new perspective to potential job seekers. The Department will strive to provide job placements and training to enable job seekers to have first-hand experience and thus enhance their employability.

The promotion of labour migration is another aspect on which the Department will have to focus so as to provide our fellow citizens the opportunities for international exposure and provide them a platform for the transfer of technology and knowhow.

Last but not the least we have not lost sight of the social aspect of employment and the need to reduce the impact on family life. Therefore, on the strength of technological developments, the Department will be called upon to encourage and promote home-based work so as to enable those having family commitments to maintain a fair balance between work and family life. In addition, this provision will ensure that those having a mobility challenge have a fair access to employment.

In terms of the functions and powers, the Department will be called upon to play a proactive role in the management of the labour market. At present the Employment Service's main mandate is to maintain a register of unemployed persons and to refer such persons to potential employers as and when vacancies are notified. This restrictive mandate is no longer responsive to the needs of a country which has the ambition of joining the league of high income countries.

The Department which will replace the Employment Service will have a wider remit and powers. It will be empowered to collect and analyse data on any employment related matter in order to respond to the dynamic needs of the labour market.

Madam Speaker, for too long the argument has been around skills mismatch, the mismatch between demand and supply and mainly the failure to make forecast on the needs of employers and job seekers. The new Department will be the focal point to address these shortcomings.

The other major weakness is the absence of a platform where employers and job seekers and other stakeholders could have access to real time information on all aspects of employment. This is being addressed with the setting up and operation of an electronic platform which will be called the National Employment Dashboard and which will be managed by the Department.

This instrument will be the platform where employers will have to advertise all their vacancies and job seekers may obtain information and guidance accordingly. It will also enable linkages between the public service and the private sector including recruitment agencies.

Moreover, for the first time we shall have a National Human Resource Inventory with categorisation by age, sex, qualification, locality, occupation, skills and experience. The creation of such a database will no doubt provide a rapid response to the demand of employers.

Madam Speaker, through this Bill we are proposing a new social contract with the population; a contract under which we undertake to support our fellow citizens in their endeavour to find jobs which respond to their individual aspirations and in this perspective the Department will have the mandate to establish and implement programmes and projects relating to employment and training.

We also undertake to provide vocational guidance and counselling which are the key vectors for secure and sustainable employment. In the earlier part of my intervention I have lengthily explained the importance of counselling and career guidance. I must emphasise that career guidance and counselling are the prerequisites for a successful career path.

Part II of the Bill deals with the administration of the Department. Provision is being made for the department to be under the responsibility of a Director who will be assisted by other public officers.

The director will be responsible for the administration of the Act, the day-to-day operations of the department as well as the implementation of Government policies.

Provision has also been made for officers of the Department to have power of entry as well as the power to issue summons for the purpose of inspection and information gathering and investigation. This provision is intended to support the smooth operation of the National Employment Dashboard and ensure the integrity of information provided by the Dashboard.

Section 10 of the Bill makes it mandatory for a job seeker or a person already in employment to be registered through the Dashboard in order to benefit from the services provided by the latter. This is being proposed with the intention of providing job seekers or persons in employment a prescribed route to obtain employment or to take advantage of other job offers.

With regard to job or training offers, it is common knowledge that some job seekers could be unusually difficult or choosy. Accordingly, it is proposed to allow an applicant three opportunities to decline a job offer or training which is in line with his profile and qualifications. Failure to accept the proposal made by the Department, without reasonable excuse, the applicant will not benefit from the services offered by the Department for one year from the date of his last offer. The House will appreciate that we are putting up a system that would work for all the citizens of this country and it would be unacceptable to show undue leniency towards those who are not interested to take advantage of the services being offered.

We have also deemed it necessary to place an obligation on the registered job seekers to notify the Department after obtaining employment. This will ensure the accuracy of the information available on the Dashboard.

Section 11 of the Bill seeks to provide an unprecedented level of transparency in the recruitment process. Within the remit of this section every employer, be it from the public or private sectors, will be subjected to the standard rules. All of them will have an obligation to -

- advertise any vacancy, open to the public, within 7 days of the advertisement;
- submit to the Department the names of the persons recruited, and lastly
- notify the Department of any termination or retirement within 15 days thereof.

Madam Speaker, I wish to emphasise that the level of transparency being proposed will not in any way interfere with the recruitment process in the private sector or in the public sector.

Part IV

Part IV of the Bill provides for the setting up a National Employment Advisory Committee with the mandate to advise on employment policies and strategies on all issues associated thereto such as training, employment opportunities, be it local and overseas.

The Committee will, *inter alia*, be called upon to advise on -

- the correlation between the education, training systems and the work place;
- measures to reduce mismatch between demand and supply of labour.

Madam Speaker, the House will reckon that such a Committee, comprising of major stakeholders, is called upon to play a significant role in the management of the labour market. By virtue of its composition, the Committee will be an ideal platform where the needs of the society will be discussed, assessed, and recommendations made to close any gap for the efficient operation of the labour market. This will definitely provide comfort to all economic operators as well as investors in general and demonstrate our determination to provide the prerequisites for a sustainable development.

Section 15

Madam Speaker, the National Employment Advisory Committee to be established under section 12 may benefit from the support of Technical Committees, which may be set up for the purpose of having an expert view on any matter of public interest in relation to the fundamental objects of this Bill. With such a setup, we have tried to ensure the effective operation of the Advisory Council and enable it to provide a meaningful contribution in policy formulation.

Section 16

For the purpose of making accurate forecasts and with a view to providing accurate labour market intelligence, the Department will place an obligation on all academic, technical and vocational institutions offering post-secondary education, to provide an annual return on local students or trainees. The information provided by these institutions will enable the department to provide to employers and the public in general a clear indication on the level of skills available at a given time and also in the next few years.

Similarly, the Commissioner of Prisons will provide to the Department a report on the skills which Mauritian inmates possess so that they could be easily reinstated in the society because the stigmatisation that they have now is unacceptable. Many NGOs have, all the time, encouraged this approach. Now, with this Bill, this will become a reality.

Our intention is, therefore, Madam Speaker, like I said, to ensure inmates reintegrate society and be active in the labour force.

Section 17

Madam Speaker, we are determined to ensure a successful application of this legislation. We have thus made provision for effective deterrents to compel compliance with the provisions of the law.

Today, we are moving towards the re-engineering of the Employment Service and we are proposing a modern mechanism adapted to our needs. Here, I must inform the House that we have benefited from the support of the French authorities through the *Agence française de développement*. My Ministry signed an agreement with the French authorities in October 2015 for assistance towards the restructuring of the Employment Service in line with the *Pôle emploi*, which deals with employment issues in France.

The model, which we are proposing, is to a large extent inspired from the mode of *Pôle emploi*, adapted, but designed to our local requirements and specificities.

Madam Speaker, looking at the future may seem speculative or even whimsical with the advances in robotics and artificial intelligence, which may have potential disruptive impact on jobs.

On the one hand, we may face the paradox where the emergence of substantial talent pool may promise intense competition for opportunities at all levels of our workforce and, at the same time, we are likely to face skills vacuums where we are not fast enough at developing skills for newly emerging business fields.

Madam Speaker, we are, today, facing an unprecedented situation. On the one hand, we are having recourse to some 40,000 expatriates to run our factories, bakeries, supermarkets, hotels, clinics and, on the other hand, we have a mass of unemployed young professionals and graduates. These facts cannot be reconciled and explanation resides in the fact that we are faced with a situation of supply largely exceeding demand of the labour market. We are faced with such a predicament due to a combination of factors which may include the general attitude of job seekers to work, lack of skills and knowledge or the overwhelmingly poor career guidance given to them. The problem has been compounded by the lack of understanding of the dynamics of the labour market.

With this legislation, we are putting in place a modern structure, which will enable the formulation of coherent labour policies responsive to the needs of the country. This is, indeed, a

historic moment and Mauritius will be among the first countries in the region to provide the structure for professional manpower planning.

Notwithstanding the uncertainties, we have to provide for a robust framework that will stand the test of time, which will provide an optimistic employment landscape. This is precisely the mission we have before the House today.

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

Mr Jhugroo rose and seconded.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: Madam Speaker, I beg to move that the debate be now adjourned.

Mr Bodha rose and seconded.

Question put and agreed to.

Debate adjourned accordingly.

ADJOURNMENT

The Deputy Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, I beg to move that this Assembly do now adjourn to Tuesday 31 October 2017 at 11.30 a.m.

Mr Lutchmeenaraidoo rose and seconded.

Question put and agreed to.

Madam Speaker: The House stands adjourned.

At 5.01 p.m., the Assembly was, on its rising, adjourned to Tuesday 31 October 2017 at 11.30 a.m.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

CEB - POWER PURCHASE AGREEMENT - BAGASSE TRANSFER PRICE FUND

(No. B/584) **Mr D. Ramful (Third Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien)** asked the Minister of Agro-Industry and Food Security whether, in regard to the renewal of the Power

Purchase Agreement with Alteo Ltd., he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Central Electricity Board, information as to if the formula applicable for the calculation and distribution of the accruals out of the Bagasse Transfer Price Fund shall be reviewed so as to provide for a fair and reasonable price to small planters.

(Withdrawn)

CEB - ALTEO LTD. - POWER PURCHASE AGREEMENT

(No. B/585) Mr D. Ramful (Third Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to the renewal of the Power Purchase Agreement with Alteo Ltd., he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Central Electricity Board, information as to the terms and conditions upon which the existing agreement is being renewed.

(Withdrawn)

MAHEBOURG-BAMBOUS VIRIEUX - OYSTER FARM - SEA LEASED

No. B/586) Mr D. Ramful (Third Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien) asked the Minister of Ocean Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping whether, in regard to the Oyster Farm of Mahebourg-Bambous Virieux, he will state –

- (a) the name of the promoter/company involved therein, indicating the shareholding of each director;
- (b) if any deed concession has been signed;
- (c) the extent of sea leased and rental value thereof;
- (d) if it has been issued with an Environment Impact Assessment Licence, and
- (e) the estimated impact thereof on the fishermen thereat.

(Withdrawn)

BLACK RIVER GORGES – ENTRANCE FEE

(No. B/596) Mr A. Ameer Meea (Second Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Minister of Agro-Industry and Food Security whether, in regard to the Black River Georges, he will state if an entrance fee thereto is being or will be applied and, if so, indicate the –

- (a) reasons therefor, and

- (b) tariffs applicable or being envisaged.

Reply: The Black River Gorges National Park covers an area of 6,574 hectares and harbors some of the rarest pristine forests of Mauritius as well as worldwide known endemic birds like the Mauritian Kestrel, Pink Pigeon and Echo Parakeet. Around 273 species of native flowering plants and endemic species of birds are found in the Park.

The Black River Gorges National Park is managed by the National Parks and Conservation Service of my Ministry for the conservation of endemic and endangered fauna and flora and for recreational purposes.

As per the Native Terrestrial Biodiversity and National Parks Act of 2015, the Director of the National Parks and Conservation Service is required to prepare a Management Plan for the National Park. The Management Plan has already been prepared in consultation with relevant stakeholders. The Plan has enumerated ways and means for the National Parks and Conservation Service to generate revenue and one of the proposals made is the introduction of an entrance fee for foreigners only. Public comments and suggestions on the Management Plan have been invited and the deadline for the submission of same was 07 October 2017.

It is relevant to mention that Government commits every year 25 to 30 million rupees from the National Budget for the management, rehabilitation and maintenance of the Native Reserves and Parks. So far, no fee has been charged to visitors accessing the national parks.

The main reasons justifying the introduction of an entrance fee for access to the parks are as follows -

- (i) It will enable the National Parks and Conservation Service to raise revenue and be less dependent on Government funding;
- (ii) The fee collected could be reinvested in the National Park to provide better facilities to visitors and to carry out restoration activities to improve the ecosystem and biodiversity of the Park, and
- (iii) It will enhance opportunities for the implementation of certain essential projects relating to conservation and infrastructural facilities.

A decision on the introduction of the entrance fee will be taken by my Ministry in the light of the comments received from the public on the Management Plan. The approval of Government will eventually be sought on any such decision.

It is worth pointing out that Government had in March 2011 approved the introduction of an entrance fee of Rs100 for foreigners visiting the National Park. This measure has, however, not been implemented because the necessary logistics were not in place. My Ministry has proceeded with the recruitment of Tickets/Sales Officers in February 2016 and will arrange for the provision of other facilities once the final decision on the entrance fee is taken.

CWA – REPLACEMENT OF WATER PIPES PROJECT - CONTRACT

(No. B/598) Mr B. Jahangeer (Third Member for Rivière des Anguilles & Souillac) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to the Replacement of Water Pipes Project for 2015-2016, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Central Water Authority, information as to if all the contracts have been implemented as per the bid conditions.

(Withdrawn)

QUEEN VICTORIA, FLACQ – PV SOLAR FARM - IMPLEMENTATION

(No. B/599) Mr B. Jahangeer (Third Member for Rivière des Anguilles & Souillac) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to the contract awarded to Messrs Voltas Green Ltd. for the setting up of a PV Solar Farm of 12.2 MW at Queen Victoria, Flacq, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Central Electricity Board, information as to where matters stand as to the implementation thereof.

(Withdrawn)

MONT ROCHES MURUGAN MALAI KOVIL - BUILDING PERMIT

(No. B/610) Mr F. Quirin (Fourth Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the construction of the Mont Roches Murugan Malai Kovil, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Municipal Council of Beau Bassin and Rose Hill, information as to if a building permit for the construction thereof has been issued therefor and, if not, why not.

Reply: I am informed that no Building and Use Permit has been issued to Mont Roches Murugan Malai Kovil Sangam for construction of a Kovil.

I am further informed that the application made on 09 May 2017 by the developer was incomplete and that they were informed on 18 May 2017 accordingly.

The Municipal Council of Beau Bassin-Rose Hill has informed me that as soon as the missing information and documents are made available by the representative of the Kovil, the application will be processed without any delay.

MINORS - LIQUOR & CIGARETTES - SALE

(No. B/611) Ms M. Sewocksingh (Third Member for Curepipe & Midlands) asked the Rt. hon. Minister Mentor, Minister of Defence, Minister for Rodrigues whether, in regard to the sale of liquor and cigarettes to minors, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to the number of contraventions booked over the past two years in Constituency No. 17, Curepipe and Midlands, therefor, indicating the actions taken against the Liquor and Tobacco Licensees involved therein.

(Withdrawn)

CUREPIPE & MIDLANDS – STATE LAND - BENEFICIARIES

(No. B/612) Ms M. Sewocksingh (Third Member for Curepipe & Midlands) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Housing and Lands whether, in regard to State land, he will state the number of plots thereof granted in Constituency No. 17, Curepipe and Midlands, since 2015 to date, indicating the names of the –

- (a) beneficiaries thereof, and
- (b) applicants therefor who are on the waiting list.

(Withdrawn)

MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND QUALITY OF LIFE – HEARING AIDS - SUPPLIERS

(No. B/613) Ms M. Sewocksingh (Third Member for Curepipe & Midlands) asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether, in regard to hearing aids, he will state the –

- (a) name of the suppliers thereof;
- (b) country of origin thereof;

(c) number of defects thereof reported, indicating the number thereof having been refunded, if any, and

(d) number of people on the waiting list to be allocated therewith, indicating since when.

(Withdrawn)

HOSPITALS - SERVICE D'AIDE MEDICALE URGENCE - AMBULANCES

(No. B/614) Mr S. Abbas Mamode (Fourth Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether, in regard to the *Service d'Aide Medicale Urgence*, he will state the number of ambulances thereof operating on a 24 hour basis available at each hospital.

(Withdrawn)

HOSPITALS - CT SCANS

(No. B/615) Mr S. Abbas Mamode (Fourth Member for Port Louis Maritime and Port Louis East) asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether, in regard to the CT Scans, he will state the number thereof presently available in each regional hospital, indicating if they are operational and, if not, indicate –

(a) since when, and

(b) the remedial measures taken, in each case.

(Withdrawn)

ABERCROMBIE – POLICE DIVISIONAL HEADQUARTERS - CONSTRUCTION

(No. B/616) Mr S. Abbas Mamode (Fourth Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Rt. hon. Minister Mentor, Minister of Defence, Minister for Rodrigues whether, in regard to the proposed construction of a new and modern Divisional Headquarters at Abercrombie, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to where matters stand, indicating –

(a) if all the quarters occupied by Police Officers or as offices have been vacated and, if not, why not, and

(b) the expected start and completion dates thereof.

(Withdrawn)

PLAINE VERTE – DR. HYDERKHAN MEDI-CLINIC - SERVICES

(No. B/617) Mr S. Abbas Mamode (Fourth Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether, in regard to the Dr Hyderkhan Medi-Clinic in Plaine Verte, he will state the services presently available thereat, indicating if consideration will be given for the posting of specialist doctors thereat and, if so, when and, if not, why not.

(Withdrawn)

SUGAR – PRICE

(No. B/620) Mrs D. Selvon (Second Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Agro-Industry and Food Security whether, in regard to the sugar industry, he will

–

- (a) give the detailed plan currently being carried out by his Ministry to help planters thereof face the risk of a sharp decline in the prices of sugar after the abolition of sugar quotas by the European Union member states and the European Parliament, at the end of the 2016/17 marketing year, that is, after 30 September 2017, and
- (b) state the measures taken since December 2014 to date to rehabilitate some 20,000 arpents of sugar plantations left abandoned or in the process of being abandoned by sugar planters.

Reply: The sugarcane industry has had to face several challenges in the past and Government had to intervene and take appropriate policy measures to safeguard the interests and increase the revenue streams of small and medium planters. These measures include, among others –

- (a) the setting up of a Sugar Cane Sustainability Fund managed by the MCIA. The annual contribution made to planters are as follows -
 - (i) planters producing up to 60 tonnes received Rs1,100 per tonne of sugar, and
 - (ii) those producing in excess of 60 tonnes received Rs300 per tonne of sugar.

- (b) increase in bottler's fee from Rs20 to Rs40, representing additional revenue amounting to some Rs550 per tonne of sugar to every planter, and
- (c) provision of a special financial assistance and premium waiver from the SIFB. For crop 2014, in view of the low price obtained per tonne of sugar, the SIFB was requested to pay a compensation of Rs2,000 per tonne of sugar to all insured planters and a special effort was made for the payment of an additional amount of Rs1,400 to planters producing up to 60 tonnes of sugar. For crop 2015, given the price of sugar was still low, the SIFB was again called to pay a compensation of Rs2,000 per tonne of sugar to all insured planters.

In view of the continued decreasing price of sugar in the EU market, Government has taken additional measures, such as –

- (i) a contribution of Rs500 m. by the SIFB in the form of special financial assistance and premium waiver for Crop 2017;
- (ii) the waiving of Cess contribution for Crop 2017 to all producers, which will represent a saving of about Rs450 per tonne of sugar to the producers;
- (iii) an increase in tariff from 15% to 30% on imported sugar for local consumption and not intended for refining, and
- (iv) provision is made for the implementation of a Cane replantation scheme whereby land owners who replant their fields would be eligible to a cash grant of Rs71,000 per hectare. Planters who have benefitted from FORIP and have completed a cane cycle of 6 years would also be eligible for this scheme to ensure that they do not eventually abandon their plantation.

The Mauritius Sugar Syndicate and the Mauritius Chamber of Agriculture have made some proposals to further increase the revenue streams of planters.

A Technical Committee is examining these proposals and will submit its findings to Government in due course.

With regard to part (b) of the question, I wish to point out that following a survey conducted by the Sugar Insurance Fund Board in 2010, approximately 20,000 arpents of land have been identified as abandoned.

Based on the report of the SIFB, a cumulative extent of 5,178 hectares of land was in an abandoned state, out of which around 1,200 hectares of land would ultimately move out of sugar cane cultivation.

The measures adopted by Government since December 2014 to address the problem of cane abandonment are as follows -

- (a) in the Budget 2016/ 2017, provision was made to increase the number of management contracts between planters and millers from 54 to 109 and the leasing out of abandoned lands to other interested planters, through the MCIA Agricultural Land Management System;
- (b) for Crop 2016, 67 management contracts have been signed by the corporate sector. In addition, the corporate sector had signed 495 contracts with planters for the cutting, loading and transport of cane during Crop 2016;
- (c) the Agricultural Land Management System has been set up by the MCIA. The total extent of land which moved away from cane during the period 2010 to 2015 is estimated at 8,175 hectares. During the period November 2016 to February 2017, an awareness campaign among stakeholders has been initiated by the MCIA;
- (d) with a view to dealing effectively with the land abandonment phenomenon, Government has made provision for an amount of Rs50 m. in the 2017/2018 Budget;
- (e) the MCIA has, as from July 2017, implemented a cane replantation scheme whereby land owners who replant their fields would be eligible to a cash grant of Rs71,000 per hectare. Planters who have benefitted from FORIP and have completed a cane cycle of 6 years would also be eligible for this scheme to ensure that they do not eventually abandon their plantations;
- (f) contract agreements have already been signed for a total extent of 425 hectares, out of a total of 500 hectares. Land preparation has been completed on 87 hectares and 46 hectares of fields have already been planted under cane, and
- (g) Government, through the MCIA, is implementing the Sugarcane Planters Regrouping Scheme whereby an extent of approximately 250 hectares of

abandoned cane land have been brought back under sugar cane production during the period 2015 to date.

FISHING COMPANIES - PERMITS - REVENUES

(No. B/621) Mr E. Jhuboo (Third Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Minister of Ocean Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping whether, in regard to the fishing industry, he will state the –

- (a) total revenues generated from the licensing or permits issued to foreign and local fishing companies since January 2015 to date, and
- (b) actions taken to preserve the fish stocks and enhance control in our fishing zone, indicating –
 - (i) the measures taken to address the shortage of 4,000 tons of tuna on the local market, and
 - (ii) where matters stand regarding the negotiation by the European Union to increase our export quota for fish thereto.

Reply: With regard to part (a) of the question, the total revenue generated from the licences issued to foreign and local fishing companies since January 2015 to 20 October 2017 amounts to around Rs138 m.

With regard to part (b) of the question, actions to preserve the fish stocks and enhance control include -

- (a) implementation of a licensing system for all foreign and local vessels operating in our EEZ which are subject to strict conditions with regard to areas of operation, catch reporting, licence fees, authorised species and period of validity;
- (b) implementation of a Bank Fishery Management Plan comprising such measures as catch quota system allocated to companies/vessels which is reviewed at the start of each fishing season that is September to May. The plan also includes a limit on the number of vessels operating on the banks;
- (c) for the tuna fishery, statistical data are collected from all local and foreign licensed vessels. The data are processed, analysed and transmitted to Indian Ocean Tuna Commission where these data along with those received from other States are used to evolve conservation and management measures;

- (d) implementation of all IOTC resolutions relating to conservation and management of the tuna stocks;
- (e) a Port State Control Unit has been set up to monitor all fishing vessels operating in our EEZ through advance notification, verification of vessel documents and inspection of catches;
- (f) a Vessel Monitoring System (VMS) has been put in place for the monitoring of licensed fishing vessels in our EEZ;
- (g) at National level, Surveillance of the EEZ is carried out by the National Coast Guard;
- (h) participation in the Regional Surveillance Project of the “Commission de l’Ocean Indien”, and
- (i) implementation of measures earmarked in the National Plan of action to combat illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing.

Regarding part (b) (i) of the question, I wish to inform the House that the local tuna cannery is facing difficulties in sourcing raw materials in view of the catch limits as agreed at the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission in 2016, with regard to yellow fin tuna which is in the Red Zone. Due to the catch limit imposed, vessels carried out a race to maximise their catch within a short period. This resulted in the quota being reached well before the end of this year. This situation could not be foreseen by the private sector and consequently it is forecasted that a shortage of raw materials may occur. To address this problem, Mauritius has made a request to the EU for a normal derogation of 4000 tonnes from the Rules of Origin as provided under the Interim Economic Partnership Agreement.

In a letter dated 16 October 2017, the EU indicated that the Mauritius’ request may be positively considered as an exceptional case. At the request of EU an application in due form with additional justification signed by the hon. Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade has been submitted to the EU on 23 October 2017.

With regard to part (b) (ii) of the question, I am informed that, at the last meeting of the Joint-Economic Partnership Agreement held in Madagascar on 02-03 October 2017, between EU and the Eastern Southern African Interim-Economic Partnership signatories, an Agreement in principle was reached between the two sides to pursue negotiations on a more comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement.

In the context of these negotiations, Mauritius will urge that the quota on automatic derogation for tuna should be substantially increased from the current level of 8,000 tonnes. The proposal to increase the quantum of automatic derogation has been made several times in the EPA Committee. However, this can only be achieved in the context of the negotiation on the comprehensive EPA.

MONT CHOISY & TROU AUX BICHES - NHDC HOUSES - MINORS

(No. B/624) Mr G. Lepoigneur (Fifth Member for Beau Bassin and Petite Rivière) asked Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Housing and Lands whether, in regard to the allocation of NHDC houses to minors at Mont Choisy and Trou aux Biches, he will state if consideration is being given for the setting up of a Commission of Inquiry to look thereinto and, if so, indicate where matters stand.

(Withdrawn)

CÔTE D'OR - MULTIPURPOSE GYMNASIUM - CONSTRUCTION

(No. B/625) Mr G. Lepoigneur (Fifth Member for Beau Bassin and Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether, in regard to the proposed renovation of the existing sports complexes and construction of a multipurpose gymnasium at Cote d'Or in the wake of the forthcoming Jeux des Iles de l'Océan Indien 2019, he will state where matters stand.

(Withdrawn)

IOIG 2019 – BUDGETARY ALLOCATION

(No. B/626) Mr G. Lepoigneur (Fifth Member for Beau Bassin and Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether, in regard to the 18 million rupees budgeted for year 2017-2018 for the preparation of the athletes for the Jeux des Iles de l'Océan Indien 2019, he will state the amount thereof that has been disbursed, indicating the federations which have benefitted therefrom.

(Withdrawn)

ALBION - MORCELLEMENT RAFFRAY - ILLEGAL CONSTRUCTION

(No. B/627) Mr J. Lepoigneur (Fifth Member for Beau Bassin and Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether, in regard to a complaint dated 29 August 2017 to the District Council of Black River regarding the illegal construction of a residential building in Morcellement Raffray, in Albion, wherein a stop order was served but disregarded by the promoter thereof, he will state the action that will be taken in relation thereto.

(Withdrawn)

PUBLIC SCHOOLS - WOMEN CLEANERS

(No. B/628) Mr V. Baloomoody (Third Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources, Tertiary Education and Scientific Research whether, in regard to the 629 women cleaners earning a monthly salary of Rs1,500 who are providing their services in the public schools, she will state where matters stand regarding the proposed absorption thereof on the permanent establishment of her Ministry.

Reply: I would like, first of all, to thank hon. Baloomoody for giving me the opportunity to shed more light on the whole issue of cleaners who are providing their services to public schools.

The House may wish to note that there are two categories of cleaners offering their services to the Ministry of Education. The first category refers to persons whose services had been enlisted by the Parent Teachers Association and the cleaners are mainly engaged in the cleaning of toilets, while the second category is involved in the cleaning of school premises and the cleaners are employed by the cleaning contractors, whose services have been retained by the Ministry of Education, through a bidding exercise.

Following Government's decision taken in 2016 with regard to the cleaners whose services were retained by the PTA's for cleaning of school toilets, it was agreed that the 310 cleaners in that category would be employed on a full-time basis and their schedule of duties would be adjusted accordingly.

Government has decided that those who, as at 2012, was less than 48 years of age will be placed on the establishment of the Ministry, while those who were 48 years of age when they

were enlisted in 2012 will be offered yearly renewable contracts. The remaining PTA cleaners who are more than 65 years of age now, will be paid a gratuity equivalent to 15 days for each year of service.

As regards the cleaners employed by the contractors, they are governed by the Cleaning Enterprises (Remuneration) Regulations 2013 and as such they are being paid on an hourly basis. The option of placing them on the establishment of the Ministry does not therefore arise, as they are employees of private companies.

It is worth noting that many of those cleaners simultaneously hold a second or third part-time job with different employers. As per information gathered, their monthly salary with the cleaning contractors, ranges from Rs1,800 to Rs10,000, depending on the number of hours put in.

We have been given to understand that the main complaint raised by the cleaners employed by the contractors relates to their low level of remuneration. If this is indeed the case, will placing all of the cleaners employed by the contractors on the establishment of the Ministry without any selection exercise be the solution? We must also take note that the cleaners are employed on a part-time basis in the schools.

The figures worked out by my Ministry indicate that funds disbursed to cleaning contractors for the cleaning of public schools, amount to some Rs28 m., out of which 40% (Rs11 m.) are paid as wages to cleaners and the remaining 60% (Rs17 m.) are paid for ad hoc cleaning (high water pressure, mowing of grass and truncating of trees). In the event that the Ministry opts for the full-time recruitment of all the 414 cleaners, an amount of Rs70 m. would have to be disbursed in terms of salary and benefits. Moreover, an additional Rs17 m. would be required yearly to meet the costs of ad hoc cleaning.

Having said so, it is clear that the issue here is an industrial relation one and required action is being taken by the Ministry of Labour to ensure that the cleaners are being remunerated as per the provisions of the Cleaning Enterprises (Remuneration) Regulations 2013 in force and

needful will also be done for the contractors to pay the required contributions to the National Pension Fund. Legal action will be taken in case of non-adherence to the legislation in force.