



SIXTH NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

**PARLIAMENTARY
DEBATES
(HANSARD)
(UNREVISED)**

FIRST SESSION

MONDAY 25 JUNE 2018

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(Formed by Hon. Pravind Kumar Jugnauth)

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Hon. Sir Anerood Jugnauth, GCSK, KCMG, QC	Minister Mentor, Minister of Defence, Minister for Rodrigues
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PRINCIPAL OFFICERS AND OFFICIALS

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MAURITIUS

Sixth National Assembly

FIRST SESSION

Debate No. 17 of 2018

Sitting of Monday 25 June 2018

The Assembly met in the Assembly House, Port Louis at 11.00 a.m.

The National Anthem was played

(Madam Speaker in the Chair)

PAPER LAID

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, the Paper has been laid on the Table.

Prime Minister's Office

The Financial Statement of The Prime Minister's Relief Fund for period
01 July 2016 to 30 June 2017.

ANNOUNCEMENT

PARLIAMENT OF BANGLADESH - DELEGATION

Madam Speaker: Hon. Members, I am pleased to announce the presence in our midst this morning of a delegation of the Members of the Standing Committee for the Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment of the Parliament of Bangladesh, led by hon. Mohammad Shahab Uddin. On behalf of hon. Members and in my own name, I extend a warm welcome to the delegates and wish them a fruitful stay in Mauritius.

MOTION

SUSPENSION OF S.O. 10(2)

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

Mr Gayan rose and seconded.

Question put and agreed to.

PUBLIC BILL

Second Reading

THE APPROPRIATION (2018-2019) BILL 2018

(No. VII of 2018)

Order read for resuming adjourned debate on the Appropriation (2018-2019) Bill 2018 (No. VII of 2018).

Question again proposed.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Deputy Prime Minister!

(11.03 a.m.)

The Deputy Prime Minister: Merci, Madame la présidente. Il y a quelques jours, le 18 juin plus précisément, se tenait à Maurice l'*Africa Energy Forum*. C'était au Morne. Il y avait 2,000 personnes. Ce forum est un forum qui existe depuis 20 ans et c'est la première fois que l'*Africa Energy Forum* se tient en Afrique. Et le seul pays d'Afrique que les organisateurs *Hogan Lovells*, grande firme américaine, ont choisi, c'était la République de Maurice. Il y avait une vingtaine de ministres africains de l'énergie. Certains d'entre eux de grosses pointures. Il y avait des investisseurs potentiels, des agences internationales de *funding*, des institutions financières, des consultants, des *law firms*, et beaucoup dans le secteur mauricien intéressés à l'énergie étaient présents. Les firmes, les *law firms* mauriciennes, les compagnies, bien-sûr, le CEB, le ministère, j'ai fait le *keynote address*, Madame Nababsing, la *Senior Chief Executive*, est intervenue ainsi que tout le monde, hélas à

cause du budget, je ne pouvais pas être aux deux places à la fois. J'ai essayé de faire un petit peu de tout.

Mais ce qui était intéressant, c'est quand j'ai demandé aux organisateurs pourquoi avoir choisi Maurice pour un forum de cette importance. Et j'ai été surpris de leur connaissance du pays. Ce que nous avons fait depuis trois ans dans ce secteur international, nous sommes les premiers qui montent à la tête, qui viennent à l'esprit.

Tout le monde me dit : 'c'est extraordinaire ce que vous êtes en train de faire pour votre pays.' Ils vont plus loin, nous sommes premier dans le Mo Ibrahim Index. Le Président Faure des Seychelles qui est un ami à moi de très longue date - très, très longue date d'ailleurs - me disait qu'il fera tout pour essayer de nous ravir cette première place. Je crois pendant des années nous avons été premier. Mais nous, nous essayons d'empêcher que Seychelles nous prenne cette première place : *World Bank Ease of Doing Business*, *World Economic Forum* au niveau international. Il n'y a que dans la petite opposition locale et j'entendais l'honorable Bhagwan venir nous dire que notre réputation internationale bat de l'aile!

Mais quand vous lisez les commentateurs - j'ai oublié mon ami, un collègue du gouvernement, qui lisait les commentaires des autres - je lisais le rapport de PricewaterhouseCoopers, mais à part huit personnes qui sont ici, tout le monde est unanime que depuis 2015, que ce soit sous Sir Anerood Jugnauth, que ce soit maintenant sous l'honorable Pravind Jugnauth, l'île Maurice est en train de sortir du *middle economy* et d'entrer de plain-pied pour pouvoir tutoyer les plus grands et pour ça je félicite le Premier ministre et ministre des Finances.

Les qualificatifs utilisés, ça fait bien, parce que c'est vrai que maintenant on est à la télévision. Tout le monde regarde, donc, on essaye de faire un petit peu plus de démagogie que son camarade. Mais ces qualificatifs, la population ne partage pas. Je regrette que ce forum par contre, je n'ai pas pu noter la participation des *Independent Power Producers*. Alors que le sucre passe par ce que ça passe, alors que nous avons besoin de l'industrie sucrière pour faire un *boost* sur notre énergie, ce qui va en même temps aider toute l'industrie, les IPPs ont, selon ce que j'ai vu - je peux me tromper, si je me trompe, je retirerai mes mots, bien sûr - ce que j'ai constaté, dans ces 2,000 personnes, il n'y avait pas de IPPs. C'est dommage ! Ils auraient pu avoir grandement bénéficié car il y a beaucoup d'investissements qui sont dans ce secteur dont les IPPs auraient pu avoir bénéficié.

Depuis que nous sommes là, en décembre 2014, depuis que je suis au ministère de l'énergie, j'ai voulu que l'énergie à Maurice ait un rayonnement international car si nous ne

sommes pas dans l'international et que nous gardons nos propres réflexes des années 1990, nous ne décollerons pas. Le monde a changé, l'histoire du climat est devenue *high on the agenda*. Et nous, Maurice, nous sommes maintenant présents. Nous sommes membres de l'IRENA. Nous étions membres de l'IRENA, nous continuerons à être membres, mais beaucoup plus actifs à l'IRENA. Tous les ans, je me fais un devoir d'être présent à Abu Dhabi à la réunion à l'IRENA. C'est intéressant que tout le monde sache que la délégation mauricienne se compose également de membres de l'opposition. C'est extraordinaire quand les mauriciens, l'opposition et gouvernement, nous sommes ensemble dans un forum international, nous réagissons comme des patriotes.

J'ai remarqué cela les trois fois que nous sommes allés, les membres de l'opposition qui étaient là, ensemble avec le gouvernement, nous avons fait le mieux qu'on pouvait. Nous ne sommes pas des prix Nobel. Nous ne sommes pas '*conne tout*'. Heureusement peut-être ! Mais l'opposition et gouvernement dans ce forum international, nous avons travaillé ensemble, en grande amitié d'ailleurs, mais surtout il n'y avait aucun problème de tomber d'accord sur les points que nous allions mettre en avant. Par exemple, la dernière fois, les Chagos étaient à l'agenda et tous ceux qui étaient présents, - je ne nommerais pas les noms parce que ce n'est pas très correct de le faire - opposition et gouvernement confondus, nous avons dit notre petit mot pour les Chagos, même si c'était un sommet sur l'énergie. Nous avons tous été des patriotes. Pourquoi diantre, lorsque nous venons juste ici, nous oublions tout cela et - je viendrai plus tard sur deux ou trois exemples – nous sombrons dans le *telenovelas*. Auparavant, il y avait Marimar!

(Interruptions)

Maintenant pas besoin de Marimar, ici-même il y a Marimar.

(Interruptions)

On fait toutes sortes de...

(Interruptions)

L'IRENA m'a inspiré pour qu'on mette sur pied le MARENA, *Mauritius Renewable Energy Agency*. Cela a pris son temps. Je suis moi-même pas très content de la façon que cela prenne du temps pour décoller, mais ils font leur travail. Ils ont pris du temps pour nommer un *CEO*. Là aussi, dans MARENA, l'opposition est représentée, les forces vives sont représentées, les syndicats, je crois, mais des forces disparates! Et malgré tout, encore une fois, ils se bagarrent, bien sûr, c'est normal. Ils ont chacun des positions différentes. Mais, ils travaillent pour le bien de l'énergie renouvelable, ainsi que le *LNG*, ici. Encore une fois, je ne vais pas mentionner les noms parce que ce n'est pas très correct de le faire. Je vais

donner l'impression de flatter les gens. Mais des gens qui deviennent très intelligents lorsqu'ils décident de travailler ensemble en équipe pour le pays.

International Solar Alliance, le *brainchild* de Narendra Modi. COP21 à Paris, notre ami, Raj Dayal représentait Maurice. J'avais aidé dans la préparation de tous les papiers à l'époque. Avec l'aide d'une équipe française qui était là, nous avons préparé le papier; nos contributions et notre stratégie sont dans ce papier. Les gens disent que nous n'avons pas de stratégie. Nous avons de la stratégie. Et un petit mot, cette stratégie-là, je ne l'ai pas inventé. Je n'ai pas essayé d'aller faire le nouveau rapport. La stratégie était là. Quand je regarde l'*Energy Strategy* qui avait été fait pour, je crois, 2012, très bon papier! Je ne suis pas allé *challenge* ce qu'il y a dedans. En 2013, il y avait le *National Energy Commission*. Quand je lis tout cela, mais c'est formidable ! C'est ce qu'on aurait dû avoir fait. Tous ces rapports ont été bien faits. La stratégie était bien déterminée. Seulement on mettait cela de côté. On faisait la télévision venir pour deux ou trois jours, voir tous les grands de ce monde défilés et puis on oubliait Moi, j'ai déterré tout cela. J'ai dit : «Voilà notre stratégie, nous continuons, ne perdons pas de temps à aller réinventer la roue. » C'est ça ce qu'on a fait. C'est comme ça qu'à COP21, il y a cet accord entre le Président Hollande et Narendra Modi faisant l'*International Solar Alliance*, l'Inde et La France.

Et, vous savez, l'honorable Premier ministre devait partir pour l'Inde. Un jour un ambassadeur vient me voir et me dit : « Il faut absolument que vous accompagniez le Premier ministre. » Le Premier ministre m'avait demandé. J'ai dit : « Ce n'est pas possible, j'ai trop de travail » *Delay too short!* Et on dit: «Non, il faut que le *Deputy Prime Minister*, parce qu'il a le portefeuille de l'énergie, vienne dans cette mission ». Et là, j'ai vu pourquoi. Le Premier ministre signait comme *founder member* du *ISA*. Et moi, comme ministre de l'Energie, j'avais à faire un certain travail que fait normalement dans ce genre de fonction. Il a continué sa visite d'État et moi je me suis concentré sur l'*International Solar Alliance*.

Nous avons fait beaucoup de travail. Un milliard de *US dollars* sera dépensé pour le développement de l'énergie solaire entre le Tropique du Cancer et le Tropique du Capricorne. Les endroits les plus ensoleillés du monde et les endroits qui importent le plus de pétrole dans des pays les plus pauvres du monde. Voilà! Et Maurice est là. Nous allons contribuer aussi au *ISA* et nous en bénéficions, bien sûr. Et la deuxième fois, je suis allé là-bas. Tout le monde, je me souviens, mon collègue du Mali, qui voyait ça bizarre pourquoi nous étions aussi *high in the agenda* de ces deux pays. Je réfléchissais et dans mon discours je lui ai dit : 'Ne soyez pas surpris que nous soyons *high on this agenda*.'

Ancienne Ile de France, et *Chota Bharat, french-indian relationship*, le seul pays dans le monde où on parle français et des langues indiennes sur le même territoire, un petit territoire comme ça. Il n'y a aucun pays dans le monde qui est comme ça. J'avais gardé une citation en Hindi, mais puisque je ne parle pas l'Hindi aussi bien que certains de mes amis, je préférais me retirer là-dessus.

Le *Green Climate Fund in the wake of COP21*. Le 14 décembre 2016, nous avons reçu une lettre. Le *Green Climate Fund* a approuvé un *grant* d'un milliard de roupies sur la base des papiers des projets que nous avons. Un milliard de roupies!

(*Interruptions*)

Plus exactement 28.21 millions de dollars, taux de change multiplication, erreurs de mathématique!

Nous étions parmi les premiers pays; nous avons travaillé très durs pour faire cela, mais dans la discrétion, sans faire de tam-tam, comme on faisait auparavant pour rien. On a travaillé très dur jusqu'à tard le soir ; bonne petite équipe. On a mis la dernière main pour présenter le projet - trop long pour venir en parler là - et nous avons présenté le produit en juillet 2015. Vous rendez-vous compte de ce que ça veut dire ? Février 2015 COP21, accord de Paris, nous, en juillet 2015, nous étions parmi les premiers pays à soumettre notre demande pour le *Green Climate Fund*. Et nous étions dans le deuxième batch de pays pour obtenir le *grant* du *Fund*. Entre autres - je ne donne pas tous les projets - un projet de - et c'est ça qui suscite l'appétit de nos *funding agencies*, et je viendrai à d'autres plus tard -, 300 kilowatt de panneaux solaires, photovoltaïques, à Agaléga pour avoir de l'électricité, parce qu'à Agaléga il ne manque pas de soleil. Cela ne va pas coûter très cher, mais vulgariser les énergies renouvelables.

Au niveau international, ce que nous avons fait, alors que c'était un désert ! Personne ne réalisait que l'énergie pouvait être internationale. Je ne suis pas un grand prix Nobel, je ne connais pas tout, mais ces gens savent et j'essaye de lire un petit peu. Je n'ai pas grandes habitudes de grande lecture, etc., mais j'ai du *common sense* et je ne suis pas trop couillon non plus ; trop bête, je voulais dire. Je crois qu'on n'a pas le droit de dire ce mot. *I withdraw it and replace it by the word 'bête'*.

Le gouvernement italien, on signe un *MoU*, 2 millions d'euros, pour mettre dans des projets d'énergies renouvelables, y compris solaire, que CEB Green Energy Ltd, cité par le Premier ministre dans son discours du budget, va utiliser pour mettre l'énergie solaire partout - *Institute for Environmental Analytics UK, MoU funded by the UK Space Agency*. Comme ça, on pourra faire des *renewable resource assessments* en utilisant les satellites. Je crois que

personne n'a vraiment remarqué, n'a bien noté, enregistré l'impact du *statement* du ministre Sawmynaden.

Le lancement d'un satellite mauricien. Il fallait y penser quand même ! Depuis que le Premier ministre était en charge de *ITC*, continué par l'honorable Sawmynaden, formidable ce qu'ils ont fait ! Et je viendrai plus tard sur Fibernet. Avec le satellite, avec cet institut, nous pourrons savoir où sont les endroits les mieux situés pour le solaire, parce qu'aujourd'hui, on va sur l'à-peu-près. Les études sur l'ensoleillement, sur le nombre d'heures de soleil, c'est à peu près basé sur ce que la météo nous donne et sur notre bon sens mauricien. Mais ce n'est pas assez. Il faut être beaucoup plus rigoureux.

L'AFD - Agence française de développement - un *grant* de 200,000 euros pour des études sur l'énergie, sans compter les autres programmes d'assistance, de coopération, et le plus important peut-être, la Banque africaine de développement, avec son *African Legal Service Facility*, qui vient nous aider, que ce soit dans la négociation pour les *IPPs*, que ce soit sur le URA ou le CEB. La SADC qui aide MARENA, 500,000 dollars pour développer les standards. La Commission l'océan Indien, 6 millions de dollars pour des projets.

Le ministère a lancé un network international pour que nous puissions devenir en avant-garde sur les énergies renouvelables ainsi sur le *LNG*, sur lequel je reviendrai un peu plus tard.

Aujourd'hui, au moment où je vous parle, il y a 30 mégawatt de solaire qui sont en opération, y compris SARACO qui travaille très bien, quoi qu'on peut parler d'autres choses, mais ça marche.

En ce moment où je vous parle, il y a 80 mégawatt de capacité en train d'être construits. Cela veut dire que l'année prochaine nous aurons 120 mégawatt d'énergie solaire. Vous savez ce que cela veut dire ? CT Power devait, avec le charbon, nous donner 110 mégawatt. Avec le solaire, l'année prochaine, nous ferons 120 mégawatt. *No need for coal*. Eolienne - 9 mégawatt Plaine des Roches, 30 mégawatt Suzlon. Beaucoup de retard à Suzlon. J'ai dû me démener. On a essayé de faire ce qu'il fallait, on a réussi finalement. Aux dernières nouvelles, ce sont les fondations qu'on fait pour l'énergie solaire. Nous aurons, donc, 11 fermes solaires, y compris celles d'Henrietta, dans la circonscription de mes collègues, l'honorable Bodha et l'honorable Sinatambu, ainsi que l'honorable Baboo.

Le *Green Energy* déjà lancé, mais peut-être dans l'énergie renouvelable ce qui me fait le plus chaud au cœur, c'est le *Home Solar Project*. Dans 10,000 maisons de ceux qui sont dans le registre social, *low-income categories*, nous avons placé des *home solar appliances*, des *solar PV kits*. Nous avons déjà commencé. J'ai inauguré à Cascavelle, dans la

circonscription numéro 14, il y a Bramsthan, et nous allons continuer. Toujours, *CEB Green Energy*, l'électricité sera solaire et en plus, le consommateur va produire de l'électricité et va mettre sur le réseau du CEB, ce qui veut dire que cette personne-là, pendant 20 ans, n'aura plus besoin de payer de l'électricité et sera épargnée de cette ignominie d'avoir CEB *vine coup courant*, parce qu'ils n'ont pas payé le *bill*. Pas beaucoup, mais ça va faire sa petite contribution.

Madam Speaker, IRENA a examiné des projets d'énergie solaire de 89 pays. Nous avons eu le premier prix pour ce projet. Premier prix ! Rwanda deuxième ! Et c'est juste deux qui ont été sélectionnés. Le CEO d'IRENA me dit, à moi personnellement : «*Now I understand the Mauritian miracle !* »

(*Interruptions*)

Un petit peu d'imagination ! Pas besoin de faire le *faiseur*, de dire : « je connais tout », « il faut mettre ça comme ça ». Non, on écoute tout le monde, y compris l'opposition, surtout l'opposition. On l'écoute, parce que dans toute démagogie, il y a un peu de bon sens. On essaye de séparer le bon grain et l'utiliser - pas beaucoup de bon grains, mais il y en a - et nous progressons comme ça. Le CEO d'IRENA qui est Kenyan, et qui me parle comme ça.

Le même projet, nous allons l'étendre maintenant, comme le Premier ministre et ministre des Finances l'a annoncé au paragraphe 141 de son discours pour les *small businesses*, qui, eux aussi, sont en train de *struggle*, et leur plus grand problème c'est d'avoir à payer l'électricité. C'est un grand problème dans leur budget. Nous allons mettre cela gratuit et puis l'autre moitié, ils vont payer sur la moitié gratuite et il y aura un *scheme* que nous avons bien travaillé. Donc, une partie gratuite et une partie remboursée sur deux ans parce que ce sont quand même des business, ce n'est pas comme des logements sociaux.

Sur les maisons de la NHDC, solaire ! Mais plus que ça ! Nous construisons pour des batteries pour que quand il n'y ait pas de soleil, l'électricité est stockée et on peut continuer. Tout ça a été fait à partir des budgets qui se sont succédé depuis 2015.

Rodrigues sera aussi dans le *scheme*. Je vois le représentant de Rodrigues. Ils ont fait quelque chose d'extraordinaire à Rodrigues. Là-bas, ils ont un problème, le dessalement de l'eau de mer était important. Ça n'a pas marché au début car c'était trop expérimental. Mais maintenant ils ont commencé. Quel était le problème ? C'est que maintenant il y a un projet pilote, c'est vrai, mais qui marche, et j'espère pouvoir être présent le 4 juillet quand ils vont faire l'inauguration. Le dessalement de l'eau de mer, mais tout avec l'énergie solaire et non pas - c'était ça le gros problème – utiliser *fossil fuel* pour faire du dessalement de l'eau de mer. Laissez-moi mettre *on record* mon appréciation de la vitesse d'exécution, il est vrai,

beaucoup plus petit, de l'Assemblée régionale, pour pouvoir mettre sur place ce projet qui va être la solution au problème d'eau et au problème d'électricité à la fois de Rodrigues, et ensuite, j'espère venir aider les Rodriguais à mettre en place l'utilisation de ces mêmes équipements solaires pour aider à perfectionner l'agriculture bio, car Rodrigues se prête encore plus que Maurice à cela.

Je vous ai parlé de l'énergie renouvelable. Ce n'est pas seulement quelque chose qu'on fait pour nous, pour notre pays et pour le monde. Nous sommes, c'est vrai, des victimes innocentes dans ce changement climatique, mais nous avons des engagements internationaux, mais nous avons des engagements moraux aussi, ne pas remplir notre pays avec des *power plants* de charbon, de pétrole, de diesel.

En 2015, je me souviens très bien de la PNQ du *Leader* de l'opposition d'alors sur le *blackout*, *rolling blackout* en fin 2015, et l'honorable *Leader* de l'opposition, conseillé, bien sûr, pour lui sa thèse était qu'on devait chercher partout des technologies, tels que le charbon, le gaz, le *LNG*, *bagasse*, *coal*, *heavy oil*. J'ai répondu tout de suite et j'ai dit : « Halte là ! C'est ça que vous auriez fait si vous aviez gagné les élections ? » Mais *it is completely wrong* !

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Mind your language, hon. Rutnah, please!

The Deputy Prime Minister: Moi, je vais mettre de l'accent sur l'énergie renouvelable et ça va marcher. On me regardait comme si un petit garçon qui ne comprenait rien. Mais décembre 2015 est venu, il n'y a pas eu de *blackout*. Et l'autre jour, j'entends l'honorable Osman Mahomed qui me dit : « Ah ! 2021 *blackout* ! » Okay, nous allons voir ! Et en même temps...

(Interruptions)

En même temps, disant...

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: I have told you, hon. Rutnah, mind your language!

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Prime Minister: Et en même temps, disant : « Mais de toute façon, vous ne serez plus au gouvernement ». Et ça se répète partout, pas tellement le PMSD, mais surtout du côté du MMM et Travailleiste. Ils disent : « Ah, vous ne seraient plus au gouvernement. Vous serez *out*. » Eux, ils seront dedans. Ils me font rappeler M. Rama Sithanen...

(Interruptions)

Vous savez, 60-0 inévitable !

(Interruptions)

Voilà ! *Worst case scenario*, 60-0 ! Conférence de presse, deux semaines avant les élections : « 60-0 inévitable, enfin on espère qu'ils pourront avoir un ou deux sièges » !

(Interruptions)

Même langage, on entend : « Vous ne serez plus la ! »

(Interruptions)

Nous ne serons plus là ! Mais n'importe quelle personne qui regarde juste les discours d'un côté, et de l'autre côté regarde les réalisations du Premier ministre, n'importe qui d'objectif - moi aussi, j'ai fait de l'opposition de nombreuses années. Il n'y avait pas la télévision à l'époque et c'était les journaux qui racontaient ce que nous disions. Mais maintenant que nous parlons directement à la population, venez dire à la population : « d'accord, c'est une bande d'imbéciles, mais voilà nous ce que nous allons faire quand nous prenons le pouvoir, si nous prenons le pouvoir ! » Au moins la population peut voir il y a une bande d'imbéciles au gouvernement et une bande d'intelligents dans l'opposition !

(Interruptions)

En tout cas, jusqu'aujourd'hui ...

(Interruptions)

...on n'a pas eu beaucoup de génies venant de l'opposition. Que de la démagogie ! C'est tout ce qu'il y a eu ! Et le discours de mon collègue, l'honorable Sinatambu, était extraordinaire !

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Order!

The Deputy Prime Minister: Ecoutez! La liberté de mouvement existe.

(Interruptions)

Il y a des gens qui sont payés pour être à la Chambre et qui ont probablement d'autres occupations qui les empêchent de venir à la Chambre et qui n'ont pas pu être là. Je ne vais pas passer de jugement là-dessus. La population arrive à ses conclusions elle-même !

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Order, please!

The Deputy Prime Minister: Merci. Centrale de St Louis, depuis 2008 - je vais aller beaucoup plus vite - aujourd'hui c'est fait, 6 *cases* en Cour que nous avons eu à combattre, sans compter les craintes justifiées, bien sûr, sur la pollution, sur le bruit, etc. Il fallait écouter les Forces Vives et les députés de l'endroit. Fort George, c'est simple, nous devons *look forward*. *Open cycle*, dans un premier temps. Je remercie l'honorable Osman Mahomed

d'avoir expliqué cette horreur scientifique en des termes très simples pour que finalement j'arrive à comprendre ce que c'était, si je peux abuser un peu du langage. Mais c'est vrai, il y a des interrogations ; dans tout projet innovateur qu'on a, rien n'est certain, mais il faut le faire. Il faut le faire parce que, premièrement, ces 2 turbines vont rouler à 35% d'efficacité et ensuite la Phase 2 va venir pour se servir, comme l'a bien expliqué, du *exhaust gas as a form of energy*. Très, très bien ! Mais ensuite, essayer de se servir du LNG. Le point est très bien fait que WorleyParsons a bien fait ressortir qu'on va dépenser beaucoup d'argent dans le LNG pour faire l'électricité, *economies of scales*, ce n'est pas profitable, *we grant you this, no problem*. Mais il y a encore plus que cela. *Bunkering* - les bateaux de croisière maintenant ne pourront plus rouler au diésel. Leur *carbon credit*, ils seront pénalisés. Même les bateaux de transport, les navires marchands comme on dit, petit à petit se convertissent au LNG. Et le problème c'est le storage, le *stocking*, le *storage* du LNG sur les bateaux. Quand ils sortent du port de Singapour - Singapour est le *state-of-the-art* - certains ont étudié à Singapour, ils savent sur LNGs - ils sont bien en avance. Ils vont mettre du LNG sur le bateau ; 33,000 bateaux comme ça passent devant Maurice tous les ans. Mais là, ils auront besoin, quand ils arrivent à Maurice, de s'approvisionner en LNG. Où ils auront cela ?

La Réunion a commencé, mais a interrompu pour le moment, pas besoin trop d'entrer dans les détails. Mais si la moitié de ces bateaux s'arrêtent à Maurice, *bunkering, on travaille là-dessus*. Transports internes, allez à New Delhi, voyez les bus, vous êtes étonnés de voir pas de bruit, pas de fumé, rien. Pourtant, là-bas aussi ils ont toutes ces organisations, tous les syndicats, mais ils ont pu le faire et même pour les maisons, dans un dernier temps. Mais tout cela, nous ne dormons pas. Nous le faisons, nous avons un consultant qui travaille là-dessus et il y a eu un *request for information* pour mettre un *LNG Facility for Supply of Gas to CEB*. 10 entreprises sont en train, maintenant où je vous parle, de travailler, de participer à un exercice de *pre-feed, front-end engineering and design* ; une étude à leur propre frais. J'ai demandé au CEB de ne rien garder secret, de leur donner toutes les informations qu'ils voulaient. Cela ne fait rien qu'elles risquent de *leakage* je ne sais pas quoi, ce n'est pas mon problème. Mais toutes les informations doivent être données pour qu'ils puissent préparer leurs documents, leur *proposals* à bon escient sachant qu'ils avaient toutes les informations.

L'étude sur LNG - je dis cela parce que je sais que l'honorable Mahomed est intéressé à ce genre de choses - cette étude est en train d'être faite par Poten & Partners Ltd de UK et ils vont regarder tout le *supply chain* du LNG.

L'honorable Mahomed a aussi mentionné : 'Mais qu'est-ce qui va arriver au tarif d'électricité ?' J'ai demandé au CEB de me donner des éléments de réponse. Ils m'ont

répondu que non, cela ne voudra pas dire de *increase in tarif* d'électricité. *All things being equal*, bien sûr, si le prix du pétrole arrive à USD200 Dollars, ce sera une autre chose. *All things being equal, no electricity tariff will be envisaged under the new Fort George System.*

Un mot rapide, parce qu'il y a encore d'autres choses à dire, sur FibreNet. Qu'est-ce que je n'ai pas entendu là-dessus ? Alors que le Parlement a voté cela, on a discuté, certains étaient dans le gouvernement, on est tombé d'accord de faire cela et on le fait. Initié par le Premier ministre lorsqu'il était ministre de ICT, ce sont deux choses : Satellite et FibreNet. C'est déjà expliqué. Aujourd'hui, il y a 30 sites qui sont complétés. Il y a 9 qui seront terminés en octobre. Le commercial commence à rentrer dedans, CEB FibreNet, et ensuite, ce sera *link* au projet METIS, le câble sous-marin qui va relier Maurice-Reunion-Madagascar à l'Afrique du Sud, où CEB est participant dans l'actionnariat de METIS. Un projet de la Commission de l'Océan Indien, avec l'aide, le soutien de l'Union Européenne.

Cela veut dire le prix de l'Internet, l'accès à l'information, l'accès à l'Internet sera véritablement démocratisé. Cela va devenir accessible à tout le monde. Et maintenant quand vous aurez le panneau solaire sur votre petite case et votre enfant veut se connecter sur l'Internet pour voir combien d'électricité il a produit pendant la journée, sera accessible, et apprendre d'autres choses, bien-sûr. Malheureusement, aussi de mauvaises choses. Mais cela on ne peut pas bloquer. Mais tout cela sera accessible aux gens qui sont le plus au bas de l'échelle. Et ça, la population doit remercier Pravind Jugnauth, on veut ou on ne veut pas. Je suis un exécutant, mais les idées qu'il a, comme on voit dans le budget - comment on appelle cela ? Les confettis - je ne sais pas qui a dit cela - vont tomber dans les maisons des gens les plus pauvres. Elimination de la pauvreté ! Je regarde uniquement mon secteur de l'énergie, 31% de réduction. Qu'est-ce qu'on n'a pas dit ? Que je devrais réduire l'électricité pour tout le monde ! Réduire pour *gros paletot* ! J'aurais dû réduire par 5%, là je réduis 31%.

Je cible! CEB cible! *Lor zero* à 6 m³, beaucoup de grandes théories! Qui est-ce qui va payer? Est-ce que c'est la CWA qui paye? Quelqu'un doit payer, bien sûr. Mais lui, la personne qui est en train de recevoir son bill – zéro!

Aller lui dire que c'est un budget, quoi creux, ce n'est pas quoi! Aller lui dire ça! Laissez-moi parler un peu du *Wastewater Management Authority* avant d'arriver à l'eau parce que l'eau aussi est un gros morceau. Concernant *Wastewater Management Authority*, c'est vrai, l'honorable Rughoobur a manifesté beaucoup d'intérêt là-dessus, et j'ai bien écouté ses interventions. C'est vrai que sur le projet...

(Interruptions)

...non, il n'a pas parlé de Grand'Baie ...

Madam Speaker: Don't disturb the hon. Deputy Prime Minister !

The Deputy Prime Minister:...le projet de Grand'Baie prend du retard pour des fautes, responsabilités à partager. Il faut aller beaucoup plus vite. Concernant les Japonais, finalement, nous sommes arrivés à les convaincre de venir voir et discuter. Nous avons discuté, ça décolle. J'ai lu le rapport du *Public Accounts Committee*. Le dernier rapport du *Public Accounts Committee* est très sévère envers le *Wastewater Management Authority* et je dois rendre hommage à l'esprit d'indépendance du *Chairperson*, l'honorable Madame Perraud –

“Your Committee is of the view that there has been total absence of accountability and good governance in the management of some statutory bodies falling under the aegis of the Ministry of Energy and Public Utilities (MEPU). Et ce Wastewater Management Authority raised concerns inasmuch as the report et la Chairperson est bien claire de quoi elle parle dedans –

“Inasmuch as the Report of the Director of Audit for the year 2014 raised concerns about the shortcomings relating to ineffective management of public funds and unexplained waste of resources in both organisations.”

Ils ont regardé le rapport et fait des commentaires acerbes sur ce que était arrivé à *Plaine Wilhems* que –

“Your Committee was neither satisfied with the explanations provided by the officers of the parent Ministry nor with those provided by officers of the WMA as to the effective monitoring of the project.”

Et cela continue –

“...was open to abuse...”

Et il y a un paragraphe sur le *Chairperson* du *Board* –

“Your Committee noted with concern that the then Chairperson of the Board of the WMA refused to collaborate with the Senior Chief Executive and officers of the Ministry.

Your Committee severely condemns the conduct of the then Chairperson of the Board of the WMA inasmuch as he was paid out of public funds.”

C'est un rare sursaut d'objectivité d'indépendance venir blâmer comme ça sur ce qui s'était passé en 2014 parce que tout ce que est écrit dans ce rapport est vrai. Je rends hommage parce que ce *Chairperson*, dont parle l'honorable Madame Perraud, n'est ni plus ni moins que Me Khushal Lobine.

(Interruptions)

Je crois tellement, il dépasse le secrétaire général ou quelque chose du PMSD. Donc, lorsque nous avons entendu parler du *Public Accounts Committee* et des critiques contre le PAC, moi, je pense que le PAC fait un bon travail, même si ce n'est pas très pratique. Mais là, on voit que l'honorable Madame Perraud n'a eu aucune hésitation que d'être extrêmement forte dans son langage contre un de ses propres membres.

(Interruptions)

Et, bien sûr, nous étions au courant de cela depuis 2015 et les *remedial measures* ont été prises, comme on voit dans le rapport du directeur de l'Audit de cette année, par exemple.

Je viens au problème de l'eau, le plus important ces derniers jours. Alors, l'honorable Mahomed aurait pu rater une occasion de rester tranquille. *The third act of perfidy – perfide - by this Government is found at paragraph 160 and has to do with the decision not to increase the water tariff.* Donc, il est contre la décision du Premier ministre, il trouve cela perfide. Autant que je sache, perfide est une mauvaise affaire.

Mr Osman Mahomed: This is not what I said. The Deputy Prime Minister has to look at it in the whole context of volte-face. I raised three issues through you, Madam Speaker, and in the context volte-face, I said this is the third act of perfidy. So, he should not mislead the House by saying that I am against that the price of water has not been increased because in the Press, I have already expressed that I am against.

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Hon. Osman Mahomed, I want to draw your attention to the fact that when you have a point of clarification, you should not bring in any arguments, but you have just to clear what you said or you did not say.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Prime Minister: This is how we should read or have heard the hon. Member. I am prepared to go down his root. But did he tell us whether he was for or against? The hon. First Member for Port Louis South and Port Louis Central, hon. Uteem, is first, the other one is third. They are both very bright persons; this is why I want to take some time with them because they talk well, they are not stupid, they are intelligent, but when you talk of perfidy, don't look here!

Last year, the whole chunks of speeches of hon. Uteem was the disaster that we were facing with the Metro Express. Today, this year, not one word on Metro Express! Do his eloquence, undoubted, his financial, wizardry no question, he must have convinced and must have contributed to the campaign that there was against the Metro Express. But when we look

at reality today, what Minister Bodha has been able to perform, the first train running in September? Don't raise your head tell me yes or no!

(Interruptions)

Yes. And today he criticises everything. *C'est extraordinaire! Oui, rien n'est bon!*

(Interruptions)

Les routes ! Mais tout a été fait par Anil Bachoo !

(Interruptions)

Mais enfin ! Anil Bachoo, son ami !

(Interruptions)

Le discours de l'honorable Bodha - *coup-de-poing, la main dans poche !*

(Interruptions)

On verra s'il continue comme ça.

Sur le chômage, *financial wizardry !* Il faut lire ça. Il cite *Statistics Mauritius*. Il commence sur l'honorable Premier ministre ; cette façon honteuse de faire croire que le taux de chômage est soi-disant en baisse. Scandaleux ! Mais quand il dit ça à la télévision, 'ça baisse ça ! Scandaleux !'

(Interruptions)

Ayez au moins le courage d'expliquer à la population que le taux de chômage a baissé, parce que *Statistics Mauritius* a changé sa façon de calculer le taux de chômage. Et il cite - regardez son calcul et la manière qu'il manie le langage.

"The number of persons aged 16 stood at 397,100. Some 5,800 of them were classified as forming part of the potential labour force, that is, persons not in employment who were not looking for a job, but were available for work, or those who were looking for a job, but were not available for work. Those persons have not been classified as unemployed."

Et bien, normal ! *They are not in employment and they are not looking for a job.* Étudiants ou en congé sabbatique, ou ils sont en train de faire leurs petites entreprises ou jardin - des jeunes. Normal ils seront *unemployed !* Et lui, il vient dire, et il cite, parce que lui, au moins, il ne fait pas de plagiat. Il ne copie pas comme ça. Il prend les paroles et dit ses citations. Il est intellectuellement honnête, mais jusqu'à un certain point seulement.

"Those persons have not been classified as unemployed since they did not satisfy the criteria of unemployment."

Mais si vous n'êtes pas *unemployed*, vous n'êtes pas *unemployed !* Donc, lui, ce qu'il fait, il prend 41,800, les chiffres de *Statistics*, et il ajoute les 5,600 personnes qui, eux, n'ont

pas d'emploi, mais qui n'ont pas envie de travailler, parce qu'ils sont étudiants, jardiniers ou n'importe quoi. Il ajoute ça, et il vient dire que le chiffre de chômage est 8.1%. Quand je l'ai écouté, franchement, moi je l'ai cru, parce que vraiment il le fait très bien. Je le félicite. C'est le seul qui sait faire ça aussi bien que ça.

Mais quand vous regardez bien, c'est le contraire de ce qu'il dit. Mais vous ne pourrez jamais l'accuser de malhonnêteté intellectuelle, parce qu'il dit tout et le contraire de tout dans une seule page. C'est extraordinaire ! Quand il a fini de dire ça, il ne manque pas de culot pour accuser le Premier ministre. Cela, Madame la présidente, relève de la malhonnêteté tout court. C'est ça qui relève de la malhonnêteté tout court ! Franchement ! Ensuite pour venir dire que le budget est un disque rayé. Ça n'existe plus les disques rayés de nos jours, Madame la présidente !

(Interruptions)

L'époque longtemps ça, disque rayé !

(Interruptions)

On vit dans le passé ! Aujourd'hui satellite ; 'disque rayé', personne ne comprend ce que ça veut dire. Demandez aux jeunes ce que c'est un disque rayé ! Mais enfin !

Le prix de l'eau. Moi, je ne suis pas un comptable. J'avais une réunion avec les cadres financiers de la CWA. Ils sont venus avec leur grand tableau qu'ils mettent sur le mur, on regarde, bien intelligent. Très bien ! *Bottom line, say 6m³ d'eau, levy sur les bouteilles d'eau, les R 200 millions qui manquent, il faut make good the shortfall. Somebody must pay for it.* Ma première réaction, c'était qu'on n'allait pas demander au gouvernement, les consommateurs vont payer pour ce qu'ils consomment. Ça a été ma première réaction, et je l'ai dit partout. Deux choses sont arrivées.

Un jour, le *Finance Officer* de la CWA me dit : « mais on peut aussi aller demander les subsides au gouvernement ». J'ai dit : « non, ça je ne vais pas le faire ». Et l'honorable leader de l'opposition pose sa PNQ d'une façon très correcte. Il vient avec les comptes. Il dit ce que le *Finance Officer* avait dit ; la même chose. Il dit : « mais si vous faites ça, vous n'avez pas besoin de monter les tarifs. » Mais je ne suis pas un borné. Je ne suis pas un têtard. Je vois des gens qui ne sont pas des imbéciles, qui viennent dire des choses qui sont sensées en comptabilité. Je vais voir l'honorable Premier ministre. L'honorable Premier ministre me dit que lui aussi pense qu'on ne devrait pas monter le tarif d'eau. Quelle claque ? Claque magistrale ?

(Interruptions)

L'honorable Premier ministre m'a donné une claque ? Cela a été discuté entre l'honorable Premier ministre et moi. Je lui ai dit : «voilà les deux options », et j'ai montré les chiffres. On a parlé, on a appelé des officiers, *high officials* du ministère des Finances, et on est arrivé à la solution. Claque magistrale ? Au contraire, c'est comme ça qu'une démocratie doit fonctionner. Vous devez, quand vous êtes dans l'opposition, au lieu de caqueter, venir avec des propositions et dire : «voilà, *there is an alternative, and I propose this alternative* ». Moi, certainement, ce jour-là, j'ai dit : « écoutez, moi je ne suis pas d'accord avec les subsides ». Mais je me dis quand même que le bougre n'est pas un imbécile pour dire quelque chose comme ça. Allons revoir. Et c'est ainsi qu'il n'y a pas eu d'augmentation de tarif d'eau. On a regardé nos chiffres. Le ministère des Finances a regardé les chiffres. Il faut empêcher que la CWA ne puisse plus fonctionner, ne puisse plus arriver au point où ils n'auront plus d'*overdraft*. Mais il faut chercher de l'argent. On a eu de l'argent. Donc, fermons cette parenthèse.

Maintenant, on parle de la réforme du secteur de l'eau. Deux choses séparées ! D'abord, on dit qu'on a dépensé beaucoup d'argent sur la réforme de l'eau. Je raccourcis. Nous obtenons un *grant* de 475,000 dollars pour les services- conseils, et nous obtenons ça de la banque mondiale. Et nous obtenons R 400,000 pour que nous puissions payer l'*IFC* pour ses services. Nous, nous allons payer 400,000 dollars et jusqu'à l'heure nous avons payé R 6.8 millions. J'ai entendu avec stupeur l'honorable premier membre de la circonscription de Savanne et Rivière Noire. Il y a une limite ! Quand on a été un *senior Member*, un *Speaker*, un ministre de l'Énergie. Ecoutez, il y a une limite, quand on a été un *senior Member*, un *Speaker*, un ministre de l'Énergie, il y a des limites qu'on ne dépasse pas. Okay, l'honorable Uteem le fait dans les limites de ce qu'on fait in *Parliamentary exchanges, debates etc.* Mais l'honorable Ganoo dépasse la limite. Il vient dire que l'affermage va nous coûter R 10 milliards, ou est-ce qu'il est allé chercher ça ?

Allons voir les chiffres ! Quand nous avons pris en 2015, le réseau de la CWA était dans un piteux état, la moitié de l'eau était perdue. On essaye de rentrer dans un débat, quel pourcentage etc., la moitié de l'eau était perdue ! Ça veut dire on produisait de l'eau, mais on ne recevait l'argent que pour la moitié, c'est comme si je vais à deux au restaurant, je commande deux *mine frit*, quand je paye, je paye un seul *mine frit*, mais comment ce restaurant va continuer de travailler. Nous avons besoin de mettre *capital investment*, et la première chose, je me souviens à la Caverne, quand le Premier ministre désigné d'alors, dans sa cour à la Caverne, me dit, qu'est-ce que je pense du ministère de l'Énergie - je vais évidemment vous épargner ma réaction initiale, mais il me dit : « ne t'en fais pas, nous allons

trouver de l'argent parce que la première chose c'est de refaire le réseau ». C'est extraordinaire. Il n'a pas besoin de livre de comptable, il vous donne la réponse directement, après il va aller chercher vos justifications avec les comptables, les économistes etc..

R 8 milliards, le gouvernement va faire ça parce qu'on a besoin de faire ça ! On a laissé cette affaire-là pourrir et on m'accuse de faire pourrir la CWA ! Il y a des gens ne savent pas ce qu'ils disent. Il fallait refaire les tuyaux, les stations de traitements. Quelqu'un en a parlé, je pense que c'est l'honorable Ganoo, oui, il raison. Il faut mettre de nouveaux systèmes, mais tout ça, ce n'est pas des paiements à l'opérateur, c'est des paiements pour nous, pour la nation. De R 5 milliards, le gouvernement a donné depuis 2016 comment l'opérateur sera rémunéré.

L'opposition sait très bien, puisque l'honorable Ganoo, lui-même, a travaillé là-dessus quand il était ministre. Je n'ai pas inventé la roue, moi. Vous croyez que j'ai la capacité d'inventer des histoires comme ça? Je n'ai pas le Prix Nobel. Je me suis basé sur des rapports qui existaient à l'époque, où nous étions ensemble dans le gouvernement, le MMM et le MSM étaient dans le gouvernement ; les dossiers qui ont été travaillés, mais, malheureusement, en 2005, qu'est-ce qu'ils ont fait, ils sont allés chercher une bande de Singapouriens, ils leur ont donné R 1 milliard, pour zéro. Alors que le MMM de l'époque s'était engagé - c'est *on record*, on ne peut pas dire non ça - dans cette réforme-là, je n'ai fait que de déterrer comme j'ai fait pour l'énergie renouvelable. Je n'ai fait que déterrer ce qui avait été enterré. Heureusement que j'avais des conseillers qui avaient tout répertoriés, et nous avons dit, allons faire ça comme ça, et on a pris la Banque Mondiale. On aurait pu fait ça sans la Banque Mondiale, seulement il aurait eu trop d'accusation d'ici et ça aurait coûté trop cher. Tandis qu'avec la Banque Mondiale, tout de suite ils sont venus à notre aide. Nous avons IFC, et nous avons des instances internationales qui sont là pour rassurer tout le monde et *make sure that we get the best*.

L'opérateur, il va obtenir - bien sûr, qu'il sera payé. Il y a des gens qui croient que l'opérateur va venir à Maurice, va travailler pour vous et il va vous payer. Il faut être fou ! L'opérateur, il sera payé, - je dis ça en anglais pour que ce soit bien claire, qu'il n'y ait pas de *misinterpretation - based on the volume of water built and collected, multiply by an operator, tariff qui sera discuter*. Deuxième, *Performance-based payments, bonus, si vous arrivez à faire mieux, penalty, if you don't reach your targets*.

Supervision fees for ongoing projects. A fee for billing and collecting ground water license charges on behalf of the Water Resources Unit, and Wastewater charges on behalf of Wastewater Management Authority.

If there is a disagreement in the currency of the contract, of course, there will be mechanism of settlement of dispute, as hon. Ganoo well knows. How can he ask such a question?

So, this is roughly the diagraph. Of course, in the details, we are actually now for the last three months, if there has been some delay, because we are monitoring all these negotiations with IFC to make sure - what do you think, I, a lawyer of 40 years, am going to make a deal where my client is going to lose, and this time where I, myself, am going to lose. Well, I am stupid or what! I am going to work out the best deal, but the best deal is not like some people have said, not this House, I agree, but on the radio. They have been saying: “*ah, zott la pou fer profit*”. But if they are giving you a service why should you not pay them?

So, hon. Ganoo asked a PQ B/440 in 2007 -

“Can I ask the hon. Minister whether he does agree that with what IFC said in the report that, in fact, to take the bull by the horn we can have reports, but the main solution to this problem would be a performance based management contract which would be the remuneration of the management contractor into achievement of stated quantifiable performance improvement of unaccounted for water reduction?”.

*We are in 100% agreement ! So, il aurait pu avoir économisé son discours. Qu’est-ce qu’il est en train de parler ? Nous sommes d’accord ! D’ailleurs, quand on avait discuté ça en 2000, j’avais écouté les discussions au bureau politique, mais j’étais full d’accord, et c’est ça même que nous sommes en train de faire. D’ailleurs, c’est vrai, que rendre hommage au MMM, ils sont très mesurés dans leurs critiques et, bien sûr qu’ils vont surveiller, c’est leur rôle de l’opposition de surveiller à ce que l’on ne fasse pas d’erreur, et nous aurons tout dans la transparence, mais surtout, surtout, les *human resources*, il ne faut pas que les employés payent le prix de la réforme.*

Voilà l’opérateur privé devra investir à peu près R 2 milliards dans les nouvelles technologies. Toute sorte de système qu’il faut mettre, qu’il n’y a pas ici. On est encore en train de taper avec un marteau pour détecter ou il y a une fuite. Mais il y a d’autre system, et c’est l’opérateur qui aura à mettre dans les outils, dans la machines, dans l’informatique et ça va durer pendant 15 ans. Il y aura un devoir de renouveler son software, et de renouveler son hardware aussi parce que ça ce sera les opérations.

24/7 ! Qu’est-ce que je n’entends pas sur 24/7 ! Laissez-moi vous dire, Port Louis, la circonscription de notre ami l’honorable Uteem, 78%. Vous savez, parfois, quand j’écoute l’honorable Uteem, par exemple, sur les tarifs d’eau, pourquoi utiliser ce genre de langage sans venir dire s’il est d’accord sur ce que le Premier ministre a décidé ou pas, sur notre

décision. Je suis en train de commencer à me demander : est-ce que vous n'avez pas quelque chose de personnel qu'on dirait que ça vous gêne cette affaire que nous sommes en train de bien travailler comme ça ? On verra, le futur va nous le dire plus tard.

Un petit mot sur *Bagatelle Water Treatment Plant*. Oui, le retard est là, nous avons perdu deux ans parce qu'il y avait une compagnie française qui avait *challenged* la décision du Central Procurement Board (CPB) de le donner au contracteur qui est en train de faire son travail. Nous avons dû suivre le cours. Contrairement à ce que quelqu'un dit, ce n'est pas la CWA qui a *challenged* cette affaire. C'est la compagnie, *un bidder* qui était *unsatisfied*. Ils ont utilisé les moyens légaux et, malheureusement, la cour nous a dit de ne pas commencer, '*you don't award the contract*' comme c'est normal et nous avons perdu deux ans. Après ils ont perdu leur *case*. C'est comme St. Louis, j'ai pu éviter des injonctions, sinon pour St. Louis on aurait été encore là. Mais c'est le processus démocratique qui suscite l'admiration des gens qui étaient aux *African Energy Forum*.

La CWA, on continue, le nord: 70% ; l'est: 79% ; il n'y a que dans les Plaines Wilhems MAV Upper, MAV Lower, là où on avait mis les Singapouriens pour travailler, c'est 49% et 31%. Ces deux régions seulement qui sont bien affectées. Et les autres régions ? Les *hours of supply* ont augmenté Longtemps c'était 4 heures de temps, mais, maintenant, c'est 10 heures de temps. On ne peut pas aujourd'hui pour demain dire changer toute cette histoire de CWA. CWA est un vestige du passé. Ça existait quand il y avait deux fontaines dans un village. Ça existait au moment où il n'y avait pas d'hôtels. On pouvait *bate bater* à cette époque-là. À cette époque-là, il n'y avait que les villes qui obtenaient 24/7. La campagne n'avait même pas d'eau, n'avait même pas de chemins !

On a écouté le discours du ministre Mentor. Tout a évolué dans Maurice. Tout s'est amélioré excepté la CWA ! Quoi ? On ne veut pas ? J'entends des gens dire : « *garde li coumsa* ». L'honorable Ganoo : « allons apporter des consultants étrangers pour faire ça. » Mais où sera leur intérêt ? Ils vont venir comme la Canadienne qui était venue pour la CEB. Elle passe deux ans de vacances à Maurice ! Comme il y avait quelqu'un à la *Wastewater* ! Il vient passer deux ans de vacances à Maurice. Il est content.

(*Interruptions*)

Il viendra là ! Oui, il y aura des consultants, mais leur intérêt sera dans leur *performance* !

(*Interruptions*)

Madam Speaker: Hon. Deputy Prime Minister...

(*Interruptions*)

The Deputy Prime Minister: Oh! I am sorry!

Mr Ganoo: On a point of personal explanation. The hon. Deputy Prime Minister is dragging me in the last argument he made. When did I say we should bring foreigners to manage the CWA?

Madam Speaker: Please proceed!

The Deputy Prime Minister: I got it from the speech of the hon. Member, of course, if I am in error, I apologise. But am I confusing him? I don't think hon. Uteem said this, but I won't waste time checking that on my computer now. I shall personally apologise to him afterwards if I find out that it was not him. I could be wrong.

Mr Ganoo: I am positive, I never made that argument.

Madam Speaker: Okay. No. Resume your seat!

The Deputy Prime Minister: Okay, I have no issue with that. But whoever said so, somebody said it! And, whoever said this, he fell into gross error. The capital investments, duplicate boreholes, 15 mobile treatment plants, Rivière des Anguilles Dam are being considered. IPPS - hon. Mahomed asked the question. Yes, the sugar industry does remain important to the economy of the country and power generation is important for optimisation strategy for bagasse. But let us face it. Today, it is the bagasse and coal. Today, it is coal with a sprinkle of bagasse because sugar has fallen down. 360,000 tones this year compared to what we used to have. It is no fault of anybody. Sugar prices have fallen down. But we have got to cure it. Hon. Seeruttun, working on high fiber cane or that sort of thing and other forms of biomass, to reduce coal input. We will see how we do it. Not easy! I never said it was easy. But it has got to be done. The energy and water front is as optimistic as one can be.

Time does not permit me to go into each and every one. I have tried to encapsulate the most that we could in this time. I must finish by one thing: there are in this Government a number of persons, of Members of Parliament, who work, *des travailleurs de l'ombre*, whom people do not know very well. They know them, but they do not realise the work they are doing. They work in silence. Their work is tough. I am mentioning the PPS.

(Interruptions)

They are the ones who are putting into practice *development devan ou la porte*. This is why when I hearsay: "2021, you won't even be there", the PPS are that transmission chains with the NDU and the Local Authorities. I have a list of what has been done in Constituency No. 19, roads, drains, pavements.

In 2014...

(Interruptions)

...here we are talking *narien pas ti pe faire!*

(Interruptions)

Ligne Berthaud? Ligne Berthaud is the link – I was going to say umbilical link – between Stanley, Trèfles, Mont Roches, Roches Brunes and *l'hôpital* Victoria. Umbilical? Because you know that road was in such a state, women being rushed to hospital because they are in labour, they can't stand it, in the middle of the road, the baby comes! I know of three cases of baby's place of birth: Ligne Berthaud!

(Interruptions)

There we are doing it now!

And one word for hon. Soodhun because there were lots of land issues. I told him, please come. He came, he looked at it and within 3 days he concurred! He is great...

(Interruptions)

He is great!

(Interruptions)

And Ligne Berthaud will be finished.

Mediclinic Stanley, just as mediclinic or whatever in Petite Riviere, hon. Dr Husnoo is working on this, replacing that old dispensary of Buckingham. *Développement dans ou la porte!* This is what the PPS are doing. Hon. Aliphon opened our eyes - and I understand why immediately the tone changed on the other side - when he started giving the list of what he had done as PPS. This is why my concluding words will be *l'hommage aux travailleurs de l'ombre, l'hommage à la NDU, aux PPS!*

Madam Speaker, I thank you for your attention.

(12.32 p.m.)

Mr P. Bérenger (Third Member for Stanley & Rose Hill): Madam Speaker, GDP growth in 2018/19 will remain, unfortunately, too low for Mauritius to move on to reach 'High-Income Country' status. Budget deficit and public debt figures have become meaningless because of massive off-budget manipulations, but the fact is that both the Budget deficits and the public debt are unsustainable. Growing uncertainties threaten our balance of payments and our capacity to continue financing our international transactions. Approaching general elections have prompted some budgetary sweeteners, but also explained why certain vital decisions have been postponed.

Madam Speaker, let me start with GDP growth. We all know that we had been promised *un miracle économique*. But when the present Minister of Finance, now Prime Minister, presented the 2016-2017 Budget in July, he came back to us and predicted a 4.1 GDP growth. It turned out to be 3.9% as we all know. A year later, Madam Speaker, he again

predicted a 4.1 GDP growth for 2017-2018. It was again 3.9%. Last Thursday this year, the Minister this time predicted for the third time and consecutive year that GDP growth in 2018-2019 would be again 4.1%, which is not in itself enough for Mauritius to graduate to 'High-Income Country' status. This is an economic fact. But, in fact, GDP growth in 2018-19 will most probably, again, be less than 4.1%, if we go by investment and public capital outlays figures available to date.

Madam Speaker, total investment in 2018 is forecasted by Statistics Mauritius to remain almost static at 7.2% of GDP. It is very low. Statistics Mauritius also expects the ratio of private investment to GDP to fall to 12.6% in 2006 and in 2008, from 13.2% in 2017. The last Budget provided for capital outlays of Rs12.7 billion in 2017-2018. As at June 2018, the figures provided in the Budget Estimates, themselves, as at June 2018, only Rs8.6 billion had been disbursed, had been spent, that is, a shortfall of 36% Madam Speaker. In fact, as in previous years, the need to meet social and other current expenses, whilst having to contain the Budget deficit and public debt, has caused Government to curtail capital spending. I hope I am proved wrong. I hope I am wrong but the above considerations indicate clearly that in 2018-2019, the 4.1 GDP growth target will unfortunately, again, be missed.

Let me move on to the Budget deficit and the public debt, Madam Speaker. The Minister has predicted a 3.2% Budget deficit in this financial year, and 63.1% of public debt by the end of June next year, by the end of this financial year. Madam Speaker, I have to say that these figures are meaningless, have become meaningless because Government now resorts, by now, to massive off-budget manipulations that artificially bring down both the Budget deficit and the public debt. The Budget deficit is underestimated by the incurring of expenditure in State-owned companies, Special Purpose Vehicles and special funds. A few examples, the Safe City Project is financed through the Mauritius Telecom for billions of rupees. The 2,800 new social housing, which are supposed to be built in the next two years, are to be constructed at the cost of the NHDC, at a cost of Rs12.7 billion. More than Rs14 billion will be spent through the Metro Express Ltd for the construction of the Metro Express. All this outside Budget considerations! More than Rs3 billion will be spent, through the Mauritius Multisport Infrastructure Ltd, another Government-owned company, for the Sports Complex at Côte d'Or, as we all know. Infrastructure - the new Cancer Unit. Even the new Cancer Centre Unit will be paid for through a recently registered SIC Development Co. Ltd, which will finance 10 other projects.

Replacement of pipes will be financed, by millions of rupees, through a National Water Development Co. Ltd. Other Government owned companies spending billions include the CEB Energy Co. Ltd, the CEB Green Energy Co. Ltd and Landscape Mauritius Ltd.

Madam Speaker, it is estimated that the consolidated budget deficit, including the above off-budget figures exceeded 4% of GDP in 2017-2018, and it is estimated that the budget deficit will be over 5% of GDP in 2018-2019, if we have recourse, as was the case in the past, to ordinary serious budget accounting.

I repeat, we estimate, I estimate that the budget deficit this ending financial year exceeded 4%, and we believe, I believe that the budget deficit - when we take all this into consideration - for 2018-2019 will exceed 5% of GDP, and that, as the hon. Prime Minister and Minister of Finance knows, in spite of billions received as grants from India. But, of course, those grants will only last a few more years.

In the case of the public debt, Madam Speaker, Government uses a so-called international definition of public debt that includes the debt of only a select limited number of public enterprises like CEB, CWA, Wastewater Management Authority, National Pension Fund, whereas the IMF definition of public debt includes financial and non-financial entities like Mauritius Telecom, State Bank of Mauritius, SICOM, MauBank and the State owned companies referred to above.

I give a few examples again. An Indian Exim Bank line of credit of USD 500 million is being routed through State Bank of Mauritius and a China Exim Bank line of credit is being extended to Mauritius Telecom for the Safe City project. Redeemable preferential shares are being invested by the State owned companies to allow an accounting trick - if I can call that like this - so that redeemable preferential shares are not included in the public debt, Madam Speaker.

Government now refers to partial repayment guarantees or annual lease payments, again to justify non-inclusion in the public sector debt. Madam Speaker, I estimate - it is estimated - that all the above debt by Government owned companies and all Government guaranteed borrowing, if all this is included, public debt would reach or even exceed 70% of GDP, the way things are going. To such public debt, of course, must also be added substantial contingent liabilities like the one arising from the Betamax case.

Madam Speaker, to me, it is absolutely clear that such levels of budget deficit and public debt are simply unsustainable in the near future; may be not the near future, but in the more or less near future. What is even more disturbing to me - and that will be probably my

main point in this part of my speech - and should be to all of us, including Government, are external threats looming over our capacity to finance our external transactions.

The current account of the country, Madam Speaker, which is one of the best measures of the economic health of any country, including, of course, Mauritius. Our current account deficit is in big deficit. Yet, the balance of payments has been in huge surplus these last years and our international - as the hon. Prime Minister and Minister of Finance said - currency reserves have risen to their highest recorded level because - that is the key point - the offshore banking sector and the so-called Global Business Companies, the GBCs, have been bringing into the country billions and billions of dollars that moved on partly to be invested in India, and this allows us to live with this massive current account deficit.

But again, it won't last forever, and I will get to that. In fact, we have estimated - I have estimated - that total GBCs net inflows are estimated to represent some 20% of our GDP, whereas the balance of payments surplus is only, as at present, 6% of GDP, Madam Speaker. It has also been estimated that excluding these GBC companies, these GBC flows, the current account deficit would stand at a high level of over 10% of GDP. The disturbing fact is that these GBC flows are increasingly under threat. I will explain myself. The formal elimination of the capital gains tax advantage under the India-Mauritius Double Taxation Agreement, this final elimination will happen in April next year, that is, tomorrow. That is when this elimination of the Capital Gains Tax will really kick in and then we shall be really measuring the impact on our offshore sector, and especially on our GBCs, on global companies, Madam Speaker.

OECD and European Union initiatives against offshore financial centres or tax havens that erode the tax base of developed countries are intensifying. The increase in interest rates worldwide led by the US and a rising US dollar will impinge on capital flows to offshore and developing financial centres like Mauritius.

Madam Speaker, all this means that the continued availability of GBC financing is subject to increasing uncertainty. On top of that, we must add now the increasing risk of the global trade war and greater financial insolvability available as the global economic and financial situation becomes more disturbed and more difficult these days, Madam Speaker. This is an opinion shared by prominent central bankers and economists, including the Governor of the Central Bank of India these days.

Again, Madam Speaker, I hope I am proved wrong. The near future will tell for the reasons which I have just given. And that is why I am very worried as to how our economy, not just our offshore sector and our GBC companies, but our economy in general under such

influence is going to evolve in the months and years ahead. I don't want to sound totally pessimistic, but I am giving facts and I am worried. I am very worried that the GDP growth will not be sufficient. I am very worried that the public deficit and the public debt are not sustainable in the medium-term and I am even more worried what is going, as I have just said, to happen to our offshore sector and GBC companies.

This was, Madam Speaker, then main part of my intervention on the economy. I am going now to move on to some of the measures '*la bouche doux*', which are contained in the Budget, but if you do not mind, if we can break for now and then I will take up on that part of my speech.

Madam Speaker: So, I will suspend the sitting for one and a half hours for lunch.

At 12.56 p.m. the sitting was suspended.

On resuming at 2.31 p.m. with Madam Speaker in Chair.

Mr Bérenger: Madam Speaker, I was moving on to talk about measures *la bouche doux* which are to be found in the Budget and about two problems that have been kicked down the road past the next general elections.

Madam Speaker, as many orators have said before me, after increasing in May the price of diesel and essence by 10%, Government, in the Budget, brought the price down by 5% a month later, and, at the same time, brought down the price of LPG, obviously to try *de faire oublier le zigzag* which it represented. But it went down well, it is not surprising that it went down well because it should not have gone up the way it went up.

Then Government brought down the Income Tax rate for those earning between - I don't have the exact figure in my handwriting - annually from 15% to 10% and, of course, that also went down well, but as has been pointed out before me, Madam Speaker, the fact will remain that in spite of the income tax rate being brought down, the MRA is going to collect slightly more in terms of income tax on individuals for the forthcoming in spite of having brought down the rate, and Value Added Tax, which we all know, VAT which brings in the major part of Government revenue, will go up at the same time that income tax in spite of that reduction from 15% to 10% will go up, in fact from Rs9.6 billion income tax for individuals to Rs9.8 m. in 2018/2019. But, more importantly, VAT will increase during the forthcoming financial year from Rs33 billions to Rs36 billions, that is 10% increase. But, obviously, these two measures went down well, and it is not surprising.

Concerning the two problems I wanted to talk about, one is the sugar industry, Madam Speaker. Apparently, the Government Whip had problem understanding what I meant by '*effrayant*'. I am afraid, I meant it and I made it. I find the way this dossier, this issue of the sugar industry has been treated is *effrayant*. Why do I say that, Madam Speaker, for months I had been - these last months, because we know that the price had gone down but crashed down over the last 12 months, a bit less - I had been insisting on the urgency of the situation in the sugar industry and that the priority of priorities was the need to help the planters so that planters would at least stop accelerating the rhythm at which land is being withdrawn from under sugar. I don't think I am exaggerating when I say *que l'écroulement de toute l'industrie sucrière menace*. And when *l'industrie sucrière est menacée* in that way and if *demain l'industrie sucrière s'écroule*, everybody will be affected, not just labourers, artisans, planters, *usiniers*, but all the population, including the production of electricity. Of course, if there is no longer bagasse, the IPPs will certainly resort to coal, but the situation is very, very serious, and all our calculations on renewable energy and so on will disappear in case we no longer have sufficient bagasse available.

What I found *effrayant*, Madam Speaker, was that Government appointed a joint public sector/private sector committee, Joint Technical Committee. And then when we listened to the Minister of Agriculture and the hon. Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, when he presented the Budget, but also when we listened to the Minister of Agriculture, they had nothing to say pending this magical ministerial committee working. That is what I find *effrayant*. A Joint Technical Committee is appointed, it works for weeks, comes with their solutions, especially amongst the trade unions, and we are told by the Minister and the Prime Minister, now the Ministerial Committee is going to start its work, as far as the Ministerial Committee is concerned. That is what I found *effrayant*, and I am sure the hon. Prime Minister and everybody is aware the *urgence* de la situation. We have wasted enough time over the last months, whilst this Joint Technical Committee has been working, *il y a urgence*, Madam Speaker. We hope that in very near future that Ministerial Committee chaired by the hon. Prime Minister and Minister of Finance will come forward urgently with important solutions to the problems of the sugar industry in general. That is why I have said that I find this whole situation *effrayant*.

The second problem which has been kicked down the road, water tariffs and *affermage*. And I must say I listened to the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Public Utilities today. I am not impressed at all. I was not impressed before, and I am impressed at all by his speech of today. First of all, let us admit - we can *bla-bla-bla*, we can bluff, okay,

but let us admit that there has been a complete cacophony – let us admit this - with the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister concerned saying tariffs must increase, *affermage* must go ahead and finally the hon. Prime Minister and Minister of Finance saying no. Saying no, especially to the increase in tariffs. And I don't think, as a modern nation, we can be satisfied that simply we are told: 'look, there was a need to increase the water tariffs, because the CWA is in big financial trouble.' But a miracle, suddenly the hon. Prime Minister apparently has offered to the Minister concerned financial assistance and therefore water tariff increase is no longer - but we need to know. Is this just pending General Election, *après moi le deluge*, and in this case we are talking about water. We must be told, first of all, how much of public assistance - the word used by the hon. Prime Minister - we have the right as a country, as a people to know how much will be spent per year in terms of financial assistance to the CWA.

I listened carefully to the hon. Deputy Prime Minister when he talked about *affermage*. I wasn't impressed and I am even less impressed today. What he said the other day, replying to the PNQ, I listened to him very carefully, the Deputy Prime Minister said there is no decision yet on *affermage* or no. So, we are entitled to know why. It is still being studied, it has also been postponed until the next elections. We are entitled, as a mature nation to know what the situation is.

But what really surprised me today is what the Deputy Prime Minister said à l'adresse de l'honorable Alan Gannoo. I find it quite extraordinary. What is proposed is *affermage*. He accused hon. Alan Gannoo of having proposed in the past a management contract. Completely different from *affermage*! Honestly, let us be serious! *Affermage* is *affermage*, management contract is management contract. He cannot just say: 'It is the same thing. We agree, we are in full agreement.' I was really surprised. But anyway, *allons tourner une page*! I hope we know what lies ahead! *Affermage*! What is the intention of Government? Either, *un contrat de gestion*, management contract - if, yes, what kind? Or, *réorganisation*! We read in details that - supposedly the Prime Minister's Office, which is by now a kind of parallel Government - the Prime Minister's Office is preparing a new management for the CWA. From what we understand, there will be neither *affermage* nor management contract. There will be a new management, recruitment of international staff and so on. So, *quelle cacophonie*! Therefore, we are entitled as a nation to hear more and I hope that the hon. Prime Minister will have things to say on that.

I would say a few words, Madam Speaker, on issues that from my point of view have been mishandled or *négligés*. A lot has been said - and I won't repeat - but I share the criticism by my colleagues, especially hon. Reza Uteem on the offshore sector, the

manufacturing sector and the SMEs sector. I won't repeat all their arguments, but the situation is not satisfactory as far as these three sectors are concerned, as far as we are concerned. CEB, I listened again carefully to the hon. Deputy Prime Minister, but I am very worried because there is a strategic decision to be taken in CEB these days. Are we going to go ahead with this so-called combined cycle gas turbines, plus Liquefied Natural Gas, later on? It is a vital decision *et les avis divergent*. I do not know if the hon. Prime Minister has had the occasion to study the dossier. We are going to take a decision *qui va engager l'île Maurice pendant les 25/50 ans à venir*. If we go for this technology, if we go for this combined cycle gas turbines, and once we have put our finger *dans cet engrenage*, we have to move on to LNG. *Cela va nous engager pendant cinq ans*. I am not convinced that a small place like Mauritius, at this stage, can do it. I hope so!

I don't know if the hon. Prime Minister has noted the thing, I must say, last week, Seychelles decided - little Seychelles - to move ahead with storage facility for LNG, in the Seychelles. I am not very convinced, I must say, but that was last week. I agree that we must look into the combined cycle gas turbine question, but let us be very, very, very careful. If we choose the wrong decision, we will lose a lot, a lot of money. If we move to the combined - it is not combined at the start - it will be a single cycle gas turbine, but it is supposed to move, otherwise, it is not economic at all. But if we do not move to the LNG, the import for the CEB and probably for the whole of the country, we are going to end up in big trouble. Therefore, I would request Government to look very carefully - both the Minister concerned and the Prime Minister - at this whole issue of the combined cycle gas turbines and LNG *derrière la porte*, because it is a strategic decision which will cost a lot of money and that we must be very, very clearheaded about this.

Tuna, Madam Speaker, I consider that this dossier has been very mishandled. Let me say one thing, Madam Speaker. We started in 2000-2005 the so-called 'Seafood hub'. Essentially, what is it? Canning of tuna! Now, some 8,000 people work in that sector. It is a vital sector. Our exports are in big trouble. If our tuna-canning factory runs into serious trouble, we will be in even more trouble. But I am always amazed by two things. One, that people do not realise, when we started the seafood hub, we were aware of that but, unfortunately, these fish, Madam Speaker, do not come in commercial quantity, in our commercial zone. Tuna goes round the Indian Ocean every year. It goes round Mozambique, Somalia and Seychelles especially, but not Mauritius. We have some tuna, but in commercial quantity at all.

Therefore, all these tuna that we are can, we import. But we import all these tuna to employ 8,000 people, we we must have these tuna, and we are running into trouble. Because *cela ne pouvait pas durer*. In the Mediterranean there is no tuna, commercial tuna, I am saying - they export tuna and so on, it is just something else - but for commercial for canning purposes, they do not have any, in the North Atlantic also. Now, it is biting into the Indian Ocean. Now, measures are being taken to preserve tuna in the Indian Ocean. We have a limit on catches. People do not realise that all this tuna that we purchase, is caught mostly, mainly by European purse seiners, with satellites, with helicopters. You must look at that. But, inevitably, *la ressource est en train de s'épuiser*. So, I hope that the Prime Minister and the others are aware that the Europeans have their own interests.

We cannot, we, Mauritians, with our canning factory, with our 8,000 people working, we cannot rely. We have good French friends. We need them, we need to purchase tuna from them, but we must rely on ourselves. It is a terribly tough business, this business of tuna catching and we are in trouble. I advise the hon. Prime Minister and Government to be very careful about this whole tuna situation. We are already in trouble. It is a very complicated dossier. To understand it, it is very difficult. Until now, we have been mostly relying on our French friends, on our European friends to do the work for us. We must do it ourselves. I am very worried about that also. But I will take the opportunity to say something, which disturbs me a bit, is that we talk about fisheries in Mauritius.

We have no fisheries in Mauritius. We have different kinds of fisheries. The problems of one part of this fishery sector are not the same as elsewhere. We have lagoon fishing; with our lagoons that have been exhausted, now picking up, and with great difficulty. You have lagoon fishing. We have outside lagoon fishing, including with fish aggregating devices. When we fish outside, we put around devices and so on, that is the second kind.

The third kind is bank fishing - Nazareth, Saya de Malha, St Brandon. And then, you have tuna - whatever tuna there is - in your economic zone. So, you have different sorts of fishing in Mauritius. And when we mix it altogether, we mix the problems of one of these four sectors to the others, we think our problems in tuna can be solved by bank fishing. It is not the same fish; it is not the same thing at all. It is not the same method of fishing. It is not the same markets. So, I will advise Government to be very careful as far as this issue of tuna is concerned. We are already in trouble. *Mieux vaut tard que jamais*, Madam Speaker.

I would move on now to what I consider to be three bad decisions, *carrément* bad decisions. One is the passport and citizenship. I will not repeat a lot that has been said. I hope that the Prime Minister, the Government will not go ahead with the project that has been

presented as far as passports and citizenship for foreigners are concerned. I appeal to Government not to go ahead with what has been proposed until now.

I was talking about fisheries a few minutes ago, and I consider the second very bad decision which has been taken, is supposedly to open our fishing banks. There is a lot of confusion that has been created. The hon. Prime Minister spoke about fishing banks - Nazareth, Saya de Malha, St Brandon; our fishing banks. Do not repeat *les erreurs du passé*, Madam Speaker. Yesterday, I was looking at a Press conference which Sir Anerood Jugnauth and I held in the early 80s, when the fishing banks were being *pillés*. Foreign boats - I will not say which boat. I can say because the Soviet Union no longer exists. Soviet boats were fishing on those banks; we had no means to *surveiller*. They were using the most negative methods, scraping the bottom of the bank, killing the corals on the banks and so on. *Un crime été commis*. We are in danger of this starting again because you cannot really supervise those fishing banks, even if we have equipment now, even if our Indian friends are helping us a lot. And I am worried about St Brandon also, what is happening on St Brandon.

I am not saying that, as in the past, St Brandon must be reserved for an elite. I am not saying that at all. But if you open St Brandon without due precautions, *cela peut être une catastrophe écologique*. It can be the end of St Brandon within a few years. And there are things happening. I am dead against this idea, especially the words used by the hon. Prime Minister - opening our fishing banks to industrial foreign vessels. The last thing to do, the most dangerous thing to do, and I appeal to Government. I am not surprised that we have been slow to get going but, today, both operators, that is, the small operators, Mauritian operators I mean, and the fishermen concerned are all against completely, and rightly so, this idea of opening our fishing banks to industrial foreign vessels.

The third decision, which I consider awful, dangerous also, is handing over the Safe City project to Mauritius Telecom instead of the Police. If it is a Police project, it should be handled by the Police, but for budgetary reason, but also for security reasons, I am dead against the idea of handling the so-called Safe City project to Mauritius Telecom.

Madam Speaker, allow me now to raise a few questions that do raise a number of questions. The first one is the 6,800 social housing units that are supposed to be constructed over the next two years. I not only listened carefully to what the hon. Leader of the Opposition said, but I got an extract because I could not believe my ears. There is no *démenti*, and I do not understand either why no Paper reported It; not one Paper. But if what was said by the hon. Leader of the Opposition is true, it is very disturbing. Supposedly, these 6,800 housing units are going to be constructed by a company created and owned by the army of a

great country, friendly country. But that is not my point. What is this? And I will tell you, I do not understand Mauritius sometimes.

The hon. Leader of the Opposition said that very seriously and with due precaution. Not one - from what I saw - Paper dared or chose to report, and we do not hear anything anymore. On what conditions? Is it the Government of China? It is really the army? The People's Liberation of China? Is it a Government grant loan? What mix? Will there be tenders? Will it be restricted to Chinese companies? We are adults enough to be given the truth, and I do not understand. I tell you honestly, I do not understand how there has - from what I heard - been no reaction from Government. I hope that the hon. Prime Minister will tell us later on what is this thing. Where will the money come from? On what conditions? What company will be involved? We have the right to know, especially after what the hon. Leader of the Opposition said. If it is not true, say so! If it is not true, tell us! But then, tell us who is going to give the money, who is going to construct.

The second point - and it is a bit linked to that because this is supposed to be a Chinese company, including the Chinese army - is the fishing port. Until a few years back, I remember hon. Minister Koonjoo replying to a Parliamentary Question, a year ago, I think, saying that this is finished; this project of a fishing port at Les Salines, in the mouth of our only harbour. I was very disturbed by that when the question was being discussed. It was supposed to be a private company, but we know, Chinese companies, private companies, companies in harbours. Look, who does not know what has been taking place in Sri Lanka and in Maldives as far as harbours are concerned? We have to be very careful. China is a friendly country, one of the countries where our people came from in the past - great country. But I would be very happy to have a company controlled by a foreign country at the mouth of our only harbour. That raises security reasons also. So, when the hon. Minister said, a few years back, that this idea is no longer on, I was *soulagé*. But now, in the Budget Speech, you have just three words; that there will be a new fishing port at Les Salines. Is it Les Salines that they say?

(Interruptions)

Fort Williams. Well, it is the same place; it is the same area. So now, in the Budget Speech, there is one little sentence that brings back this idea of a fishing port at the mouth of our only harbour.

So, again, we are entitled to know, is it the same project, is it a Chinese project, which company are we talking about, or are we talking about another company, another project, especially when you have security considerations to be kept in mind. We have a right to

know. That is why I am raising questions, I am putting questions. Agalega! I think it is very unhealthy what is taking place, all sorts of insinuations because we don't know the truth. But tell the whole truth, even if Government doesn't want to give a copy of the agreement, give all the details. I am sure that the Prime Minister and the others are aware of what has just taken place and there are a lot of lessons in that for us what has just taken place in Seychelles. You have a small island called Assumption Island, the farthest away from the main Island of Seychelles up there. It is next to the north of Madagascar. No human beings – so India and Seychelles signed an agreement, they agreed, they signed an agreement for, we won't call it a base, but for a military facility on Assumption Island.

Supposedly, Seychelles keeps the sovereignty, India will finance the whole - the idea of financing in Agalega and it will be jointly managed. That's when the trouble started. When it came out that, in the agreement, it will be jointly managed by India, friendly country of the India Ocean, neighbouring country, and Seychelles, trouble, big trouble because the Opposition, others, even in Government I must say, said no, if there is going to be joint management we are losing our sovereignty.

So it is off, the Seychelles Government has said no need we won't agree at all, we will do a coast guard facility for ourselves on Assumption Island. I must say that an added complication is that Assumption Island is not far from Aldabra, which is UNESCO site and so on. So, tell us, before some kind of trouble erupts, which I do not wish at all, but tell us exactly what is there going to be in Agalega, if there is only going to be *une piste d'atterrissage*, a mini airport, plus a jetty, that's all, no boots on the ground, give us the guarantee, no boots on the ground, no arms on the ground, and then the thing will cool down if we give all the reassurances and clarifications required.

As I said, I think, we have lessons to learn from this Assumption Island episode, and it is not finished. I think, today, the President of the Seychelles is in India on official visit, but he has said, no, he is not going to discuss this Assumption Island issue again. So, let's take whatever lessons we can take from this episode, let us get rid of this Agalega issue, and let us clarify everything.

Another point which I wanted to clarify, the Cancer Centre, the new Cancer Centre! Why will the construction thereof, the financing thereof, go through a new thing call the SIC Development Company Ltd? Why?

We have already lost a lot of time and it is urgent, people are suffering, they have to travel to India, and thanks to India, but it is not easy, parents have to pay for their own travelling. It is difficult - I have been a cancer patient; when you go overseas for cancer

treatment, radiotherapy, it is not easy. They have to travel to a foreign country and some of them without their parents, without any parent. Therefore, we must complete this project, but, tell me, reassure me that this idea of constructing, financing the Cancer Centre through the SIC Development Company Ltd, is not going to make us waste time again or create other problems.

Next, *Musée de l'esclavage* ! The other day, I appreciated the fact that when I raised something - I have forgotten what it is. But the hon. Prime Minister said, no, that's a mistake, a misprint at the back of the Budget speech. It's okay. But in this case, please clarify again, because the hon. Prime Minister, in his speech, said, I quote at paragraph 103 –

“I am also providing funds for:

- i. An Intercontinental Slavery Museum at the Ex-Labourdonnais Military Hospital in Port Louis ;”

“I am providing funds”, but there are no funds! *L'intention est bonne* probably, but, no, there is another little mistake, there are no funds provided anywhere in the Budget. The Minister had to go to the Press, in a way to say that there are no funds provided, because it is early, there are going to be preliminary enquiries now. Then, tell us, what is the problem, how long will it take. At least, do we have funds for this preliminary enquiry for the *Musée de l'esclavage*, and for God's sake, let's not wait another 2, 3 year before we start work, before funds are really provided.

Terre-Rouge/Verdun! I don't want to be nasty, but I am just pointing out that there are a few mistakes like that. There was one which I referred to earlier, now on Terre-Rouge/Verdun; I noted. You know how I work, Madam Speaker. Some time back, I remember, a Parliamentary Question of 24 April, where the hon. Minister Bodha said that it will be completed before the end of this year. And then, when I listened to the Budget Speech, he said next year. Now, it appears that this is another mistake, fair enough. It is not the end of the world, such mistakes. *Mais il vaut mieux éviter et clarifier*, but when we have *clarifié*, tell us how much it is going to cost these additional magical *pilotis*. I believe Rs500 m.! We will see! And secondly, is there a full agreement? When you go to Consultants all over the place, they are bound to disagree. When you go for South African Consultants, Singaporean Consultants, Korean Consultants and finally French Consultants! This is the magical *pilotis* Professor, he came, *il a séduit le ministre Bodha et il a trouvé la solution miracle*, *pilotis* all over the place.

Are we in agreement or is it really being challenged by others? Is it being challenged? It is being challenged, from my information, by the Koreans. And I won't be surprised when

the Koreans finished challenging, we will have the Singaporeans challenging the Koreans. Please, tell us what is exactly the situation, roughly how much! Because, as I said earlier on, replying to a PQ on 24 April, he said - and I can quote. He knows how I work. He said, and he likes speaking too much, he likes listening to himself so much. He told us Professor – I forgot his name – Magnan – *presque Plaine Magnien!*

(Interruptions)

Professor Magnan will be back on...

Madam Speaker: Hon. Bérenger, I am sorry! Just to remind that you have ten additional minutes to wrap up, please. 10 additional minutes! 10!

Mr Bérenger: Who decided that? Because I was informed that there is no limit on my intervention.

Madam Speaker: No, I am sorry. Please! I am sorry...

Mr Bérenger: It is unfair!

Madam Speaker: No, let me tell you...

Mr Bérenger: Okay, I will stop! But it is very unfair.

Madam Speaker: No, but I am telling you that...

Mr Bérenger: Okay. You ruled! I don't know what instructions are coming in. Okay, I will stop.

Madam Speaker: Not stop, I am telling you that you have 10 additional minutes. Just to remind you that we asked hon. Members and I made an announcement to ask hon. Members that they should be...

Mr Bérenger: But we should be warned!

Madam Speaker: ... clear to the time allotted.

Mr Bérenger: I have been specifically told that there is no limit. I have another 15 minutes. But it is unfair! *Dans la procédure...*

Madam Speaker: I don't think it is unfair. I think it is unfair to other hon. Members!

Mr Bérenger: It is very unfair. *Mais tant pis*, I will wrap up. I will say a few comments on drug trafficking and corruption.

On drug trafficking, I think we have had enough, as if we are doing fantastic things. *Allons regarder la vérité dans les yeux!* This is the first time in Mauritius where international drug trafficking is organised from the prison. Everybody knows that. And even that, we can't stop! And the hon. Prime Minister *se tape l'estomac, la lutte contre le trafic de la drogue*. It is not for the first time that, more or less of polemy, international drug trafficking

is taking place in the prison, organised from the prison. What has just taken place in the Vacoas Detention Centre, it is a shame. And not only has this taken place, but after this has taken place, the telephone of the person concerned is *tripoter*, is deleted. That's today!

ADSU is not trusted both in Reunion and in Madagascar, including the most recent case of more than Rs500 m. Et *le comble* is, of course, when the Commissioner of Police himself, to obtain urgently a passport – the Rt. hon. Minister Mentor knows what are the procedures. Exceptional, to get urgently a passport! In this case, this chap gets his passport within days. Urgent procedure! So, that is why we say that *le bon exemple n'est pas donné. Le bon signal n'est pas envoyé.*

On corruption, it is a bit shocking. Therefore, the second year running in presenting the Budget! Don't tell me that it does not concern the Budget because it the hon. Prime minister who mentioned 'drug trafficking'. Rightly so! But in the case of corruption that is the second year running that there is not a word on corruption in the Budget. *Et pourtant* it is part of the economic set up.

Madam Speaker, Assets Act: where is the Assets Act? Everyone would have expected in the Budget to be informed what progress has been achieved with the New Assets Act. Financing of political parties, again, I must say I am worried about a lot of things. I am worried about money in politics in Mauritius. We don't have a right to treat our democracy and our kids like that. Money in politics and dirty money in politics, drug money, races money, corruption money are corrupted, our political system itself. And at least Government said that you have the intention of coming forward with a law to control the financing of political parties. We expected it to be in that Budget.

I will conclude, Madam Speaker, *puisque* you have ruled. Madam Speaker, let me conclude by repeating what I said earlier on that I am worried for the economy of the country. I sincerely hope I am proved wrong in the months ahead. *Les signaux d'alarme que j'ai tirés tout à l'heure*, I sincerely hope, as a *Mauricien*, as a patriot, that I am wrong and that I am proved wrong. But to me it is obvious, with my experience, with the amount of time I spent studying, discussing with top experts and so on, it is obvious to me, Madam Speaker, that the next two years will be crucial for our economy. Those next two years will decide the economic fate of our country for quite a number of years. I repeat I am convinced that these two forthcoming years, the two next years will be absolutely crucial for our economy for the reasons which I gave earlier on.

Madam Speaker, the slaves and indentured labourers of the past and all those men and women who have helped shape the destiny of our country over the last 300 years and the

youth of Mauritius expect all of us to rise to the occasion - at this juncture that I am talking about - at a time when we have just celebrated the 50th anniversary of our independence.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Prime Minister!

(3.18 p.m.)

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, first of all, let me thank all hon. Members on both sides of the House who have taken part in the debate on the Budget.

I must say, right at the outset, that the Budget has been widely acclaimed outside this House by people from all walks of life. The business community as well as nearly all the trade unionists representing workers from local industries have warmly welcomed the measures we have introduced in the Budget. I was reading some comments made by a few non-Governmental organisations as well with respect especially to the social measures because, when we are being accused of being without a heart, that we don't have a heart, these organisations have made very positive comments.

I won't quote so many of them, although I am happy. I must say I am a happy man, and I am sure we are a happy Government.

(Interruptions)

But I have also some experience in politics, not as long as some on the other side of the House, but I must say, from what I can recall, that I have never seen such unanimity as that over this Budget. And I say this mainly, if I take one, group of people, let's say, the trade unionists. I also have had the opportunity and the privilege of dealing with trade unionists in many instances, and on many occasions, as when I have been presiding Tripartite meetings, and have been meeting with them with regard to certain specific issues like those when there was a *grève de la faim* for the BAI, and in regard to the sugar Industry. I won't name and I won't recall all those occasions when I have been dealing with them. More recently, again in Government, as Minister of Finance chairing the Tripartite Meeting; meeting with them with regard to the Minimum Wage and the Negative Income Tax. I must say I am not a personal friend of all those trade unionists, although we have friendly relations, we have civilised friendly relations, but if I can quote somebody, Reaz Chuttoo –

«Ce budget n'est pas un bribe électoral.»

Ce n'est pas moi qui le dis, mais Reaz Chuttoo –

«Dans l'ensemble, la Confédération des secteurs public et privé (CTSP) est plutôt satisfait du budget 2018-19. Nous militons pour certaines des mesures qui ont été annoncées.»

Ce n'est pas - *it's not me again* – ‘un bribe électoral’. Et encore plus, je dis à l'attention surtout de nos amis du Parti travailliste, et aussi du PMSD, parce qu'il le dit –

«Aucune comparaison avec l'ancien gouvernement.»

Aucune comparaison! Jane Rago –

«Budget intéressant. Cela touche à la justice sociale.»

Suttyhudeo Tengur, Madame la présidente –

«Des mesures en faveur des consommateurs.»

Ce budget...

(Interruptions)

Ah, grande référence ça ! M. Tengur, voilà ce qui se dit dans cette Assemblée de la part de l'opposition ! Grande référence ce que je suis en train de nommer!

«Ce budget fait la part belle à la classe moyenne et à la création d'emplois.

Pour lui, il s'agit de ‘bonnes mesures en faveur des consommateurs’.»

And I won't go on others. In fact, I think, my friend, Minister Sinatambou, has, in the course of his intervention, given a long list and long quotes from the different sectors, different partners, I would say, of the economy, trade unionists, Business Mauritius and so many others.

Once again, let me thank all those who have given their valuable time, and have provided inputs during the pre-budget consultations that I had with them. All those, I mean, trade unionists, Association of Planters, NGOs, my colleague Ministers, PPS, Members of the National Assembly, artists and so on.

This Government, Madam Speaker, has a clear vision for which the population gave us the mandate in 2014. The vision of a better, modern and more inclusive society. Today, in my summing-up, I would like to address some of the comments and criticisms from certain quarters both in this House and outside. Let me say that some comments and criticisms were fair, some of them were constructive, but there are also those which were really demagogical. Obviously, there were some comments that do not even deserve any response so that I will not be wasting the time of the House. I will, however, where warranted, give the necessary clarifications and answers to questions that have been raised.

Let me stress, Madam Speaker, that the Budget 2018-19 builds on the strategies and policies that we have been implementing in the past three and a half years to achieve the goals that we have set out in our Manifesto and Government Programme, *donc, un budget de continuité*.

Let me also recap the very essence of the Budget which is to address in a balanced way the development priorities of the country while expanding opportunities for our youths, men and women to meet their aspirations.

The population, I have no doubt, has understood the main thrusts of the Budget which are –

- to transform Mauritius into a modern, forward looking and adaptive economy and society;
- to ensure that we will be able to create wealth at a faster pace while at the same time securing inclusiveness and improving the quality of life of one and all;
- to reduce gaps, in particular, in our education system, the income gaps and the gender gaps, and
- to maintain macroeconomic stability and sound public finance at all times.

In fact, there are many unprecedented policies and actions in this Budget to deal with the challenges we are facing and to create the right environment to achieve the nation's goals.

The first is the channelling of an unprecedented Rs1 billion to address the issue of unemployment. Some 14,000 of our youths and women will have the opportunity of being accompanied and better prepared for employment. This, Madam Speaker, spells out a totally new and more effective approach to resolve

the problem of unemployment amongst our youths, our graduates and our women. For example, the Youth Service Programme is a first. The Work@Home programme is a first. The SME Employment Scheme is another first. And so is the *certificat de compétence* that will be given to our youths, and that will give them a sense of accomplishment and the confidence they need when they enter the world of work.

Another unprecedented policy is the fostering of a new wave of import-substitution industry to address trade deficit and employment creation. In this context, we are creating three Technology Parks, I have mentioned, across the country, in Côte d'Or, Riche Terre and Rose Belle.

Madam Speaker, we are creating new investment and job opportunities. The creation of opportunities for our technology-savvy young people in the digital economy, amongst others. The fostering of the Fintech hub and the launching of the blueprint for the financial services sector, are going to be game changers and, of course, and I agree, in the face, of challenges that we have before us.

Another policy is the amount of financial resources that are being mobilised to protect and enhance our environment. We are starting with Rs2 billion. As I have said before, never in our history has so much money been mobilised to deal with environmental issues and to adapt to and mitigate the impact of climate change. There will be massive investments in the water sector and renewable energy.

Other policies include the investment in the modernisation of our infrastructure, from metro express and the A1-M1 bridge, that will enrich our physical landscape, to investments in the expansion and modernisation of our port and airport. The modern Mauritius that our population aspires to is emerging, Madam Speaker, right now.

Indeed, modernisation is sweeping across all sectors, including agriculture, where technology will be applied in an intensive way to produce bio food while, at the same time, raising productivity and competitiveness of the sector, and to address also the issues of land abandonment, sluggish agricultural growth and food security, amongst others.

Madam Speaker, no Budget before has taken an ambitious decision to construct 6,800 dwelling units over a two-year period. I must here point out that this Government is building and will continue to build housing units which are very different from those of the previous Government, what we call the *boîte zallumette*. People are already seeing the kind of housing that we are proposing to them. Since I am on this issue, just to reply to hon. Paul Bérenger, we are right now negotiating with the Government of China. We will have finance. He does not have to worry. But, of course, the terms and conditions are not yet finalised. When the details, conditions and terms are finalised, then we will agree on the process in terms of which companies will be qualified, will be called upon to tender for that project, depending also on whether we are able to get concessionary loan finance, whether we will get a grant. I do not know. But I have heard all sorts of things, and hon. Bérenger is saying why is it that, and I can't answer for the Press; there has been an allegation that the military will construct those houses.

But, you know, I just mentioned, there are certain comments that are made that are not worthy of response. Do you think, Madam Speaker - I mean the people of this country - that the Chinese military will come and construct houses in this country? In which age are we living?

(Interruptions)

That age is gone now, Madam Speaker! I can assure the hon. Member, the House and the population, there are reliable construction companies in China. Now, if, I say suppose - I am not even sure that this is going to be the case, but suppose - we get concessionary loan

or we get financing on specific conditions from China, obviously, we will see whether it will be a condition that it will be a Chinese company that will be constructing those houses. Then obviously, I believe that they are big constructing companies in China having built so many housing units there. We will see, but definitely, it is not people from the military who are coming to construct, as if there has been...

(Interruptions)

Yes, if the hon. Member wants to say...

Mr Bérenger: I never said the military. I said a company created by the military and controlled by the military. I never said the military.

(Interruptions)

The Prime Minister: Hon. Member, you said this is what you picked up from hon. Xavier-Luc Duval. This is what I can recall, that there is a military company that is going to come. Well, I don't know whether they are military people in that company or whether they are employed by the company that are going to come. That is why I am rebutting this. To me, this was not really worthy of any comment, but still!

Let me also say, that in the housing sector, we have provided Rs1.3 billion, Madam Speaker, to complete some 3,041 housing units this year. This is also the first time that families earning Rs15,001 up to Rs20,000 will benefit from a maximum grant of Rs50,000 for the casting of roof slabs. This is what we are doing for middle-income people, for people who do not really have the means also, and who are going to benefit from this.

Another historic action is the strategy to deal with gender gaps in our society. This Budget has indeed kick-started a totally new approach to gender mainstreaming. This Government, Madam Speaker, has an unflinching resolve to combat drug trafficking, and this is being upheld with even greater determination. I will come to combatting of drugs later on. And it is with this same determination that we are dealing with the issues of road accidents and crimes.

We have not forgotten our Judiciary, one of the main pillars of law and order and, indeed, we are modernising by investing massively in infrastructure: the new Supreme Court Tower, the upgrading of District Courts around the country and the digitisation of the Judiciary system.

Madam Speaker, this Budget has special considerations for our middle-income earners. For them, we have reduced the tax rate from 15 per cent to 10 per cent to improve their disposable income. This will add to our various actions, including the increase in tax deductions for children attending university; tax deductions for investment in rain harvesting

system; the improved facilities for housing, and for obtaining loans from banks. As I have stated, there is now no more condition with regard to how much a bank can finance an applicant or a borrower who wishes a loan. But even if, when looking at the repayment capacity of that person, he has this repayment capacity, he can even be entitled to 100 per cent of the loan.

Now, combined with our policies in the education sector and in the health sector, the setting up of new teaching hospital in Flacq, a cancer treatment centre and the new ENT hospital, amongst others, this Budget can hardly be considered as a '*Budget Panadol*'. But I do understand that it must have been a headache for the Opposition...

(Interruptions)

...to digest these unprecedented developmental policies and measures.

Madam Speaker, this reminds me of the past when there was somebody who campaigned and won an election also and said, '*dans 100 jours nou pou change ou la vie*'.

(Interruptions)

Hundred days! He did not want more than that! Hundred days he would start changing the lives of people! Well, he started to change his life first, and we all know how - I won't go into all this and say how he looked after himself, especially his coffer! But this population will see the difference and they know who are really changing their lives, and changing their lives for the better!

(Interruptions)

Let me come to the intervention of certain Members of this House on the economic performance of this Government. But, before that, maybe I shall say one thing. I have noted that only two hon. Members have not intervened, namely hon. Kalidass Teeluckdharry because he is the Deputy Speaker, and, of course, he was chairing at different times and, therefore, and also he was advised that it would not be conventional for him to intervene on the Budget. But there is another Member, hon. Barbier. He has not intervened. Well, either he agrees totally with the Budget or he has not understood anything and he cannot say anything about the Budget.

(Interruptions)

But let me say that, Madam Speaker

(Interruptions)

What unfair? They have been allotted a time, they have been given time to intervene and they do not intervene! What is unfair?

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: No crosstalking among Members! Please! No crosstalking among Members! Can you please address the Chair?

Mr Ganoo: Madam Speaker, the hon. Prime Minister, maybe he is Prime Minister, but he cannot impute motive, he cannot say he does not understand anything. How can he say that? This is very unfair on the part of the hon. Prime Minister!

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: No! I do not know whether this is a Point of order, but I do not see any Point of order in this.

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, what I said is that I can only conclude. His name was twice on the list! Twice he has been on the list, and then he does not intervene!

Let me say, Madam Speaker, it is a pity to see that the hon. Leader of the Opposition, I must say, in a bit of a desperate attempt to criticise the actions of this Government, has indulged in some *demagogies* in trying to contest the improving performance of our economy. He refers to a growth rate of 3.5% in 2017, while we have announced a growth rate of 3.8%.

Madam Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition is an accountant and a former Minister of Finance also. I believe he should know the basics and he should compare likes with likes. In his speech, he, in fact, referred to the growth rate of Gross Value Added (GVA).

(Interruptions)

Let me explain! The Leader of the Opposition has made his comments, he should let me explain.

Madam Speaker: Do not interrupt! Please!

(Interruptions)

No, no! Do not interrupt! Otherwise everybody will keep on interrupting the hon. Prime Minister.

The Prime Minister: Well, I must say, the conventional measure which is used internationally to express the economic performance of a country is the GDP at constant market prices. Most countries as well as international institutions such as the IMF, World Bank and OECD use the growth rate of GDP at constant market prices when referring to the growth rate of the overall economy. The fact is, and it is there for everybody to see, our GDP is on a rising trend. This is not only me saying that. This is borne out also not only by the projections of Statistics Mauritius, but by the World Bank and the IMF as well. The World Bank has estimated GDP growth for Mauritius for 2017 at 3.9%. It has upgraded its growth

projection for 2018 by 0.2 percentage points to 4% and for 2019 by 0.4 percentage points to 4.1%. The IMF has also estimated GDP growth for 2017 at 3.9% and projected a 4% growth rate for 2018 and 4.1% for 2019. The document is there, if the hon. Leader of the Opposition ...

(Interruptions)

Yes! Maybe he does not know! Let me see if I have this document. It says ‘International Monetary Fund’. This is a document which says International Monetary Fund...

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: No, no! This is not Question Time, hon. Leader of the Opposition!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Leader of the Opposition! Hon. Leader of the Opposition, you cannot ignore me when I am calling you. I am telling you not to interrupt the hon. Prime Minister. You have had ample time to intervene on the Budget and I will ask you not to interrupt him.

(Interruptions)

The Prime Minister: December! I will give him.

Mr X. L. Duval: On a Point of order! When the hon. Prime Minister is quoting from a document, he should also say the date. This is my point.

Madam Speaker: But it is up to the hon. Prime Minister to say which document it is. Give him time to intervene. Hon. Leader of the Opposition, you are interrupting him before he says what he has to say.

The Prime Minister: Why is the hon. Leader of the Opposition jumping the gun?

(Interruptions)

I am going to tell him. I will give him more details. This is, first of all, an official document and it is on the website of the IMF (International Monetary Fund), Press Release No. 17/471, December 08, 2017.

(Interruptions)

Yes! Look what it says –

“IMF Executive Board Concludes 2017 Article IV Consultation with Mauritius”

And what does it say? *Ecoutez!*

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: You continue, hon. Leader of the Opposition! This is the last time I am drawing your attention to this! Last time!

(Interruptions)

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, when the hon. Leader of the Opposition was addressing the House, I was listening carefully. I did not interrupt although he was saying certain incorrect things. But I kept quiet because I know my turn will come when I will be able to reply to him. And this is what I am doing. So, be democratic. At least, listen to the truth!

Madam Speaker: Please! Do not engage in a conversation with the hon. Leader of the Opposition!

The Prime Minister: Okay! So, here, it is stated – IMF is saying - Madam Speaker, third paragraph –

“Growth in 2017 is projected at 3.9 percent in 2017, and about 4.0 percent over the medium term.”

I do not want to go lengthily into this document, but I will send a copy to the hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Madam Speaker, it is clear that the hon. Leader of the Opposition, therefore, has been incorrect when he says that the economic growth in 2017 was 3.5%. I heard him last time, he said that he would be writing to the IMF. I hope that he includes in this letter that he will tell the IMF that they are wrong in their Article IV Consultations 2017, and then we will see what is going to be their reply.

But, I must say, Madam Speaker, our economic performance has also impressed Moody's to maintain our sovereign credit rating at Baa1.

Moreover, at the sectoral level, the construction industry which has been in recession for 5 years, grew by 7.5% in 2017, and a higher growth rate of 9.5% is expected in 2018.

Now, let me remind the hon. Leader of the Opposition that when he was Minister of Finance in 2013, the construction sector was in deep recession with a contraction of 8.2 %, - 8.2 %, Madam Speaker. And guess what, the very next year, it followed by another contraction of 8.5% in 2014!

The tourism sector has also...

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Stop provoking!

(Interruptions)

If he starts provoking, I will take him to task!

The Prime Minister: The tourism sector has also recovered in an impressive way, I must say, due to the right policies of this Government, especially to further open up the sky.

In fact, the tourism sector was experiencing a sluggish growth of 1.9% in 2013. That is the performance. That is their performance! In 2018, the output of most major sectors of the economy will be experiencing positive growth. Madam Speaker, these figures speak for themselves.

Now, hon. Uteem talks about the economic situation deteriorating and that this Government is failing on all the indicators. I believe that hon. Uteem needs to have some serious *cours de rattrapage* as far as economic analysis is concerned as the basics are not yet there for someone who is supposed to become – he is the shadow Minister of Finance for the MMM.

Let me ask the question! Since when is a rising growth rate of GDP from 3.7% in 2014 to 3.8% in 2017 and projected to rise to 3.9% considered as a failure? Since when a falling unemployment rate from 7.8% in 2014 to 7.1% in 2017 considered as a failure? Since when is a high level of FDI considered as a failure? Since when is the building up of the record level of foreign currency reserves ever in our country, from Rs124.3 billion in 2014 to Rs222 billion, considered as failures?

In any case, Madam Speaker. the real experts, the IMF, the World Bank, Moody's, they think otherwise, they see progress, they see improving performance, they see us moving confidently towards our goal of Inclusive High Income country – why? Because they know how to read, interpret and analyse economic data. And they are internationally recognised Authorities on world economic matters.

I would add also, Madam Speaker, that locally we have the big four international accounting firms, and in their analysis, they have also provided, I must say, a fair and positive opinion on our economic performance and particularly now on the Budget measures. And let me quote from one of them –

“This Government’s fourth Budget was delivered with a deep sense of enthusiasm and optimism. As expected, this year’s Budget is a continuation of the vision to transform Mauritius into a high-income economy. (...)The Budget further adds on the building blocks of sustainability where fiscal prudence and institutional reforms will preserve the past achievements and continue our competitive positioning as a financial and regional hub. From an economic outlook perspectives the 2018-19 Budget is expected to pursue a controlled path in terms of macroeconomic fundamentals with growth forecast at 4.1%, a budget deficit at 3.2% and public sector debt of 63.4%”.

Now, if, as has been alleged, I was trafficking the figures, I was trying to cook up or hide the real situation, can you imagine, I would have done so, first of all, they are officers of the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development, they are trusted officers, the Financial Secretary, other top senior officers who have been serving different Governments, different former Ministers of Finance? First of all, I would have told them: 'look, you better hide this figure, you better put up a different figure.' Can you imagine, will the population believe that I would be trafficking with the figures?

But, secondly, let's say I am able, my influence is so much that I am able to convince them, that we are in complicity. When the IMF meets us here - those maybe who have been Minister of Finance would know - we have to answer any query from them with regard to each and every indicator. Top senior officials and the Minister himself also and if there is something with which they would not agree, they would not only tell us, but they would put it in their report, Madam Speaker. Because they are independent, because they have nothing else to do, and they are not our supporters. Now, can you imagine the IMF confirming and telling us that we are on the right path and confirming those indicators! And I would say, more so, the local big four accounting firms, as I have just quoted, confirming the figures that I have mentioned. Now, are all those not to be believed, but only a few people from the Opposition, who come up with figures, and will say that they are speaking the truth, while the rest of the world is not.

But that is why they are where they are, Madam Speaker!

(Interruptions)

No, they must be serious. Madam Speaker, I agree when we are in Opposition and Government - yes, I have been in Opposition also, I have been criticising measures and so on. But we must be serious.

Let me now come to what the Leader of the Opposition had to say about poverty. I do not want to elaborate on all the measures and policies that this Government has put in place to combat poverty since it came to power in 2014. A lot has already been said by my colleagues.

It is well-known that the commitment, determination and action of this Government to combat absolute poverty and reduce inequality are really unprecedented. Yet, the hon. Leader of the Opposition states that the Household Budget Survey shows that the proportion of households below the relative poverty line was estimated at 9.4% in 2017, same for 2012. Nothing has been done that has had an impact on poverty.

Well, I also have gone through the Household Budget Survey and I have seen a number of things that have been stated. And let me quote -

“According to the Household Budget Survey 2017, a poverty threshold which is fixed at a point in time and adjusted for price changes is more appropriate to monitor the evolution of poverty levels over time. Thus, upon using the relative poverty line of 2012 and adjusted for inflation as a “fixed threshold”, a declining trend in poverty is observed both in terms of households and persons.

The proportion of households below the fixed poverty line went down from 9.4% in 2012 to 5.5% in 2017.”

(Interruptions)

C’est le résultat.

“Similarly, the proportion of persons below the fixed poverty line declined from 9.8% in 2012 to 6.3% in 2017.

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker, I am not saying that we have done everything and that is the end of the matter. No! What I am saying is the measures that we have taken are bringing results. *On est en train de progresser et surtout on est en train de diminuer la pauvreté, Je ne dis pas qu’on est en train d’éliminer. On n’a pas complètement éliminé la pauvreté. Absolute poverty, we are talking. Mais on est en train de faire de sorte qu’il y ait plus de personnes qui puissent graduer, sortir de la pauvreté absolue pour au moins avoir une meilleure condition de vie.*

This is the reality therefore and the Leader of the Opposition, in fact, should read the whole Household Survey and not miss the core results of the survey on poverty reduction. In addition, the following may be noted, Madam Speaker and this is really, really revealing –

“Income inequality decreased between 2012 and 2017. The share of total income going to households at the lower end of the income range increased from 5.3% in 2012 to 5.7% in 2017.

On the other hand, the share of the upper end of households decreased...”

Obviously, it will decrease!

“...from 47.5% to 46.0% during that same period.”

I was saying what is more revealing because this is the international measure that is used by all countries.

“The Gini coefficient had decreased from 0.414 to 0.400, indicating clearly an improvement in the income distribution.”

These are facts. These are figures. And those figures show that we are moving in the right direction, but we have to keep on.

Madam Speaker, this Government has addressed absolute poverty as a priority by increasing the subsistence allowance and putting in place a series of measures to alleviate absolute poverty. Again, we have come up with, I would say, two astounding measures, the Negative Income Tax and the introduction of the Minimum Wage. Both measures are targeted towards the more vulnerable of our society. With these measures, we have reached out to more than 75,000 individuals for the Negative Income Tax and more than 100,000 individuals for the Minimum Wage.

(Interruptions)

I still remember when I first announced that measure, after some time, in this very House, hon. Uteem was turning it into a ridicule, saying: “Well, how many people would have been affected by this measure, just a few thousand?” I, myself, didn’t know at that time. We had a guess. We had a projection. I mentioned figures, but then I said: “Look, I hope we will be able to reach that figure”. But I was not myself very sure about whether we will be able to. But, today, I will leave it to those people to tell us whether this measure is really supporting them or not. They will know. I was saying something with regard to the comment they made that ‘*nou pena leker*’. We don’t have the heart. ‘*Governman pena leker*’, Madam Speaker. *Enfin, le vrai coeur!*

Let me emphasise our efforts and actions to support the consumers, the low income families in particular, and what we have reduced in this Budget. True it is that we had to increase the price of petroleum because the price on the world market has increased; the price stabilisation account was meeting a deficit - a huge deficit. And, Madam Speaker, if we are irresponsible like the Labour Government had been in the past, we could have – hon. Members of the Opposition and other people also outside were saying: “Well, why increase? - yes, we could have left the price as it is.’ Yes, we could have done so. What would have happened to the price stabilisation account? It would have run into deficits by billions of rupees after some time. And then, what will happen in the future? So, the price was adjusted. But then, as I said, in a spirit of solidarity, we obviously know what are the consequences of increase in price of petroleum, what cascading effect it has on a number of other sectors. Therefore, we had discussed especially lengthily, and we agreed and had found a way of decreasing and reducing the prices of petroleum products at the pump.

I must say here that, at the time of the Labour Government - because they have been criticising a lot, especially the former Prime Minister; who now, sees that it is *dominere*, and we should not have. But when he was Prime Minister, the price has increased to record level at that time, and at a time when the dollar, the exchange rate was more favourable to them than now, and still they criticise now.

Hundreds of thousands of consumers, Madam Speaker - it is good to remind the people and the Opposition - will benefit from a reduction Rs2.35 in the price of Mogas from Rs52 to Rs49.65 per litre and a reduction of Rs1.90 in the price of diesel, that is, from Rs41.90 to Rs40. Then, we have also, as I said, decreased the price of the 12 kg cylinder of cooking gas from Rs270 to Rs240 in spite of prices which have gone up on the world market. It is also good to recall that in 2016, we had reduced the price by Rs60. So, in all now, consumers are benefitting from a reduction of Rs90. Can you imagine Rs90 per 12 kg of cylinder of cooking gas!

By the way, the hon. Leader of the Opposition said: "Well, why is it that we have maintained the excise duty on petroleum products?" This is also what he said in the PNQ.

(Interruptions)

Yes, he said so, you forgot! He was talking about the Build Mauritius Fund, and since we decided to close that Fund, therefore, the money would be going to Consolidated Fund. But remember, he, himself, introduced the Build Mauritius Fund. He introduced the tax of R1. Then, why is it that he had to tax at that time? Why is it? I am not saying that it was not correct. It was a good thing because there were so many urgent projects to attend to. For example, in the water sector, obviously, he has been financing, the Road Decongestion Programme. And that is why I say, Madam Speaker: "Why is it that we have this tax and that we can remove this and that." But if we remove everything, where are we going to have the revenue in order to be able to finance all these infrastructural projects? It must be taken somewhere.

(Interruptions)

Now, on rice, we are providing Rs714 m. of subsidy on flour and Rs186 m. for rice. And again, I would recall also that we have reduced the price of flour by R1 per half kilo. Once again, we are talking about *ti dimounes*, we are talking about a Government without a heart! On higher purchase, Madam Speaker, we had removed the surcharge that Consumer Finance Institutions was imposing for late payments.

Let me recall again, in 2015, the maximum rate of interest that was payable was 19%. We had reduced it to 12% on hire purchase. We all know who are the people who go and buy on hire purchase?

The water sector - let me say a few words about the water sector because it is good. Some people are trying to show that there is, I would not say, divergence or difference, they would say that, I and my colleague, the hon. Deputy Prime Minister, are fighting. This is what some said - not here, but outside!

Madam Speaker, the hon. Deputy Prime Minister has said and I fully agree with what he said. There are massive investments to be made in the water sector which has been neglected, and I have had, again, I would say, the opportunity to be in Government with the Labour Party, and I remember very well and my colleagues who were in Cabinet would remember also. We were pressing the former Prime Minister that water is going to be a very hot issue. A very important issue in the next general elections whenever it was going to be held. I am sure that water would be a main issue for the electoral campaign. Well, he had other priorities!

(Interruptions)

But, for us, water is a priority.

Now, for all the investments that we have to make, to replace all those *tuyaux pourris*, to build storage capacity, to replace pumps. Madam Speaker, there are pumps which have been in existence - I must say Mauritius could be a case for marketing because they have more than outlived their time. The manufacturers themselves were surprised. How is it that, in Mauritius, given a time life of 10 years, we are still running pumps for 20 years, Madam Speaker? I do not know whether we maintained, surely, we must be maintaining well those pumps! But can you imagine in what situation we were? And I agree that people - we all here are in our constituencies and we know how many times people come to us and say there is problem of water supply and so on. Yes, but then something must be done, investment must be made, and you must be able to find the money.

Now, to find the money, how do you get it? Well, logically, yes, because if people are being supplied with water, they need to pay, and they need to pay reasonable rates. We all know in Mauritius that the rates are very cheap. I do not want to go into the details if we want to compare with other countries. This is an exercise that the Opposition should do: compare water rates in Mauritius with those of so many other countries. Comparable even to us, they are very cheap! But still we have discussed and we have decided that we do not want to add another burden. Anyway, it was not going to be as if there is going to be a general increase in

tariffs. I do not want to spend lot of time because I know the Deputy Prime Minister has been dwelling on this. Initially, our intention was to increase the tariff for those high-end consumers. But, even then, we have tried to see to it that we invest, we improve the situation, we improve water supply. We are aiming at 24/7, and then, eventually, we will see. But let us improve the water supply in the water sector.

Therefore Rs900 m. is going to be invested. There is no *kasiet kasiet* or *catimini* or whatever has been said. Can you imagine, Rs900 m. I will *kasiet kasiet!* How will I do that? It will be invested. There are projects that CWA will be...

(Interruptions)

Now, can it be said, therefore, when I am mentioning all this, that we are a *gouvernement* - I say it in Creole because it is understood like that - *pena leker?*

Madam Speaker, if there is another, let's say, matter that is really dear to my heart is with regard to social aid. And I need to mention that again. The vulnerable groups, those people who are and have been discriminated against for a long time. Major injustice was caused to those who were eligible for Basic Invalidity Pension, but only because of the age of 15 years, they were not granted this benefit. We are proud - I am not saying that it is something that we should be very, very happy of - but we are proud that we have corrected this injustice, and 3,000 children, if I am right, are benefiting from this measure.

The monthly Carer's Allowance to bedridden persons under the Basic Invalidity Pension has been increased from Rs2,500 to Rs3,000, and 7,000 beneficiaries are actually getting this amount, costing Government Rs45 m. We have doubled the in-kind assistance for wheelchairs, hearing aids, spectacles and dentures to Rs30 m. for 5,000 beneficiaries.

And now, Madam Speaker, this is something which, again, this Government is very, very proud of with regard to the children with special needs who are attending secondary schools as well as primary schools. They will benefit also from taxi fares, can you imagine! They were not getting access to education.

The grant to employees of residential Care Homes and institutions that are caring mostly for our elders with disabilities has been increased from Rs6,071 to Rs8,500, that is, by 40%. I have extended the incontinence allowance to eligible cases between the age of 70 and 74 years. I have provided for two elderly Day Care Centres at Bambous and Chemin Grenier. Previously there was none.

I have also provided for training and start-up tool kits for the unemployed under the SRM. And yet, some say that we have no heart! But those who are benefiting, I am sure, know how to express their gratitude to this Government.

Let me come now to something which hon. Dr. Boolell has said. In the past, he put a PQ B/428, and I quote –

“(...) whether, in regard to taxation, he will state if Government is considering revisiting the policy thereof, indicating if the introduction of the regressive system is being envisaged?”

Madam Speaker, this question clearly indicates that the hon. Member - and I believe the Labour Party - was actually in favour of a regressive tax system. Now, let me explain to the hon. Member that, out of the three types of tax systems which exist, the regressive tax is a tax system where the low-income earners suffer a higher tax burden than the high-income group, where the tax burden decreases as the amount of income increases. In fact, as a caring Government, our aim is to increase the welfare of the population, especially those at the low-income level, and that is why we have come up with the measure in this Budget to reduce the tax rate for those earning up to Rs650,000 to 10%, and this is what you call a progressive tax system, which is in line with our mission to improve the purchasing power of our patriots.

Well, I must say, fortunately, Madam Speaker, for the middle-income earners, hon. Dr. Arvin Boolell and the Labour Party are not in Government, because they would have introduced the regressive tax system.

Madam Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition and hon. Dr. Arvin Boolell have spoken about the public sector debt being understated, and hon. Bérenger has also talked about that. I am going to respond to all these arguments. They mentioned about Betamax, ex-BAI and financing mechanism for the Metro Express.

Now, with regard to Betamax, it is public knowledge that the STC has made an appeal to the Supreme Court against the verdict of the Singapore Arbitration Tribunal. The matter is still *sub judice*. According to IMF methodology, pending the verdict of the Court, the claim of Betamax is a contingent liability of the STC and should not be accounted for as a public debt.

This is what I have been told by the IMF because I am not an expert in this matter. When this point has been made, I have taken the pain of getting in touch with the IMF and asking them, “This is what is being said. Please, I want to have your comments. I want to know whether we are doing something which is right or wrong’. I hope the hon. Leader of the Opposition, in his letter, will also include this, and then we will see what answer we get. Because I have already got an answer from them.

Now, as for the loan taken in connection with the settlement of the debts of the ex-BAI, let me say that it is already included in the public sector debt figure, and concerning the Metro Express, so far it has been financed by equity through the grant from the Government of India.

The Line of Credit from EXIM Bank of India contracted by the SBM (Mauritius) Infrastructure Development Co. Ltd, has not yet been disbursed, Madam Speaker. The Leader of the Opposition has stated that he will write - I have just said that he will write - so, please include all this.

(Interruptions)

It is a suggestion! Send me a copy, and send me a copy of the reply of the IMF also, please!

Madam Speaker, this is very, very serious. I wish to denounce forcefully the shameful attitude of hon. Dr. Boolell, who has made disrespectful and undiplomatic attacks against India. I need to quote so that they do not come and say that I am just interpreting in my own way. Let me quote, and people, I am sure, should listen again –

“While the items on the Budget are yet to be voted, the Indian High Commission through subterfuge of this Government have started to invite bidders to submit their bids.”

And he further stated, and I quote –

“But I have to tell the High Commissioner and it is best that he is advised, Mauritius is a sovereign State. You cannot call for tenders and tenders to be allocated only to Indian companies. Either we are a sovereign State, either we have a private sector, either we widen circle of opportunities for our private sector, this is Mauritius, Mauritius *hai desh hamara*, but we are not going to be taken for a ride by any power emerging or existing, Madam Speaker.”

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Order, please!

(Interruptions)

Order! Order!

Hon. Dr. Boolell! Please! No comments, please!

(Interruptions)

No! Not from a sitting position! If you have a point of order, you stand up. I will give you the floor. You stand up and make your point of order. Otherwise, from a sitting position, there should be no comments. Please!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Dr. Sorefan! I do not want you to provoke! Please!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Dr. Boolell! Please! Calm down!

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, first of all, let me talk about the content. Then I will talk about the form.

This is, first of all, absolute nonsense and it is what I call ‘mere India bashing’ that I find extremely shocking. The Indian High Commission or the Indian High Commissioner has never invited any bids on any project funded under the Indian financial assistance. In fact, all invitations for proposals have been made by the Government of Mauritius and the local implementing agencies with the technical assistance of the EXIM Bank of India.

Another falsehood in the hon. Dr. Arvin Boolell’s intervention is that contracts have to be awarded to Indian companies only. I think he has not read what has been published.

Let me point out that the Line of Credit already provides for non-Indian content of up to 70% for the Metro Express project and up to 35% for other projects.

Let me now quote another nonsense of the hon. Dr. Boolell during his intervention, and I quote –

(Interruptions)

Dr. Boolell: Madam Speaker, the hon. Prime Minister may put his views across. But I do not think that he can impute motives. There is no nonsense. He has the right to speak, but not to impute motives.

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Hon. Dr. Boolell! Please! Please! Order!

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: I have several times observed in this House, from the Opposition side, saying that what the hon. Prime Minister or other Ministers are saying are nonsensical. And we can get this from the Hansard. So, I do not think this word is unparliamentary.

The Prime Minister: So, let me quote again another nonsense from hon. Dr. Boolell during his intervention, and I quote him, Madam Speaker –

“And he has to highlight the number of projects which are yet to be voted in this House. And through special purpose vehicles, money routed through the SBM, what we call the SBM Infrastructure Development. These are channelled to many companies and tenders have already been called for and we are asked to vote for

items listed in the Estimates of 2018/19. I am not talking of one cent, a few pennies, we are talking of more than Rs22 billion, Madam Speaker.”

Madam Speaker all the projects for which requests for proposals have been launched so far have, in fact, been included in APPENDIX II of last year’s Budget. There has been absolutely no request for proposal on new projects which are included in this Budget 2018/19. Sometimes, when you want to be transparent, this is what happens. There was no obligation for me, as Minister of Finance, to include the list of projects that have been financed by the Government of India.

Dr. Boolell: I have it from good authority that what the hon. Prime Minister is saying is not true. I can read in respect of the contract being awarded by the Indian Government, inviting bids from eligible and qualified Indian contractors, not Mauritians. So, I can have it here and I can submit it to him.

The Prime Minister: Yes, but they are part of the 30% of the Indian companies that are qualified...

(Interruptions)

Dr. Boolell: No, there is no mention of 30%. That is his way of interpreting things and I have a different interpretation. And I can submit the relevant documents.

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, let me explain to the hon. Member. *Il est très, très rouillé. Très, très rouillé!* The Line of Credit that we have obtained from the Government of India for which we have signed, for which there are conditions, one of the conditions is that there is up to a certain percentage of works that can be carried out - I will explain in simple terms - by Indian companies and there is a percentage of works that can be carried out by any other companies, including Mauritian companies.

Do I have to be clearer than that? Obviously, when the institution concerned, the Special Purpose Vehicle, will call for tenders, they will see to it that in certain cases they will have recourse to Indian contractors or Indian companies. In other cases, they will have recourse to Mauritian companies.

Let me give an example. In the Metro Express project, we have been allowed to buy through the contractor, the rolling stock. The rolling stocks are made by a company in Spain called CAF and, therefore, we are buying those rolling stocks from CAF, which is a non-Indian company.

I have a letter here from the High Commission of India, Port Louis. Let me read it. In one of the communications addressed to me –

“Government of India has, after careful deliberation last week, approved a one-time reduction of Indian content requirement to 30% of the LOC component of the Metro Express Project of USD260 m.”

And it says here - well, this is exactly what I have explained. Therefore, the hon. Member, I think, should take some time and if he wants I can further explain to him after the summing-up later on.

Now, let me say something that people do not know. It is good and hon. Boolell knows about it. That is why he is protesting.

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Hon. Soodhun!

The Prime Minister: This is not a matter of hon. Dr. Boolell just intervening and saying by himself: “I know this matter has been discussed at the highest level of the Labour Party.” I do not want to mention names, but this matter has been discussed, what strategy are we going to adopt with regard to all the support that we are getting from India. And they have decided - the Labour Party -that they would...

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Order on this side, please!

The Prime Minister: ... attack India. They would attack the High Commissioner.

(Interruptions)

I know! The hon. Member wants me to give names! He wants me to give the paper?

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Hon. Dr. Boolell, I did not give you the floor!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Dr. Boolell! I am sorry! Please! No! Hon. Dr. Boolell.

(Interruptions)

I did not give you the floor. Please sit down!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Dr. Boolell, you cannot take the floor when I did not give you the floor.

(Interruptions)

Right! You cannot say the Prime Minister is a liar. No, this is unacceptable!

(Interruptions)

It is unacceptable!

(Interruptions)

Unacceptable! Hon. Dr. Boolell! Hon. Dr. Boolell, you can put it otherwise. You can say...

(Interruptions)

Please sit down! You can say that whatever the Prime Minister has said is incorrect! But you cannot say that he is a liar! Please!

Dr. Boolell: What he is saying is totally unfounded!

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Allow the Prime Minister...

The Prime Minister: No, I want him to be here. I want him to listen what I have got to say. This matter, he better goes and asks his good friend, Mr Anil Baichoo. This matter has been discussed. Madam Speaker, I can understand his reaction because he has been corrected by the Leader of the Labour Party. His speech has been corrected as was his speech which was corrected at the United Nations. He wants me to tell you more on this? We were together.

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Order!

(Interruptions)

The Prime Minister: Well, what you have said in this Parliament is in Hansard. It is on record. It is not a joke. For him, it may be a joke, but the gratuitous India bashing and statements that he made are on record.

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Hon. Dr. Boolell, please!

The Prime Minister: Hon. Dr. Boolell, it is unbecoming of you as a former Minister of Foreign Affairs to have stated all this.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Prime Minister, please! Do not engage in a conversation with the hon. Member. I have asked the hon. Member not to provoke, please!

(Interruptions)

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, let me now move to the issue of citizenship and passport to the ultra High Net Worth Individuals and their families.

Let me put it in very simple terms, that raising revenue for the country is not the main objective of the schemes. The more so that we have built up foreign currency reserves of close to Rs222 billion, the highest ever recorded. Raising revenue is actually the least of all the tremendous benefits that the schemes will bring.

Having said this, Madam Speaker, I would like to reassure the House and the population that the granting of citizenships and passports will not be open-ended. Let me also say and I say that mainly for the Labour Party – that, in fact, I am introducing a system which is transparent, where there is going to be accountability in the process of granting passport and citizenship to people. From 2005 to 2014, the Labour-PMSD Government with Dr. Navin Ramgoolam as Prime Minister has granted 318 citizenships. I won't go into the details for the time being. I have the details here, but I won't go into them. I was expecting a PNQ on that matter, but let me reserve some information for later on. They are criticising and they are talking -that has to be kept later on - about Alvaro. If we had this scheme in place, what would happen to Alvaro? Well, first of all, Alvaro has not asked for citizenship and secondly, as far as I know, up to now, Alvaro has not been convicted by any Court of Law. And I have stated earlier, Madam Speaker, I was myself asked a PNQ on this matter. When you have international banks of the repute of Canada, Switzerland, England, United States and funds have gone through those Banks and come to Mauritius, they are still saying that it is tainted money. If it is tainted money, then Switzerland, Canada, United States, United Kingdom, all those institutions there also, are not functioning, but, here, let me mention one case. I won't be able to give the name though, but they are talking about that kind of people coming to Mauritius. They granted a citizenship to somebody and suffice it to say today just for the summing-up speech, that Mr T. K. S had been convicted in England, convicted to imprisonment, *s'il vous plaît*; nine months imprisonment for offence of indecent sexual assault.

(Interruptions)

Maybe I can understand, birds of the same feather flock together. And nothing has been done, this gentleman is still here. But *à force de fouiller*, *à force* de coming up with such a scheme myself and *à force d'être accusé par l'opposition*, I have gone into a number of things, and slowly when we are digging, I am going to take up this matter. We will see later on.

I can understand what we are proposing would also be highly beneficial to our country, if, of course, it is properly managed; not giving passport, citizenship here and there. This has been done in order to attract people to invest in the textile sector at that time, and those people have they bought the country? Have they become *locataires*? But, of course, if you give right, left and centre, we will become *locataires*. And that is why, there can be a situation, wherein if we are irresponsible, it can be detrimental to our social coherence and stability. We need to make the right selection and we have to be very careful on the rights and

privileges of the new citizens. That is why these schemes will have to be implemented with care, with well-thought out guidelines, strict defined eligibility criteria, proper due diligence as well as ensuring that they do not undermine the social fabrics of our society.

Moreover, Madam Speaker, let me say, it will require, in the first instance, the drafting and enactment of two stand-alone legislations, namely the Mauritius Sovereign Fund Bill and the Mauritius National Investment Authority Bill.

It will take intensive and extensive work and that cannot be accomplished within the short delay we have to present the Finance Bill. Therefore, I can assure the House, first of all, that it will not be in the Finance Bill...

(Interruptions)

...but it will be worked out. And eventually, it will come to Parliament, then we will have the whole debate about it and then people will see also what we are proposing.

But let me say also, because I am Prime Minister, and there are two former Prime Ministers also here in this House, and we do have requests for citizenship, Madam Speaker, and I have been dealing with each application in a manner which I can say is in all transparency and each time in the interest of the country.

(Interruptions)

I can say that it is open to a Prime Minister, when people wish to have citizenship or a passport, how much they can offer, how much they can give, and I can speak only for myself, of course, that the way I do things, I do things in a way that I will see to it that I will be able to walk in any corner of Mauritius, *la tête haute sans être accusé d'avoir pris à gauche et à droite*.

But I can't speak for what has happened in the past. That is why I say -and hon. Mohamed rightly so in the past, during a debate, I think, in this House. He had proposed, why is it that we don't come up with a structured system, with a scheme whereby we give citizenship or passports to foreigners. Of course, he was mentioning about those who would invest and so on. I agree, this is what we should do so that we don't leave it for a Prime Minister to decide whenever he wants to pocket some money, left, right and centre in order to give passports.

I want it to be structured, I want it to be transparent and I want to see to it that things are done properly according to guidelines. Otherwise, if it were in my interest, and if I were a dirty fellow, I could have said and would have said: 'Well, why do we have to come up with this scheme?'

Madam Speaker, let me come to the sugar sector. Let me reply to hon. Bérenger. Government has set up a Technical Committee long time ago. That Technical Committee has been working and has produced a report. We have a number of recommendations.

But it is a Technical Committee; the recommendations are not recommendations of Government. When we put a Technical Committee, they can come up with all sorts of recommendations. Then Minister of Agriculture would produce that report to Cabinet, to Government, and it is for us then to decide what are the measures that we intend to apply. This has been done. Of course, when we look at the report, there are certain things which we thought were good, but there were certain recommendations we, ourselves, did not agree with.

Now, what has happened, Government has set up a Ministerial Committee, I am chairing that Committee and it is, I must say, a coincidence that I was also at the same time preparing the Budget and I made it a point, Madam Speaker, even if I was preparing the Budget, my time was, let's say, practically wholly taken by that, I would meet with the trade unionists and the big planters of that sector and that I would also be meeting eventually the small planters.

And we had a first meeting whereat we discussed and we got, let's say, the first views about this report and we communicated the report also to all of them. Since I have been accused of delaying, as if I am now delaying, and I am doing this and that - I am not delaying anything. In fact, Madam Speaker, let me say - I didn't ask permission to say that from the trade unionist. But the trade unionists themselves have told me during that meeting: "Let us not rush now, we understand that you have a Budget, you are going to present a Budget, let us meet after the Budget so that then we will have ample time to go through and discuss and see what recommendations we will agree with.

Now, obviously, I agreed and it was practical also for us, for Government, for me. Now, we are going to meet with all the partners and eventually, we will come – *oui, la situation est sérieuse, c'est important, il y a un autre défi à relever*. But I can assure the House that this Inter-ministerial Committee will be addressing all the issues in a comprehensive manner with all the stakeholders. Let me also say that I hope that the same attitude, the same approach will be from both the big sugar producers and the small planters and the trade unionists as has prevailed when, for example, we were discussing about the Tripartite Meeting, the Minimum Wage. I must say that I requested all parties that *on doit être réaliste, on doit être raisonnable. Il y a un défi, le prix du sucre est en baisse, et malheureusement, le coût de production est tel que la situation est devenue grave, mais I*

hope that we will put our hands together, all of us, like we have done in the past, and that we will be able to come up with acceptable solutions. Let me say that though, I did not want to go into that but, again, when I was reading the speech of hon. Dr. Boolell, he started to accuse me, and now this is coming for the first time, Madam Speaker, that when I initiated the reform process, I have copied from St Antoine – I think he mentioned St Antoine.

Madam Speaker, I had initiated the reforms back in 2001 when I was the Minister of Agriculture. I can assure the House again, this time, we will assume our responsibility as we have been doing in the past. But I cannot leave that unanswered what hon. Dr. Boolell has said. It is good that I remind him. He is talking a lot nowadays about the Sugar Industry, and his leader also. The Labour Party came up with the blueprint on centralisation.

L'honorable Dr. Boolell est amnésique. Let me remind him *le* blueprint on centralisation was presented to the nation in May 1997. I think, if I am not mistaken, he was Minister of Agriculture. Let me quote from that blueprint what it says. I quote –

“It is imperative for Mauritius to use the 1995-2001 grace period of stable nominal prices to carry out major reforms in the sugar industry to reduce cost of production, optimise the use of by-products, foster environmental protection, improve health and safety at the workplace and enhance sugar recovery so as to face the challenges of the 21st century and take up all the opportunities.”

This is the diagnosis of the Labour Party. But, Madam Speaker, we are talking about 1997 to 2000. What did hon. Dr. Boolell do?

I can tell you - because I succeeded him as Minister of Agriculture in September 2000 - I, first of all, read this blueprint and, obviously, I met all the stakeholders of the Sugar Industry. And all of them were saying that nothing has been done to come up with a plan to restructure, to reform the Sugar Industry. Three years wasted! He has been sitting down, doing nothing! There was not even, Madam Speaker - and if I can recall, I think you, yourself, were the Permanent Secretary.

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Am I to be blamed?

(Interruptions)

The Prime Minister: Now, you are Speaker. If I can recall, they had not even set up a committee to look into and come up with recommendations!

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: I was there from 2000 onwards also.

The Prime Minister: In fact, MSM-MMM were in Government then. And then, we started working on the reform process. Then, when we came up - I won't quote the other parts of it, but there was urgency. They were right. You were right, hon. Dr. Boolell, when you said in the blueprint that there was urgency, but you did not act, you did not do anything! And then, when we came to Government, we worked hard. Madam Speaker, it is good for me to say that - it is an opportunity, maybe I am taking some time - I will never forget that, just a few days after I had become Minister of Agriculture, I was told that it is imperative that I should meet with the European Union Commissioner, Pascal Lamy. And I can tell you that it was a very hot and interesting meeting, because we were praying them to give us time, they were going to adopt the reforms of the Common Agricultural Policy, and they told us -

“You have been wasting your time, that is not our problem and we are going to reform our Common Agricultural Policy, and therefore, be careful because it would mean the end of the quota and that would mean the end of a guaranteed sugar price”.

The writings were on the wall. They had acknowledged it and they did not act on it. And when we acted on it, Madam Speaker, what did the then hon. Prime Minister say? The then Prime Minister said, and I quote what was said by the Prime Minister himself when he was the Leader of the Labour Party. So, we had come up with the reform of the Sugar Industry and the leader of the Labour Party said, I quote -

“For the past 14 years, I think it is from 1986, 12,000 have left the industry, that about 1,000 workers have left the industry year by year as a policy of attrition. If that is the case, then why is it that the hon. Minister - that is me - needs to come to have a Voluntary Retirement Scheme?”

(Interruptions)

This is their criticism, their approach to the VRS. This is what they had to say with regard to the VRS. And he went on further. I quote -

“Le plan stratégique de Pravind Jugnauth est un subterfuge pour un licenciement massif.”

And in 2001, Dr. Navin Ramgoolam was the Leader of the Opposition, this is what he said again - *un langage incroyable*: “we are taking the workers for donkeys to whom the Minister of Finance was offering carrots.” *On est en train de balancer des carottes devant les bourriques.* This is how he treated the workers at that time.

(Interruptions)

And he said - it is good that it goes on record again -

“The Minister of Agriculture fails to understand if you put a carrot in front of a donkey, you know what happens”.

(Interruptions)

L'honorable Dr. Boolell avait oublié le blueprint après. Après, quand on a fait le VRS qui a été un succès, it has been a win-win situation. I don't want to dwell lengthily on that. Mais lui, lorsqu'il est venu après, il est venu comme un Zorro. Le VRS de Pravind Jugnauth n'était pas bien ! Ce n'était pas dans l'intérêt des travailleurs. Il avait dit, Madame la présidente, que he will “stick to the conditions of the blueprint”, that is, instead of giving 7 perches to the workers, he will give 16 perches to the workers. 16, he said!

(Interruptions)

It is on record! He said 16 perches! When they came to power, when they were in Government, he was again Minister of Agriculture, I believe. *16 perches ? Envolé! Envolé ene sel coup!*

(Interruptions)

16 perches monte lor pié! And he adopted the same VRS, the same plan that we had initiated. I am not blaming him, but anyway.

(Interruptions)

The hon. Members want me to say what more they had said then?

(Interruptions)

There have been many, many instances where the leader of the Labour Party has been against the Voluntary Retirement Scheme. But it is pure demagoguery because again they adopted the same scheme. I do not know whether it is a repetition. Well, the same thing; treating the workers as donkeys again. So, I do not need to go into that. Now, what is surprising to me, Madam Speaker – well, I could have maybe accepted that argument in 2000-2001, if hon. Dr. Boolell would have said: “Look, the VRS Scheme that you are coming up with, you are copying it from St Antoine”. No! They were criticising. They were treating workers as donkeys. They said: “Let them go in the natural way”. And today, after so many years, I do not know where he came up with this idea now: “Pravind Jugnauth had copied from St Antoine”. Come on, he must be serious! But anyway...

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Hon. Jhugroo!

The Prime Minister: Let me come to our fight, Madam Speaker, against drug trafficking, abuse and corruption. Again, we have been accused of laxism on this issue. Yet, they know the devastating impact of drug abuse on our society today, as a result - and I say it

forcefully - of, I would say, very, very soft - *je mâche mes mots* - approach and tolerance towards drug traffickers.

Madam Speaker, you would recall, everybody would recall in this House, how many times we have requested, we have asked for a Commission of Inquiry to be set up. How many times, systematically, the former Prime Minister, Dr. Navin Ramgoolam, had refused, taking all sorts of pretext, that there was no need and so on and so forth. In fact, they have tolerated the mafias, and those people, Madam Speaker, now have amassed so much money.

There is a lot I can say about drug trafficking, but because we are waging a determined war against drug traffickers, there are certain things I will not be able to say. We know, we have information, how drugs, heroin mainly, was entering the country before. And do you think it is only just *une coïncidence* when we had this record seizure at the Customs? *Ce n'est pas une coïncidence*. I can say that we have been following this matter for long a time. We had information about what happened previously, and I am shocked, I must say, I am really shocked, and I am scared also, I have to admit, when I look at what means those people have at their disposal. Can you imagine how much money they have risked in so many cases? There are cases people do not know about right now. So, only cases where it has come to the media, and it is only certain things that the media knows about. But there are other things that are not, and that are still being investigated.

So, they know our determination. Hon. Bérenger is saying that it is for the first time that we hear people from the prisons. Again, I will not unfortunately be able to give information on these...

(Interruptions)

It is not worse than ever. I am telling hon. Bérenger, it is not worse than ever. In fact, what is happening now, we don't know everything, but we know the network. We are communicating, we are interacting. He said something about ADSU not being respected in Reunion and Madagascar. I won't say more than that. But there are certain things that we have shared with both the authorities in Reunion and Madagascar. Let enquiries continue; let us see what happens in the future. But, our determination, I think, sur *ce dossier*, Madame la présidente, tout le monde connaît Sir Anerood Jugnauth, son courage, le passé qui est témoignage de son combat qu'il a mené contre les mafias.

(Interruptions)

And, again, I don't need to remind members of the Labour Party especially, how *la drogue était vendue, à gauche, à droite, un peu partout*. In Plaine Verte, we know the names. There are some people when they appear before you, you have to leave or run away. The

Police Station in Plaine Verte, this is the first time when iron bars were placed to protect policemen. Can you imagine, a Police Station!

(Interruptions)

But we have to take action against corrupt Police Officers also. And there are! And they are not only in the Police Force, there are not only some; I must say some in the Customs. You would be shocked, Madam Speaker, there are people elsewhere who are also accomplices, but we are watching.

I must pay tribute to those honest people who are working day and night in ADSU, in Customs, in other departments to help us, so that we are able to make those record seizures every time.

I would say to some Members of the Opposition, not to all, don't make cheap politics, because there was a time when one person was arrested by the Police, and because that person has been coming to – I am talking about the MSM meetings - wherever we have been holding meetings, have been taking pictures also, near me, with me. They try to make as if we are accomplices with those people. People know my determination, *ma sincérité dans le combat contre la drogue*, and I will not either cover up or tolerate anybody for that matter. Anybody !

Moi, je ne vais pas faire de la démagogie. I will not. I tell you, Madam Speaker, I have done something. There is one person who came to me, has produced certain photographs of Members, political people in the Opposition with people who are involved in drug trafficking, who said: "Look, they published this photograph, take it; you would gain political points." I have taken the photographs though. That's good to be there, but I have said, no, because it does not mean to say, if somebody takes a picture with you, that means you are an accomplice. If it is proved, then yes! Then, you can publicise. That is why I said to the Opposition, be very careful, sometimes there are people in their own party - I don't want to mention anything, but I am not accusing, because they not are responsible. They cannot be responsible for the acts and doings of somebody else. So, this Government, Madam Speaker, is providing the necessary resources and support to the institutions, namely ADSU, Customs and the Police.

I would again say that the Safe City Project is not implemented by Mauritius Telecom. Obviously, all the equipments, and the infrastructure are being purchased by them, but it will be under the control of the Police. It is the Police which is going to manage this. And I am sure - we are not inventing, somebody said that before; I don't know whether Minister Mentor said that. We have been to other countries where it has been successfully

demonstrated that using cameras, and modern equipment, first of all, facilitates. I think, Singapore, the hon. Minister said it. We are not inventing the wheel again. *Cela a été démontré et le niveau de crime*, and rightly so, I think Minister Mentor said in Flic-en-Flac. Hon. Xavier-Luc Duval was in Government, they had installed the cameras, and this had helped. In so many places this has helped to uncover criminal activities and, again, for drug trafficking also, this will be useful.

(Interruptions)

Well, we give him recognition for that.

(Interruptions)

Face recognition!

Madam Speaker, some Members from the other side also have cast doubts on our willingness to combat corruption. Let me announce that we will come forward with a Financial Crime Commission Bill to strengthen our fight against fraud and corruption. This will, once again, undoubtedly show our determination to fight corruption.

Madame la présidente, l'honorable Bhagwan, fidèle à lui-même, sous le couvert de l'immunité de cette auguste Assemblée, en a profité pour faire des accusations que je considère gratuites envers certaines personnes.

I would suggest that they look in their own ranks first before they dare to raise doubts about our determination to combat corruption.

Let me say, first of all, they are talking about people on our side. Let me remind him of the case of Bidianand Jhurry, who has been found guilty by our Courts under five counts, namely a public official using his office for gratification, recruiting relatives, including his ...

(Interruptions)

He has paid for that! But he is a member of your party and he has been convicted.

There is also the case, Madam Speaker, though I don't want to go into that, but since hon. Bhagwan has made unjustified attacks against us – of Ashok Jugnauth found guilty of electoral bribery by the Privy Council and yet the MMM backed him for three elections, one by-election against myself and two general elections.

(Interruptions)

Let me also recall, Madam Speaker, we all as well as I have witnessed in this House, the first person who had denounced the BAI as being a Ponzi Scheme was the hon. Paul Bérenger. He was then the Leader of the Opposition. I remember hon. Uteem also had added his voice to say to the Government, the Labour Government, be careful because this is going to undermine the economy. They were right when they said that. And yet, the MMM had

accepted a cheque of Rs10 m. from the company whom they were accusing of stealing people's money.

(Interruptions)

No, you must not be contradictory! This is what I am saying!

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Order, please!

The Prime Minister: You accused...

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Order, please! Order!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Soodhun !

(Interruptions)

Order! Please proceed, hon. Prime Minister!

The Prime Minister: You accused the company of stealing people's money, as being a big Ponzi, and yet they accept money from that company. How do you call that?

(Interruptions)

That's not that company! *Non*, be serious, hon. Bérenger!

Madam Speaker: No, please! Don't get distracted by comments, hon. Prime Minister!

The Prime Minister: Pire encore, Madame la présidente, ces donneurs de leçons ont contracté une alliance en 2014 avec la personne qui symbolise la corruption et l'immoralité – je parle de Monsieur Coffre-Fort. Ils voulaient le faire devenir Président de la République, s'il vous plaît ! Un mandat de sept ans, avec immunité absolue !

Mais, heureusement, la population n'est pas dupe. Grâce à la clairvoyance de notre peuple, c'est ce gouvernement qui a été plébiscité par la nation.

I have to say this, Madam Speaker, because the hon. Leader of the Opposition, maybe he is in a habit of probably, either by himself, or somebody else, of recording people, and there was the case of my friend who was being recorded as having said certain words and so on, and that was given to the Press. I know because they came to me, they told me what had happened. But you have to be true to yourself. Ce que l'honorable Abbas Mamode a dit à Mauritius News:

« Tou se ki proné par mo religion li mo priorité, seki mo religion li pu passe avant tou, se san condition, seki mo religion dire, li passe avan tou kitchose. »

It's good that people should know, this is the kind of Member of the National Assembly who says that his religion passes before his responsibility towards the people of this country. This is what he has stated, and I would have hoped that instead of the leader trying to justify that he was going to the Post Office, I don't know, to buy stamps, or what, at least he would have said: this is most inappropriate and he would have taken action against him. But, no, nothing has been done!

So, Madam Speaker, let me, before concluding, and in order not to forget a few things hon. Bérenger has said that, we will not be able to achieve 4.1% of growth. I have to take it in a disorderly manner because he intervened only at the last moment. So, I must say this time around, most of our capital outlays will be implemented given a boost to investments and growth. Because the implementation of the mega projects has taken time to lift up. I must agree it has taken time because of our procurement process with which we have to go along. We have to abide by these conditions so that we are not also accused of trying to circumvent certain procedures. Now that the phase is over, there will be acceleration in the construction phase unlike the previous years, most productive sectors will experience positive growth also, and we are also seeing a recovery of total investment which is very encouraging.

We believe that around 4% and we are confident that we will reach our target in 2023. With regard to the deficit what has been said is that the recurrent budget deficit as a percentage of GDP is only 1.7%, therefore, the bulk of our deficit goes to capital expenditure for creating new productive assets that will generate revenue for many years to come.

With regard to the redeemable preferential shares, he said that it is an accounting trick. There is no trick, Madam Speaker, we don't traffic, we don't trick with figures. Having recourse to SPVs is to fast-track the implementation of capital projects, and to build on the capabilities and efficiencies of the said institutions through professional Management teams.

(Interruptions)

It's not adviser. If he listens to IMF - go and consult IMF!

IMF will tell him! Let me quote, since hon. Bérenger is not agreeable, the IMF Government Finance Statistics Manual 2014. It says that in the IMF Public Sector Debt Statistics: Guide for Compilers and Users, debt is defined as a financial claim that requires payment of interest and principle by the debtor to the creditor at a date or dates in the future. From the above definition, this is what IMF says: Liabilities in the form of equity are not accounted as debt. According to the IMF Handbook on Securities Statistics 2013, redeemable preference shares are classified as equity and not as debt. Therefore, the redeemable preference shares by SBM would not be classified as debt of those entities.

And then the hon. Member mentioned also about certain public enterprises, whether their debt is being taken into consideration. Well, we have a list of those whose debts are being included: Landscape Mauritius, National Housing Development Company, National Property Fund, MauBank Holdings, Central Electricity Board, Mauritius Telecom also.

(Interruptions)

No, but the hon. Member knows better! Of course, he knows better than everybody! Okay!

I have replied with regard to social housing, the query that he had, and then he talked about the tax reduction to which I have also replied. The sugar industry, I have replied. Now, he talked about tuna. There, it is another issue where we have a situation where there is an agreement between us and the European Union, and there is a quota for each vessel. Now, the problem is that we need to have a proper management of the quota so that fish is being supplied to the canning factory at regular intervals, so that it does not come a time when there is no more quota and that there is no supply, and there is a technical layoff of workers. This has happened unfortunately because they all come, they all fish, they get their quota and then after having supplied part of their tuna to the canning factory, then there is rest of the time when we needed to ask for a derogation.

Madam Speaker, we had through good offices of the Foreign Affairs been dealing with that, and, I must say, this had been very helpful to the rescue of the tuna canning factory but, unfortunately, when we got the derogation, it was out of time. It was not useful. So, this time, in order to pre-empt what can happen in the future, we have discussed with the EU, and I speak under his correction, we have already got a derogation to be able to buy tuna from Krakow, I believe, in case there is a need to do so. So, I hope that this will resolve any situation that can arise later on.

Now, with regard to Agalega, coming from the hon. Bérenger, I thought he had met the President of the Republic of India, Shri Ram Nath Kovind, unless the Press has misquoted him. I thought that he was a bit reassured when he made a statement after his meeting. Now, he is saying that we should – and I have replied in this very House to a PNQ of the Leader of the Opposition. I have said that there is no military base in Agalega. I have said that the infrastructure, port, airport will be under the control of the Mauritian authorities. I have said concerning all these unwarranted, unjustified and vile attacks against us and India, that we are certainly not giving up sovereignty or selling Agalega to India.

Cancer hospital, we are now nearly completing the process. Eventually, there is going to be signature probably when we will have the contractor, all the process in place. But I can

say that things are moving on and it is a matter, probably, of some weeks before this. I agree that there is urgency because now we have, unfortunately again, Madam Speaker, to look at this situation. There was an equipment which, unfortunately, should have been replaced a long time ago, but had not been replaced, and was just left lying there, operating beyond its lifetime. I must say there are officers also who should have drawn the attention of Government that there is an urgency in replacing this equipment. Now, the equipment was nearing breaking down, part of it broke down, but we have initiated a process and we hope that we can move on as fast as we can because, obviously, there is an urgency in that matter.

With regard to the Declaration of Assets Bill, I can assure the Members that we will come to this House with a Bill. Financing of political parties, we will also come to this House. But, obviously, I cannot mention everything in the Budget. I have already replied in the past to PQs that we will be coming with the required legislation.

So, Madam Speaker, before concluding, I wish to highlight the unprecedented efforts in the Budget for the development of our outer islands, Rodrigues and Agalega.

Let me also say that with the public hearings to be held by the International Court of Justice next September, a crucial stage has now been reached in the efforts to complete the decolonisation of Mauritius. All necessary resources will be made available by Government so that our decolonisation can be completed as soon as possible, thereby enabling Mauritius to effectively and fully exercise its sovereignty over the Chagos Archipelago and our citizens of Chagossian origin who wish to re-settle in the Chagos Archipelago to do so in full respect of their dignity and human rights.

Next year, Madam Speaker, I will address the nation for our fifth and last Budget that will complete our mandate and our programme that we pledged to implement. Let me also seize this opportunity to thank the population for the trust that it placed in us and to say that I will personally continue with my Government to work even harder so that we see a smile on the face of each and every one of our countrymen and women.

I thank you for your attention.

Question put and agreed to.

Bill read a second time and committed

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

At 5.28 p.m., the sitting was suspended.

On resuming at 6.04 p.m. with Madam Speaker in the Chair.

ANNOUNCEMENT

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY - VOTE ITEMS – TIME ALLOCATION

Madam Speaker: Before starting, hon. Members, I have an announcement to make. In keeping with past practice, after consultation with all parties concerned, an indicative time allocation has been worked out in regard to each vote item, in accordance with the provisions of Standing Order 73(4). As usual, I will exercise some flexibility wherever the need arises. We will proceed page by page for the orderly conduct of the Committee of Supply. I would kindly request hon. Members not to address any policy issues. In this context, your attention is drawn to Standing Order 73(3), which provides that -

“Discussions at the Committee shall be confined to the details of the Estimates and shall not refer to the general principles of Government policy and administration.”

I also appeal to hon. Members to be brief in their questions and hon. Ministers to be brief in their replies. I rely on your collaboration. I further wish to inform hon. Members that the hon. Prime Minister has made a request for the votes in regard to the Centralised Services of Government to be called out of turn, that is, immediately after the Committee would have considered the votes of expenditure for the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development. I have been informed that there is no objection. We shall, therefore, proceed accordingly.

Mr Bhagwan: Can I raise a small point, Madam Speaker? Being given that we are in this corner, can I appeal to you that you have a look here? Because we are very far from you.

Madam Speaker: Yes, we will do it as a team.

Mr Bhagwan: We have so many questions and we can be frustrated at times.

(6.07 p.m.)

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

(Madam Speaker in the Chair)

Vote 1-1 Office of the President was called.

Mr Uteem: Under *Item 21110.001(1) Basic Salary - President of the Republic*, may I know from the hon. Prime Minister whether he intends to propose the name of any candidate for the post of President of the Republic in this session?

The Prime Minister: Madam Chairperson, this does not arise from the provision that we are making for the Office of President. That is going to be a decision that will be taken by Government in due course.

The Chairperson: Hon. Dr. Boolell!

Dr. Boolell: Thank you very much, Madam Chairperson. *Compensation of Employees, Item 21110.001 (3) - Deputy Permanent Secretary*. I would like to know why,

contrary to last year where there was provision for the post of Permanent Secretary, this has been downgraded to Deputy Permanent Secretary. Is it because there is relocation, so as not to say of transfer, of the former Permanent Secretary who was too overpowering in respect of advice he tendered to the former President?

The Prime Minister: I am informed, Madam Chairperson, that one Permanent Secretary has been assigned the duties of Secretary to the President, as recommended by the PRB Report. His salary is currently being met from the vote of the Ministry of Energy and Public Utilities.

The Chairperson: Hon. Baloomoody!

Mr Baloomoody: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. On the same basic salary, can I ask the hon. Prime Minister how much has been spent on travelling by the President for last financial year?

The Prime Minister: On travelling, we do not have the details here. The mission expenses are under the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development. So, the hon. Member will ask the question when we come to the vote of the Ministry of Finance.

The Chairperson: Hon. Ms Sewocksingh!

Ms Sewocksingh: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. *Item 21110.001(2) - Secretary to the President.* May I know from the hon. Prime Minister why this post is still vacant and will it be filled?

The Prime Minister: I have just answered.

The Chairperson: Secretary to the President.

The Prime Minister: Yes, this is what I just stated but, anyway, according to the PRB Report 2016, the duties of the post of Secretary to the President should be assigned to a Permanent Secretary. Accordingly, a Permanent Secretary has been assigned the duties of the post.

The Chairperson: Hon. Bhagwan!

Mr Bhagwan: On the same item, President of Republic, we have been informed that the President overseas missions fall under another vote. What mechanism has been set up by the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development with regard to the control of expenditure on that item Overseas Travel, especially with regard to the abuses of the past?

The Prime Minister: Well, it is the usual criteria that have been laid down, whereby, whenever there is any mission to be approved for the President, the consent of the Prime Minister's Office, first of all, and the Ministry of Finance must be obtained. So, if there is any particular case, of course, I will be able to answer. But the vote item is under Finance.

The Chairperson: Hon. Osman Mahomed!

Mr Osman Mahomed: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. With regard to the post of Secretary to the President, can I ask the hon. Prime Minister whether this person, whom he has just mentioned, has been appointed substantively in that post or that whenever there is a change of President, then we have problem like we have had with the former incumbent? Will he be here for good, substantively, or on rotation basis?

The Prime Minister: Well, I have been told that the person will be assigned duties. I don't know who he is.

The Chairperson: Hon. Adrien Duval!

Mr A. Duval: May we know whether the Acting President receives any additional acting allowances to the one he is entitled. I understand that now he is the Acting President.

The Prime Minister: Well, the Acting President would be receiving allowances in relation to what is already prescribed for the position that he is holding.

(Interruptions)

Mr A. Duval: If I may, just to clarify, whether the Acting President receives the salary of the Vice-President or any additional allowances now that he is Acting President or otherwise?

The Prime Minister: I am informed that the Vice-President is now acting as President. His salary and duty allowances are being met from the vote of the Office of the Vice-President. The Acting President is being paid an allowance representing the difference between the salary of the President and the Vice-President, and this is met from the Vote of the Office of the President.

The Chairperson: Last question, hon. Quirin! No! We are proceeding page by page! *Vote 1-1 Office of the President (Rs101,500,000) was, on question put, agreed to.*

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Well, the time allocated has been exhausted!

(Interruptions)

Yes! I said at the beginning that we have agreed on a time allocation. Time that was allocated to that vote item has been exhausted, that is why we are proceeding to the next vote item. You should understand!

(Interruptions)

It is not 20 minutes! No!

(Interruptions)

It's Vote 1-2 Office of the Vice-President, yes!

Vote 1-2 Office of the Vice-President was called.

The Chairperson: Hon. Bhagwan! Vote 1-2!

Mr Baloomoody: *On page 3, under item 22030 - Rent*, may we know for which building we are talking about?

The Prime Minister: Provision made for payment of rent of Rs70,000 per month for the Office of the Vice-President, situated at Avenue Farquhar, Quatre Bornes. Lessor is Mr D. Ramful.

(Interruptions)

Now, the first contract was signed for a period of three years with effect from 01 January 2009 at a monthly rent of Rs70,000, and was subsequently renewed from January 2012 to December 2016, and the contract has again been renewed from January 2017 to December 2018.

The Chairperson: We are on page 3! Yes, hon. Baloomoody! You don't have! Hon. Abbas Mamode!

Mr Abbas Mamode: I have on page 4!

(Interruptions)

Who has a question on page 3? Hon. Ameer Meea!

Mr Ameer Meea: On page 3, item no. *21110.004 - Allowances*, there is an amount Rs1 m. May we have the details of this Rs1 m. allowances?

The Prime Minister: Provision for payment of house allowance Rs9,500 monthly and duty allowance Rs48,300 monthly for the Vice-President and acting responsibility allowances for staff.

The Chairperson: Hon. Mrs Perraud! Page 3!

Mrs Perraud: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. On page 3, under item *21110.005 - Extra Assistance*, can the hon. Prime Minister give us details about this extra assistance?

The Prime Minister: It is provision for payment of salaries, duty remission on car allowance, refund of unspent leave, travelling allowances, bonus and contributions to the National Savings Fund at the rate of 2.5% of basic salary to one adviser, two household attendants and one gardener nurseryman employed on contract. I can give the names, but I don't want to take the time of the House, unless the hon. Member wants to have the names.

The Chairperson: Hon. Dr. Boolell! Page 3!

Dr. Boolell: No, page 4.

The Chairperson: We are proceeding page by page. Hon. Adrien Duval!

Mr A. Duval: The same item about Extra Assistance, as my colleague, hon. Mrs Perraud! Can we know if there has been a merging in the staff of the President with regard to the advisers and all this? The Prime Minister said it is for salaries and overtime, etc. for advisers. May we know if the advisers have moved to the State House now, if they have merged?

The Prime Minister: I said for one adviser, Mr G. Vydelingum. He is paid Rs61,325.

The Chairperson: Page 4! Hon. Baboo!

Mr Baboo: Under *item 22040 - Office Equipment and Furniture*, may we know for what equipment and furniture?

The Prime Minister: Well, provision is required for the purchase of office equipment and furniture to replace old ones. I don't have the details of what are the furniture and office equipment items.

(Interruptions)

I believe it must be! So, it is for one A4 medium size, All-In-One monochrome laser printer scan and also A4 All-In-One monochrome laser printer and notebook computer. And furniture: a four-door, two-drawer kitchen cabinet; five-door locker; four-piece outdoor sofa set, including the coffee table; one antique style side table; a metal filing cabinet, 4 drawers, anti-tilt security system and central lock. All amounting to Rs57,735.

The Chairperson: Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Under *item 22900 Other Goods and Services*, may we know what this relates to?

The Prime Minister: Other Goods and Services, it is a long list.

First of all, it is provision for payment of uniform allowance to Office Auxiliaries, Drivers and General Workers. Then, we have provision for payment of monthly allowances to one Clerk, Word Processing Operator and one Office Auxiliary employed by the retired Vice-President. Then one Office Auxiliary and one Clerk, Work Processing Operator employed by another retired Vice-President. Four first-class air tickets Mauritius-London-Mauritius annually for medical check-up for retired Vice-Presidents. Expenses for surgical intervention if required to the retired Vice-President. I don't want to mention names.

The Chairperson: Last question, hon. Ameer Meea!

Mr Ameer Meea: No, I do not have any.

The Chairperson: Okay. Hon. Ms Sewocksingh! Page 4.

Ms Sewocksingh: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Under *item 22060 - Maintenance*, can we have more details about this item?

The Prime Minister: They are for the buildings, that is, the minor works for the Office of the Vice-President, and then there are repairs also for maintenance of air-conditioners, fax machine and photocopier. Provision has been made for maintenance and repairs of three official cars and for IT equipment, furniture, fixtures, and fittings also.

Vote 1-2 Office of the Vice-President (Rs14,600,000) was, on question put, agreed to..

Vote 1-3 National Assembly was called.

The Chairperson: Hon. Bhagwan!

Mr Bhagwan: Madam Chairperson, you will excuse me, I take upon item 20100(1) *Speaker* to talk about *l'Association des Parlementaires de la Commission de l'Océan Indien* which we created some time back. I do not see any vote in that respect. Can I know whether this *Association* does still exist and whether progress has been achieved and what about the funds to operate our participation in that *Association*?

The Prime Minister: Not aware of *l'Association* - the decrease is due to fluctuation in exchange rate and to the non-payment of contribution to the *Association des Parlementaires...*

(Interruptions)

Wrong paper. Give me the right paper.

Well, no provision is allocated for the year as no contribution is being made to *l'Association des Parlementaires de la Commission de l'Océan Indien*.

Mr Bhagwan: The Association exists?

The Chairperson: Well, later we will discuss that hon. Bhagwan, because I do not think my officers have the reply. It seems they do not have.

Next question, hon. Armance!

The Prime Minister: The hon. Member can come with a Parliamentary Question.

(Interruptions)

Mr Armance: My question is on page 6, Madam Chairperson.

The Chairperson: We are proceeding Page by Page. I said page 5. Hon. Mrs Selvon, page 5.

Mrs Selvon: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Under item 20100(10) *Members of Parliament*, could the hon. Prime Minister tell the House why there has been a decrease in the Estimates?

The Prime Minister: Provision for the payment of allowances to Members of the National Assembly. The decrease of around Rs63,000 is owing to the fact that the figure has been adjusted to its actual amount for the Members of Parliament. It has been adjusted.

The Chairperson: Hon. Ameer Meea!

Mr Ameer Meea: Yes, Madam Chairperson, on page 5, there is a post of Deputy Chairman of Committees. May I know from the hon. Prime Minister how many Committees this Chairman has chaired?

The Prime Minister: I do not know. I do not have the information here.

The Chairperson: The officers do not have the reply again. The officers of the National Assembly who are there, they do not have the reply? Okay. If they don't have the reply, then we pass on to hon. Mrs Perraud.

Mrs Perraud: Thank you. I will just take under item *20100(1) Speaker* because I cannot find the budget for overseas missions for the Parliamentarians.

The Chairperson: On page 5.

Mrs Perraud: Yes.

The Prime Minister: No, but for missions, it will be under the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development.

The Chairperson: It is for the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development. Page 6! Hon. Armance!

Mr Armance: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Under item *21110.001(10) Assistant Permanent Secretary*, I see there is a big increase from last year's budget to this year's budget. May we know why?

The Prime Minister: Assistant Permanent Secretary - because full provision has been made for this year.

The Chairperson: Page 6. Yes, hon. Baloomoody!

Mr Baloomoody: Under item *21110.001(24) Hansard Reporter and Sub Editor*, I think that we are doing away with that post. May I know why?

The Prime Minister: The post will not be filled in Financial Year 2018-19 as there are no qualified candidates. Appointment is made from officers in the grade of Assistant Hansard Reporter and Sub Editor, and there are presently no officers in the latter grade.

The Chairperson: Hon. Osman Mahomed!

Mr Osman Mahomed: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. On the same page, for item relating to Management Support Officer *21110.001(33) - Personal Emoluments (33) - Management Support Officer*, although the numbers have remained the same, there are 14 of them, we see that the salary has been increased from Rs2.7 m. to Rs3.5 m., an increase of about Rs800,000. Is there any specific reason for this?

The Prime Minister: Because full provision has been made this year.

The Chairperson: Page 7. Hon. Quirin!

Mr Quirin: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. At page 7 item 22060.005 – *Maintenance of which IT Equipment*, a sum of Rs15 m. was earmarked for 2017/18. Can we know to whom the contract was awarded and was it after a tender exercise?

The Prime Minister: Maintenance of Control Room and other associated equipment: Harel Mallac; robotics cameras again Harel Mallac; Wi-Fi to Mauritius Telecom; iPad and software to iSpace & Co.; digital recording system and servers: Harel Mallac; Pre-Press Unit equipment: iSpace & Co., heavy duty printing machine to CBE & Co. That's it.

The Chairperson: Hon. Rutnah!

Mr Rutnah: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Madam Chairperson, I am interested in item 26 *Grants* sub-item 26210.010 *SADC Parliamentary Forum* for the amount of Rs4 m. last year and the cost amount for this year is Rs4.5 m. Can we have the particulars of how this Rs4 m. has been spent, and what it entailed?

The Prime Minister: So, the provision has increased due to the fluctuation in the rate of exchange and contribution to SADC Parliamentary Forum.

The Chairperson: Hon. Osman Mahomed!

Mr Osman Mahomed: Thank you. Under item 22900.922 - *Conferences/Seminars/Workshops*, last year there was an Estimate of Rs3.5 m. So, my first question is: how much was actually spent? And secondly, for subsequent years, we don't see any provision has been made for this item. So, can I ask whether this has been transferred to another vote item, or is it that officers are not going to travel to conferences or workshops anymore?

The Prime Minister: Let me say, Madam Chairperson, first of all, with regard to how much has been spent, with regard to each provision that has been voted, it does not appear in the Budget and neither will we be able to give the exact figure about how much has been spent. So, we will circulate the sum that has been spent actually. I might not be getting all the relevant figures. I am just saying this generally.

Mr Bhagwan: Can I take a point on that, Madam Chairperson? I am just appealing to the hon. Prime Minister. Last year, while discussing the Budget, many of the replies which were supposed to be circulated then there were *des oubliettes*. Can I appeal to the hon. Prime Minister to give instructions to Ministers and officers so that whenever we ask questions and we are being informed that they will circulate, at least, they are circulated and not *passé aux oubliettes*?

The Prime Minister: Yes, let me say, Madam Chairperson, as far as possible, if my officers will provide me with the answer, I will give it. I have no problem in supplying this answer to the Assembly. But, in case we don't have it, we will circulate it and as far as I am concerned I have always circulated the replies afterwards.

Can I answer this one? Because I am informed in this case that all have been spent, but no provision is made as the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association for the Africa Region Conference will not occur in 2018-2019.

Mr X. L. Duval: May I ask the hon. Prime Minister in the past each Ministry showed revised estimates page by page so that we would know how much money has been spent on each item. A year or two since now, it has no longer been the case. Can we revert back next year to having the revised estimates on each page as in previous years?

The Chairperson: That is a question on policy!

The Prime Minister: I don't know. I will look into it. But, I know that last year, for example, it was the same as this year. But, I will check with the Finance how we normally prepare it.

The Chairperson: Hon. Uteem! No? Page 7, hon. Baloomoody!

Mr Baloomoody: On item 22900.981 – *Expenses in connection with the Youth Parliament*, may we know where matters stand and when the first Youth Parliament will sit?

The Prime Minister: At the Parliamentary sitting of 08 May, Madam Speaker made an announcement as to the holding of the first edition of the National Youth Parliament which is scheduled to be held on Thursday 02 and Friday 03 August 2018. On 10 May 2018, an advertisement was published in the local Press and through the website of the National Assembly. The deadline for application was set on 23 May 2018. Applications were invited from Mauritian citizens in the age group of 14 to 23 years. Applications received are being scrutinised and eligible candidates will be called for interview. The amount of Rs1 m. will be utilised for the three days training to the selected participants and for incurring expenditure related to the holding of the event.

The Chairperson: Page 8, hon. Mrs Perraud!

Mrs Perraud: Thank you, we are asked to vote for an item 31112.442 – *Upgrading of Building of which Parliamentary Museum*. Can the hon. Prime Minister give us some information?

The Prime Minister: Which one?

The Chairperson: Page 8! Which item?

Mrs Perraud: 31112.442 - *Parliamentary Museum*.

The Prime Minister: So, the amount of Rs500,000 will be utilised for the hiring of the services of a consultant for the preparation of a detailed project write-up for the setting up of a Parliamentary Museum including a phased implementation plan for the short, medium and long terms of the project with an indication of the corresponding costs. The amount of Rs4,500,000 requested for financial year is a rough estimate for the implementation of that project in a phased manner.

The Chairperson: Hon. Bhagwan!

Mr Bhagwan: Item 31112.442 – *Upgrading of Building*, Rs12,500,000, can we know from the hon. Prime Minister if we can have some details because this is a very old building and whether there is any retention money which is still there following the major repair works which were carried out before and whether any survey has been carried out concerning the present state of our National Assembly?

The Prime Minister: To cater for the implementation of projects aiming at enhancing the security in the perimeters, compound and vicinity of the Parliament House. Details of the projects cannot be revealed due to security reasons.

The Chairperson: Hon. Dr. Boolell!

Dr. Boolell: Yes, thank you, Madam Chairperson. In respect of item 31122.824 – *Live Broadcasting Project*, in view of the sizeable amount, I would like to know to whom the contract had been allocated.

The Prime Minister: This is the provision for live broadcasting, construction of the control room and other offices to be located in the premises lately occupied by the Security Division in the Old Government Building Wing.

The contract was awarded to Bolah Jeetun Co. Ltd. for a total sum of Rs24 m. No provision is made as the project has already been completed and all payments effected in the Financial Year 2017-2018.

The Chairperson: Last question, hon. Mrs Selvon on page 8! Yes, hon. Mrs Selvon?

(Interruptions)

You don't have any question? Then hon. Uteem? No?

(Interruptions)

Hon. Ameer Meea!

Mr Ameer Meea: Yes, on item *Live Broadcasting Project*, which by the way was a very good project, can I ask the hon. Prime Minister what has been the total amount paid until now for this project and whether this project has been completed by now?

The Prime Minister: Well, I said - and this is what I have here - the contract was awarded to Bolah Jeetun Co. Ltd. for a total sum of Rs24 m.

(Interruptions)

But it is not only for that. It is for all...

(Interruptions)

You want to have all the details? Well, let me have them. So, there is refurbishment of first location, civil works for data centre, video platform and data centre, robotics camera, relocation of server and control rooms, extra confidence engineering and other variations, door modification in Chamber and contingencies.

(Interruptions)

The actual cost is Rs143 m. Maybe I should circulate this document because there is other information also with regard to the project.

Vote 1-3 National Assembly (Rs255,000,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Vote 1-4 Electoral Supervisory Commission and Electoral Boundaries Commission was called.

The Chairperson: Page 9, hon. Bhagwan!

Mr Bhagwan: On page 9 item 21110.001 concerning the *Boundaries Commission*, can we know from the hon. Prime Minister where matters stand concerning this exercise of looking after the boundaries? When is the report scheduled to be tabled and whether the Office of the Electoral Boundaries Commission is still at the Electoral Commissioner's Office?

The Prime Minister: Well, I have a very long answer.

The Chairperson: If it is a long answer, I would advise the hon. Prime Minister to table it, circulate it.

The Prime Minister: I will take the time to read this if you want, but I better circulate it. The report of the Electoral Boundaries Commission shall make recommendations. The next report of the Electoral Boundaries Commission is due in 2019. The Commission is already embarked on the exercise for the review of the electoral boundaries, which is due for 2019. The Commission has already heard all the persons who have made submissions to the Commission on 07 April 2018 and the Commission has also effected site visits from 17 April to 03 May 2018 in different constituencies in connection with the Boundary Review Exercise. The Commission has already started the drafting of the report. I will circulate because there is other interesting information.

The Chairperson: Hon. Baboo! Page 9!

Mr Baboo: Yes, thank you, Madam Chairperson. *Item 22120 – Fees.* Can we know the details about these fees and why this big increase from Rs40,000 to Rs300, 000?

The Prime Minister: The increase is due to the provision for payment of legal fees for the following Supreme Court cases related to electoral petitions to Sir Hamid Moollan Q.C., GOSK, in cases of Sandip Bhowaneedin against Chief Executive of District Council of Flacq, Village Council of Medine, Ministry of - I believe - Local Government, Electoral Commission and Electoral Supervisory Commission. The second case is Neerunjun Ramparsad vs Chief Executive of the District Council of Flacq, Village Council of l'Aventure, and so on and so forth.

Vote 1-4 Electoral Supervisory Commission and Electoral Boundaries Commission (Rs3,300,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Vote 1-5 Office of the Electoral Commissioner was called.

The Chairperson: Hon. Mrs Selvon!

Mrs Selvon: Thank you. Under *Item 2110.001(6) - Electoral Officer*, could the hon. Prime Minister tell the House if those electoral officers for 2017-2018 have already been recruited?

The Prime Minister: Already in post, I am told.

The Chairperson: Hon. Ameer Meea!

Mr Ameer Meea: Madam Chairperson, on page 10, there is a post called Chief Electoral Officer. It was funded 1 this year, that is, 2017-2018. There was a sum of Rs1,014,000. The post remains the same, that is, one person. Next year, only Rs85,000 is budgeted. May I know the reason for that?

The Prime Minister: Well, the post of the Chief Electoral Officer is presently vacant and only one month provision has been made in the Budget as there is no qualified officer who meets qualification requirements of the post, which provides for appointment in the grade to be made by promotion of officers in the grade of Deputy Chief Electoral Officer who reckon 2 years of service.

The Chairperson: Hon. Bhagwan!

Mr Bhagwan: The Electoral Commissioner is doing a good job and is very competent. Can we know from the hon. Prime Minister whether we are supposed to have the Village Council elections this year? Can the hon. Prime Minister inform the House whether he has been informed by the Electoral Commissioner of the holding of these elections, whether any provision has been made, under which item, for the holding of the Village Council elections?

The Prime Minister: Well, from memory, I can recall that we have made a provision in the Budget for the holding of Village Council elections, this year. But I will find out. It must probably be under Centralised Managements of Operation.

(Interruptions)

It is here? Good! So, let's get ready.

The Chairperson: Page 11, hon. Adrien Duval!

Mr A. Duval: Alluding to the same question, Madam Chairperson, *Item, 22120.16 - Fees icw Election.* So, the hon. Prime Minister is saying that it is for Village Council elections. May we know when this will take place?

The Prime Minister: If the hon. Member joins us, he will know.

The Chairperson: Hon. Dr. Boolell!

Dr. Boolell: *Item 22030 – Rent.* I know this is an acute and chronic feature because rent constantly goes up. Can I ask the hon. Prime Minister whether land has been identified for the Electoral Commission to construct an office?

The Prime Minister: Rent which is being paid also includes rent for the Electoral Supervisory Commission and the Electoral Boundaries Commission. They occupy the office space on the ninth floor of Max City Building. But I do not think we have a project for the construction of an Electoral Commission Building as such. I do not believe there is any amount that has been earmarked in the Budget.

The Chairperson: Page 11, hon. Baboo!

Mr Baboo: *Item 31122.402 - Upgrading of IT Equipment,* can we know whether, with regard to the Rs2.3 m. funded last year, all the funds have been used?

The Prime Minister: Provision is for the upgrading of the existing application system design by State Informatics Limited. Now, this upgrade has become necessary as the present version of Oracle in use at the office is outdated. The proposed terms of contract with the supplier, SIL, make provisions for the payment of 30% of the contract value, Rs3,558,417 at the time of acceptance. Payment has already been effected in year 2015-2016 and 60% in 2016-2017. I am informed that the decrease in provision is because only the remaining 10% of the contract will be paid during this financial year.

Vote 1-5 Office of the Electoral Commissioner (Rs257,400,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Vote 1-6 The Judiciary was called.

The Chairperson: Hon. Adrien Duval!

Mr A. Duval: With regard to *Item 21110 .001(3) - Justice of Appeal (New) and 21110.001 (4) - President High Court (New)*, first all, we see that five posts have been funded for Justice of Appeal. May we know if a new Appeal Court is being envisaged? Can the hon. Prime Minister substantiate on the recruitment as well as for the President of the High Court, and whether there is intended to be a High Court?

The Prime Minister: Well, these posts were created in the context of the establishment of the Court of Appeal, which is awaiting the passing of the relevant enactment in the National Assembly.

The Chairperson: Hon. Rutnah!

Mr Rutnah: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. If I may take the hon. Prime Minister to *Item 21110.001(13) - Deputy Director Institute for Judicial and Legal Studies (New)*. I understand this is a new post. However, I do not see any provision for the Director Institute for Judicial and Legal Studies. May we know where is the provision for the Director actually?

The Prime Minister: The post has not been established in the Civil Establishment Order.

The Chairperson: Hon. Baloomoody!

Mr Baloomoody: Under *Item 21110 - (14) Magistrate Intermediate Court, (15) Senior District Magistrate, (16) District Magistrate respectively*. We are keeping the same number of Intermediate Court and District Court Magistrates. Now that we know that Government has decided to increase the Jurisdiction of these Courts, which means that there would be more cases to these Courts, may I know why we have kept the same number of Magistrates in the Intermediate and District Courts?

The Prime Minister: Yes, but it doesn't mean to say that when we increase the Jurisdiction that we have to increase the number of Magistrates. I must say that it is a matter that has to be discussed between the Registrars and, of course, Government, and if there are requests we will look at them. One additional information, I am also informed that vacancies will be filled by the Judiciary and Legal Service Commission in due course. So, there are already vacancies. Let's cross this bridge first and then we will cross another bridge.

The Chairperson: Page 13, hon. Rutnah!

Mr Rutnah: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Madam Chairperson, if I may take the hon. Prime Minister to *item 21110.001 - (25) Trainee Court Officer*. I see that there was a funding for year 2017/2018 for 27 Trainee Court Officers and then for the current year there is a funding for 10 only. However, I see that the estimate for last year, compared to this year,

has sharply gone down, is it because there has been a reduction in the number of Court Officers?

The Prime Minister: There is no reduction, there are vacancies. In fact, 17 vacancies have been reported to the PSC.

The Chairperson: Page 14! Hon. Adrien Duval!

Mr A. Duval: Under *item 22120.005 - Fees to Witnesses*, can the hon. Prime Minister tell us how much is being given to witnesses to attend Court and whether it is envisaged to increase the fees paid to witnesses?

The Prime Minister: Fees to witnesses have increased from Rs12.5 m. to Rs13 m.

Mr A. Duval: How much per day?

The Prime Minister: I don't have the fees per day.

(Interruptions)

So, the provision for payment of witness fee of Rs100 to public officers, citizens who attend Court and Rs200 for professionals who attend Courts as expert witnesses. Travelling Allowance is also paid to witnesses to attend Court.

The Chairperson: Hon. Baloomoody!

Mr Baloomoody: On page 14, under *item 26313.126 - Institute for Judicial and Legal Studies (IJLS)*, may we know from the hon. Prime Minister the total sum that the IJLS gets? We see that from Government it gets Rs2.5 m. and also from contribution from Barristers. Up to now, we have not seen an account where Barristers are paid Rs10,000, Junior Barristers Rs5000. I have never seen an account for this, and now, on top of that, Government is funding that Institution. So, may we know how much they get annually, what are the expenses and whether we will make sure that they have an annual account, at least?

The Prime Minister: Well, I don't have the details. I only have the actual expenditure as at May, Rs2.5 m. I will try to get the information and circulate it.

The Chairperson: Hon. Baboo!

Mr Baboo: Under *Item 22090 – Security*, can the hon. Prime Minister give us the full details of the company providing the security services and why is this being increased?

The Prime Minister: Contract for Security Services for all the 9 District Courts, Commercial Court and New Court House for period 01 August 2017 to 13 July 2018 is awarded to Top Security Services Ltd. A new contract for period 2018/2019 is under process.

The Chairperson: Hon. Rughoobur!

Mr Rughoobur: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Under *item 27210.010 - Social Assistance Benefits in Cash - Legal Assistance in "in Forma Pauperis"*, I see that there is an

amount of Rs1,500,000 which have been earmarked for 2017/2018 may I know from the hon. Prime Minister what is the amount that actually has been paid in terms of legal aids during the current year out of this sum?

The Prime Minister: I don't know how much have been paid. Expenditure for the year July 2016 to June 2017 - Rs1,021, 552. I can give you for July 2015 to June 2016, it is Rs1,195,240.

The Chairperson: Hon. Quirin!

Mr Quirin: Under *item 22120.005 - Fees to Witnesses*, may we know how many witnesses are involved and the amount paid to each?

The Prime Minister: Well, I won't have the number of witnesses who have attended Court, but I have the actual expenditure for Rs10,584, 060. I will get the detailed information and circulate.

The Chairperson: Hon. Ms Sewocksigh!

Ms Sewocksigh: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Under *item 27210.010 - Legal Assistance in "in Forma Pauperis"*, can the hon. Prime Minister inform the House if he has the intention to increase this sum, because it is still Rs600 these days, especially for Rodrigues?

The Prime Minister: I think we have increased the bracket for people who are qualified for legal aid.

(Interruptions)

The fees? We will look into that.

The Chairperson: Page 15! Leader of the Opposition!

Mr X. L. Duval: May I ask the hon. Prime Minister, under *item 31122.802 - Acquisition of IT Equipment*. We know the issues that have arisen with equipment and connectivity on the *Boskalis* affair; this deals with IT Equipment and Video conferencing. Now, with only Rs365,000 being provided, isn't it time that we equip out Courts so that we don't lose face when we are supposedly connecting to Holland or whatever, and we can actually have a proper Court Case? Is it the fault of Mauritius Telecom or for lack of equipment at the Court? But can we actually have decent equipment in the Courts?

The Prime Minister: It is obviously for the Court to make any request if there is any deficiency in its equipment. I have not received any request.

(Interruptions)

You won't have this detail, but there are provisions that are being made for additional PCs for all District Courts to monitor and update case files and so on. There is additional upgrading which is being done.

The Chairperson: Hon. Rutnah!

Mr Rutnah: Thank you, Madam Speaker. If I may take the hon. Prime Minister to item 31122.802 (f), which is the last item in relation to *Revamping E-Judiciary Commercial Court*, I see that there is a provision for the current year Rs10 m. May I know from the hon. Prime Minister where is the server of the E-Judiciary based, whether in Mauritius or in other jurisdiction and what is the cost of the server that we pay per year?

The Prime Minister: I don't have this information, but we will try to find out and circulate, unless you can give me where is the server. Server is based at the GOC, Government Online Centre, so here at Ébène.

The Chairperson: Hon. Quirin!

Mr Quirin: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Item 21122...

The Chairperson: We are on page 15!

Mr Quirin: It is 15, yes.

The Chairperson: 21?

Mr Quirin: Yes, of course, 31, excuse me, I am sorry. It is 31122 (c) *Revamping of Digital Court Recording System*, from a project value of Rs25 m., I see that an amount of Rs24 m. was earmarked for 2017-2018 and the same amount for 2018-2019. Can we know whether it is the same amount coming twice or is it an increase in the project value?

The Prime Minister: Revamping E-Judiciary Commercial Court, well, it has been implemented since December 2011 for E-filing of cases. However, Microsoft no longer provides support and updates for SharePoint 2007 making the application vulnerable to new security threats and coupled with high maintenance costs, the Judiciary intends to revamp the existing E-Judiciary System at the Commercial Court.

The Chairperson: Hon. Dr. Boolell!

(Interruptions)

Mr Quirin: Rs24 m. for two financial years, why is it so?

(Interruptions)

The Prime Minister: It is Digital Court Recording System. This is a different one. The Digital Court Recording System was first implemented in the Courtrooms of the Supreme Court at the end of 1999 and extended to the Intermediate Court, Industrial Court, Court of Rodrigues and all the District Courts afterwards. The DCRS is more than 10 years

old and needs to be revamped. So, with the new system, the Judiciary will benefit from better security features, latest technologies of the new version of the DCRS, thus, enabling faster and better quality of Court records. And I am informed that due to the late handing over of the building by SIFB to the Judiciary, the revamping of the DCRS in respect of Pamplémousses, Rivière du Rempart and Savanne District Courts will not be completed by June 2018, but it has been planned in the financial year 2018-2019. The contract for the amount of Rs29,999,923.59, inclusive of VAT was awarded to State Informatics Limited on 13 April 2017. Work is in progress.

The Chairperson: Hon. Abbas Mamode!

Mr Abbas Mamode: Yes, concerning items *31112.015 Non-Residential Buildings - Construction of Courts – New Supreme Court Building* and *31112.415 Upgrading of Courts (a) New Court House and (b) Other Courts*, can I know from the hon. Prime Minister the amount of money spent during last financial year and as no amount has been earmarked for next year whether all the works will be terminated in due time?

The Prime Minister: I have lots of information. Can I circulate this information?

Mr Abbas Mamode: Yes.

The Chairperson: Hon. Ameer Meea!

Mr Ameer Meea: It is in relation to the *New Supreme Court Building*. There is a project of Rs1.1 billion and this year an amount of Rs600 m. has been budgeted. May I know the hon. Prime Minister who has been awarded the contract for the construction?

The Prime Minister: NBCC India Limited was appointed as the Project Management Consultant Agency on 10 March 2017. They floated the tender for selection of the contractor. And the contract was awarded to Renaatus Limited on 15 November 2017. Work on the site has started in December 2017 and is still in progress. I am informed that 20% of the work has been completed and provision includes a management fee of Rs2.07 m. to Landscape (Mauritius) Ltd.

Vote 1-6 The Judiciary (Rs1,230,000,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Vote 1-7 Public Service Commission and Disciplined Forces Service Commission was called.

The Chairperson: Hon. Adrien Duval!

Mr A. Duval: Under the item *21110.001 (1) Chairperson, Public Service Commission and Disciplined Forces Service Commission*, may we know how many people he has recruited on the delegated powers since he has been appointed?

The Prime Minister: I can circulate the answer.

The Chairperson: Hon. Dr. Boolell, page 16!

Dr. Boolell: Madam Chairperson, thank you very much. In respect of the same item 21110.001 (1) *Chairperson, Public Service Commission and Disciplined Forces Service Commission*, can I ask the hon. Prime Minister to impress upon the Chairperson that when vacancies are filled that the PSC publishes this on its website or at least send a letter to the applicants who forwarded their applications. Very often they are left stranded, and I think it is not fair.

The Prime Minister: Okay, I can pass on this suggestion.

The Chairperson: Hon. Baloomoody!

Mr Baloomoody: On the same page, page 16, the last item 21110.001 (13) *Legal Officer*, I see it is a new item. May we know when the post of Legal Officer will be filled?

The Prime Minister: New post created following the recommendations of PRB Report 2016 in view of the increase in the number of cases which are being lodged before the PBAT and other instances. The Scheme of Service is under process.

The Chairperson: No question on page 17. Page 18, hon. Mrs Selvon!

Mrs Selvon: Item 31122.805 *Purchase of Security Equipment*, may we know from the hon. Prime Minister which security equipment we are talking about?

The Prime Minister: Provisions made for the installation of 40 to 50 cameras at the premises to ensure high level 24-hour security.

The Chairperson: Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Item 22120 *Fees*, may we have a breakdown of the fees and also whether the fees relate to legal fees?

The Prime Minister: 22120 *Fees*: Fees to Chairperson and Members of the Boards of the committees. Provision made for payment of fees to Members of Departmental Tender Committee and Bid Evaluation Committee. Well, there are also fees for training; there are fees for consultants; fees in connection with examinations, interviews; fees to Mauritius Qualification Authority. I can circulate the details of those fees.

The Chairperson: Hon. Adrien Duval!

Mr A. Duval: Yes, with regard to item 31112.001 *Construction of Office Building*, may we have the details of the project together with the name of the contractor and the expected completion date?

The Prime Minister: Construction of Office Building, two additional floors. So, provision for construction of office building; the project was approved on 10 June 2016 at the cost of Rs32 m. and revised to Rs39 m. in September 2017, the first fee in year 2018-2019.

Now, provision for construction of two additional floors in the new building of the Public Service Commission and Disciplined Forces Service Commission. The Building Plan Committee approved architectural drawings on 27 February 2018, and submission of the working drawings by the Minister of Public Infrastructure and Land Transport is awaited by the end of July 2018.

The Chairperson: Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Yes, thank you Madam Chairperson. Following up to what the hon. Prime Minister said – he said that there is an increase in legal cases, and that’s why a legal officer would be recruited. But, when he gave the breakdown of fees he did not mention anything about Legal Fees. So, has there been any amount budgeted to pay for legal fees regarding the PSC and DFSC?

The Prime Minister: Madam Chairperson, this item of Fees, I have said, is related to the details I have just communicated.

(Interruptions)

It does not concern legal fees.

The Chairperson: Hon. Baboo, last question!

Mr Baboo: Item No. 31122 - *Other Machinery and Equipment .802* - regarding the *Acquisition of IT Equipment*, can the Prime Minister tell us whether there is any software included in that?

The Prime Minister: This is for the provision of the enhancement of the IT system, the hardware and the software.

Vote 1-7 Public Service Commission and Disciplined Forces Service Commission (Rs104,000,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Vote 1-8 Public Bodies Appeal Tribunal was called.

The Chairperson: Page 19, hon. Baloomoody.

Mr Baloomoody: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Item 21110 - (3) *Secretary Public Bodies Appeal Tribunal*, may I know whether we intend to fill in that post?

The Chairperson: Page 19, *item No. 21110 (3)*.

The Prime Minister: Secretary Public Bodies Appeal Tribunal. One Assistant Permanent Secretary has been assigned duties of Secretary to the Tribunal.

The Chairperson: Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Under *item 21110.001 Basic Salary*, I will have it under the *Chairperson Public Bodies Appeal Tribunal*, may I know from the hon. Prime Minister how many cases have been referred to the PBAT this year and being held and determined by that Tribunal?

The Prime Minister: How many cases? There is a long list with all the details. Would you mind it if I circulate it?

The Chairperson: Hon. Baloomoody, page 20!

Mr Baloomoody: Item 22120 – *Fees*, may we know that the Rs750,000 fees are for what purposes?

The Chairperson: Page 20, item 22120 – *Fees*.

The Prime Minister: Which one?

Mr Baloomoody: Page 20, item 22120 – *Fees*.

The Prime Minister: So, the PBAT enlists the services of barristers and alternates to represent the Office in cases before the Supreme Court. For cases lodged at the Supreme Court, a number of barristers have appeared. I don't want to name them, but I can circulate the list.

Vote 1-8 Public Bodies Appeal Tribunal (Rs15,000,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Vote 1-9 Office of Ombudsman was called.

The Chairperson: Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Under item 21 - *Compensation of Employees*, may I know from the hon. Prime Minister, how many cases have been investigated by the Ombudsman?

The Prime Minister: Well, again, I have a list of cases that are pending, case intake, case dealt with and so on. Can I circulate?

The Chairperson: Hon. Boolell!

Dr. Boolell: Madam Chairperson, in respect of item 21110.001 - *Basic Salary, (3) Investigation Officer*, now for this office to be effective and more efficient I would have thought that there will be better provisions for recruitment of Investigation Officer, unfortunately, it is not so. So, can I impress upon the Prime Minister to see to it that in the next budgetary exercise that there is provision for recruitment of more Investigation Officers?

The Prime Minister: The post, in fact, has already been advertised on 28 March 2018, and part provision has been made for this year.

The Chairperson: Hon. Osman Mahomed. No? Okay!

Vote 1-9 Office of Ombudsman (Rs14,600,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Vote 1-10 National Audit Office was called.

The Chairperson: Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Yes, thank you Madam Chairperson. *Under item 21110 – subsection (2) Deputy Director of Audit*, may I know from the hon. Prime Minister whether this position has now been filled? It was vacant for some time.

The Prime Minister: So, there are two vacancies in the grade of Deputy Director of Audit, which have occurred following the retirement of two officers with effect from 01 April 2017 and 22 October 2017 respectively. Procedures have already been initiated to fill in those vacancies. Therefore only nine months provision has been made.

The Chairperson: Hon. Bhagwan!

Mr Bhagwan: Under *item 21110 - Personal Emoluments, (1) Director of Audit*, can we know from the Prime Minister, whether provision has been made for the Office of the Director of Audit, to audit the accounts of Government State-owned companies, where Government have shares, like SIC or other, or Government is owner of companies? We were told last year that provision will be made to have additional staff, this is why I am asking.

The Chairperson: Provision has not...

The Prime Minister: Madam Chairperson, this does not fall under the vote of the Director of Audit. Hon. Member can come with a specific question with regard to that, then I will be able to answer.

The Chairperson: Hon. Ameer Meea. No question? Page 24, hon. Mrs Perraud.

Mrs Perraud: Yes, Madam Chairperson. Regarding item 22120 – *Fees*, can we know which fees is it and paid to whom?

The Prime Minister: Provision made for payment of fees for the training of staff in connection with new audit approach and methodologies. Now, I must say also, there is a long list. Fees to consultant, refund of subscription fees to professional bodies, inspection and audit fees. I will circulate, but I am also informed that the increase in provision is due to the refund of ACCA Subscription Fees payable to Auditors and Officers of the Examiner of Accounts cadre.

The Chairperson: Hon. Uteem, page 24.

Mr Uteem: Yes, thank you, Madam Chairperson. Under item 21111 - *.002 Travelling and Transport, .100 Overtime*, can I know from the hon. Prime Minister what are the criteria which the Director of Audit use in selecting the employees who will be entitled to these allowances, to use this transport? Whenever, for example, someone has to go to Rodrigues to do the audit, what are the criteria of selection?

The Prime Minister: I am informed that there are provisions made for payment of petrol allowance, PRB travelling, travel grant, refund of bus fares, mileage allowance and cost of air tickets to officers proceeding to Rodrigues on audit assignment.

Vote 1-10 National Audit Office (Rs163,500,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Vote 1-11 Employment Relations Tribunal was called.

The Chairperson: Page 26, hon. Baloomoody!

Mr Baloomoody: On *Item 22120 - Fees*, it was Rs900,000 and now it is Rs1.1 m. May we know to whom it is paid and for what purpose?

The Prime Minister: Fees to Chairperson and members of the Boards and Committees. The monthly fee for the president is Rs29,925 and Rs890 per sitting per member. So, the increase in provision is due to increase in the number of cases and their complexity, resulting in increase in the number of sittings. There are also fees for training and legal fees. The new provision is required in case the Tribunal cannot be assisted by the State Law Office in case of judicial review.

Vote 1-11 Employment Relations Tribunal (Rs25,300,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Vote 1-12 Local Government Service Commission was called.

The Chairperson: Hon. Baloomoody!

Mr Baloomoody: I find that for that important institution, we have only one security guard. May we know whether we have other private security services?

The Prime Minister: One security guard has retired from the service. The newly appointed security guard is drawing a lesser salary than the former one.

(Interruptions)

There is only one. This is what I have.

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Page 28, hon. Quirin!

Mr Quirin: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Page 28, *Item 31132.801 - Acquisition of Software (a) Electronic Document Management System*. Can we have some details regarding this item, please?

The Prime Minister: Electronic Document Management System, well, I have a long explanation with regard to that. Can I circulate that answer?

The Chairperson: Please. Hon. Osman Mahomed!

Mr Osman Mahomed: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. *Item 31112.001 - Construction of Office Buildings*. In year 2016-2017, the estimates for this project were

Rs48.6 m. This is what we discussed last year. And now the project value stands at Rs33.5 m. Can I know whether there has been a change in the scope of work or the design of the building?

The Prime Minister: That is because the project could not be initiated earlier as the first bidding exercise launched on 07 June 2017 was not successful as there was no responsive bidder. So, tenders were floated again on 27 November 2017, and now we have a successful bidder, Keep Clean Ltd, which quoted for an amount of Rs23,272,33...

(Interruptions)

... and was notified on 26 March 2018. So, the contract agreement was signed...

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Please!

The Prime Minister: ...and the handing over of site was effected on 25 May 2018. The duration of the works would be for a maximum period of 365 days.

The Chairperson: Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. On the same item – *Construction of Office Buildings*, I did not hear the hon. Prime Minister state where the building will be located and whether it will be dedicated wholly for the Local Government Service Commission or there will be other use of that office.

The Prime Minister: It is the second floor; extension of the actual Local Government Service Commission Building at Curepipe.

The Chairperson: Hon. Baloomoody, page 28!

Mr Baloomoody: On the same page, *Item 22120 - Fees*, we have an increase of Rs150,000. May we know for what purpose?

The Prime Minister: There is a list of fees to Chairperson and members of the Board and Committees, fees for training, fees in connection with examination and interview. So, the increase in provision is in view of the expected rise in the number of recruitment exercises requiring the conduct of examination.

Mr Baloomoody: I think, on two occasions, for the other institutions as well, it was fees for the Chairperson of the Board. But don't they get a salary? Because we are providing for their basic salary. What is being paid over and above their salary?

The Prime Minister: There are provisions here. I have provision made for fees payable to staff for attending Departmental Bid Committee and Bid Evaluation Committee as and when required.

Vote 1-12 Local Government Service Commission (Rs58,300,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Vote 1-13 Independent Commission against Corruption was called.

The Chairperson: Hon. Adrien Duval!

Mr A. Duval: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. With regard to the ICAC, may we know, since 2015, how many cases it has opened, how many cases it has closed, prosecuted and secured convictions?

The Prime Minister: Well, I will circulate the answer because I do not have any information with regard to that.

The Chairperson: Hon. Dr. Boolell!

Dr. Boolell: Madam Chairperson, in respect of *Grants, Item 26313.026 - Other Operating Costs*, I see that the estimates for this financial year have increased in a sizeable amount. Can I know why, please, from the hon. Prime Minister?

The Prime Minister: The provision is for the implementation of the case management system for the investigation and legal division.

The Chairperson: Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Same page, Item 26 – *Grants*. There is a capital grant of Rs3m. May I know from the hon. Prime Minister what this grant is for? The capital grant?

The Prime Minister: I have just answered. This is the provision for the implementation of the Case Management System.

The Chairperson: Hon. Osman Mahomed! Hon. Ameer Meea! No! Yes, hon. Adrien Duval!

Mr A. Duval: With regard to the ICAC again, may we know, with regard to its staffing, counsels, barristers, how many barristers work at the ICAC in total?

The Chairperson: Is that related to any item of expenditure?

The Prime Minister: I have a list of all the staff. I can circulate.

Vote 1-13 Independent Commission Against Corruption (Rs217,000,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Vote 1-14 National Human Rights Commission was called.

The Chairperson: Hon. Baboo!

Mr Baboo: At page 30, under *Item 26313.060 - National Human Rights Commission of which Staff Costs Other Operating Costs*, can we know what are the fees paid to the Chairperson and the Members of the Human Rights Commission?

The Prime Minister: Madam Chairperson, I have the list. I circulate it.

The Chairperson: Hon. Baloomoody!

Mr Baloomoody: With regard to the same *item 26313.060 - National Human Rights Commission of which Staff Costs Other Operating Costs*, can I know from the hon. Prime Minister whether all the contracts of the Chairperson, the Deputy Chairperson of both Commissions, the Enforcement Division of the Commission has been renewed? Because I understand they working on a day-to-day basis.

The Prime Minister: Some of them have just ended and they are in the process of being reconstituted. So we will see who will be confirmed or whether anybody would have to be replaced.

The Chairperson: Hon. Rughoobur!

Mr Rughoobur: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Under *item 26313.060 - National Human Rights Commission of which Staff Costs Other Operating Costs*, may I know from the hon. Prime Minister whether this cost includes overseas travel cost for the current year and who are the beneficiaries?

The Prime Minister: They do not include these travelling costs.

The Chairperson: Hon. Osman Mahomed!

Mr Osman Mahomed: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Under *item 26313.060 - National Human Rights Commission of which Staff Costs Other Operating Costs*. It is about Rs25 m. per year. This is what the Commission cost to Government, meaning in 5 years, Rs125 m. There are cases that are pending at the Commission since 2015.

For these cases that have remained pending, does the hon. Prime Minister hold regular meetings with the Chairman to see why there are cases for 3 years, 4 years, though people have received acknowledgement letter, but no outcome?

The Chairperson: Hon. Member, I have asked that questions be brief and the replies also will be brief.

The Prime Minister: I cannot have regular meetings. I do not interfere with the functioning of the independent institution.

The Chairperson: Hon. Leader of the Opposition!

Mr X. L. Duval: For the National Human Rights Commission, I do not whether the Prime Minister has given us a complete list. I do not want to name anyone if I have to, I will. But I cannot see the name of the recent appointments on there.

The Prime Minister: A list of what?

Mr X. L. Duval: On the National Human Rights Commission. I think the Prime Minister has not given for certain divisions. If you could have the full list?

The Prime Minister: Well, this is the list that I have circulated.

The Chairperson: You have already given the list, hon. Prime Minister. The list is there already.

Mr X. L. Duval: I cannot see it on there.

The Prime Minister: Well, have a look, you will see, it is there. You have seen!

Mr X. L. Duval: Yes!

The Chairperson: Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: At page 30, under *item 26313.060 - National Human Rights Commission of which Staff Costs Other Operating Costs*, can I know from the hon. Prime Minister whether there are any vacancies among the staff of the National Human Rights Commission that have not yet been filled?

The Prime Minister: Well, there are vacancies, I believe for two investigators. This is what has been provided to me.

The Chairperson: Hon. Adrien Duval!

Mr A. Duval: Again at page 30, under *item 26313 - Extra-Budgetary Units*, with regard to number of complaints received and number of case prosecuted and successfully prosecuted, if we can have those numbers?

The Prime Minister: I can circulate a list, but it will only indicate, from what I have, the number of complaints received, disposed of and pending. I will circulate that.

Vote 1-14 National Human Rights Commission (Rs24,800,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Vote 1-15 Office Of Ombudsperson For Children was called.

The Chairperson: Hon. Mrs Perraud!

Mrs Perraud: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. At page 31, *item 2111. 001 – Wages*, I can see that there is the sum of Rs115, 000 estimated for last year and then for this year and the following years there is no fund. Can you just explain why?

The Prime Minister: No provision is being made as payment of allowance to Ombudsperson for Children's driver will, henceforth, be made under proper item, Allowances.

The Chairperson: Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Under *item 2111. 001(3) – Investigator*, there are 5 positions that are provided for. May I know from the Prime Minister whether any of these investigators is a qualified psychiatrist, since we are dealing the welfare of children?

The Prime Minister: I have the names of the 4 investigators, but I do not have their qualifications. 3 have degrees in psychology and 1 in sociology.

The Chairperson: Page 32! Hon. Baloomoody!

Mr Baloomoody: Again under *Item 22120 – Fees*, may we know who are the beneficiaries of these fees?

The Prime Minister: Provision for payment of fees for training of staff by resource persons so that they perform more efficiently and effectively to achieve the goals and objectives of this office. The decrease in provision is because most of the officers have already been trained in financial year 2017-2018.

The Chairperson: Hon. Osman Mahomed!

Mr Osman Mahomed: Thank you, Madam Chairperson, under item *22100 - Publications and Stationery*, every year the office publishes its yearly report, which is a very good report. Can I ask the hon. Prime Minister, on whose onus the implementation of this report rests, on whose onus, on whose responsibility?

The Chairperson: You mean to whom the report is handed over?

Mr Osman Mahomed: The report is published widely.

The Chairperson: Yes.

Mr Osman Mahomed: Across the country, but with a lot of recommendations, so all the good work, investment that we make in this Department, what happens to the report? Who is responsible to implement all the recommendations that come from this report?

The Prime Minister: It must be on the office itself. Who will publish for them? The onus is on the related Ministry.

Vote 1-15 Office of Ombudsperson for Children (Rs14,200,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Vote 1-16 Independent Police Complaints Commission was called.

The Chairperson: Hon. Baboo!

Mr Baboo: Madam Chairperson, under item *Recurrent Expenditure 26313.142 Independent Police Complaints Commission* and *Capital Expenditure 26323.142 - Independent Police Complaints Commission*, can the hon. Prime Minister tell us what are the fees paid to the Board Members, the Chairman and whether also they are entitled for allowances such as official cars and overseas travel?

The Prime Minister: Yes, I have the list, I can circulate. You can have it.

The Chairperson: Hon. Baloomoody!

Mr Baloomoody: Madam Chairperson, same question with regard to the members of the Independent Police Complaints Commission, can the hon. Prime Minister give us the names and the qualifications of the Members. Their qualifications, their specialities in Human Rights.

The Prime Minister: Mrs Devianee Beesoondoyal, Chairperson, Mr Phalraj Servansingh, member, Mr Dick Christophe Ng Sui Wa – part-time member and we will circulate their qualifications also.

The Chairperson: Hon. Mrs Perraud!

Mrs Perraud: Can the hon. Prime Minister inform the House of the number of complaints that have been received and their status thereof?

The Prime Minister: Yes, I can circulate.

The Chairperson: Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Item 26323 - *Extra Budgetary Units*, the extra budgetary grant of Rs2 m. may we know what this relates to?

The Prime Minister: This is provision required for the purchase of one Motor Vehicle.

Vote 1-16 Independent Police Complaints Commission (Rs17,000,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Vote 1-17 Financial Crime Commission was called.

The Chairperson: Hon Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Madam Chairperson, under item 22900.943 - *Financial Crime Commission*, may I know from the hon. Prime Minister when does he anticipate this Financial Crime Commission to be operative?

The Prime Minister: First of all, we are working on the law; there must be a Bill before this Parliament. The Bill will come soon. I have announced in my summing up that we will be coming with the Bill and ultimately then, of course, it will be set up.

Vote 1-17 Financial Crime Commission (Rs10,000,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Vote 2-1 Prime Minister's Office was called.

The Chairperson: Hon. Adrien Duval! Page 35, no question? Page 36, hon. Uteem !

Mr Uteem: Madam Chairperson, under item 21 - *Compensation of Employees* – items 21110.001(7) *President, Equal Opportunities Tribunal* and 21110.001(8) *Members, Equal Opportunities Tribunal*, may I know from the hon. Prime Minister, the number of cases that have been heard and determined by the Equal Opportunities Tribunal.

The Prime Minister: One case has been referred to the Equal Opportunities Tribunal in 2018. So, it has not yet been disposed of and it is pending therefore before the Tribunal.

The Chairperson: Hon. Uteem! No. Hon. Baloomoody!

Mr Baloomoody: On page 36, I will ask the question under item 20100 (1) *The Prime Minister*. May I ask the hon. Prime Minister if he can let us have a list of the advisers attached to the Prime Minister's Office and their salaries, including all their allowances?

The Prime Minister: Which item?

Mr Baloomoody: Under Prime Minister.

The Prime Minister: Which item?

Mr Baloomoody: Under Prime Minister item 20100 - *The Prime Minister*.

The Prime Minister: Item 20100, it is not adviser, it is the Prime Minister.

Mr Baloomoody: No, but where in the budget do we get the allowances?

The Prime Minister: But if you can mention to me which item you are referring to, then I will answer, you can't just ...

Mr Baloomoody: I'll come to the ...

The Prime Minister: Madam Chairperson, let me say one thing, if the hon. Member will come and just ask me a general question, I will have to go and peruse this document to find out which item it falls under? We are following page by page, now you tell me which item?

Mr Baloomoody: Item 21110.004 - *Allowances*.

The Chairperson: You have to mention, I remind hon. Members that they have to mention on which item they are asking questions.

Mr Baloomoody: Page 36, item 21110.004 - *Allowances*.

The Chairperson: Item 21110.004 - *Allowances*.

Mr Baloomoody: Allowances, so who are the beneficiaries of these allowances?

The Prime Minister: Provision for payment of extra-duty responsibility, *ad hoc* and duty allowances to eligible officers.

The Chairperson: Hon. Dr. Boolell!

Dr. Boolell: Item 21- *Compensation of Employees, 21110.002 - Salary Compensation*, in fact, it would be apprised as to whether there has been salary increase in respect of estimates for 2018/2019, please.

The Prime Minister: Salary Compensation, again it is an increase in provision due to the payment of salary compensation of Rs360 per month across the board to 93 staff members as from January 2018.

The Chairperson: Page 37, hon. Mrs Perraud.

Mrs Perraud: Madam Chairperson, page 37 item 22900 - *Other Goods and Services*, can we know what it stands for?

The Chairperson: Item 22900.

The Prime Minister: So, that are provisions for payment of uniform allowance to staff of the Procurement Cadre, office auxiliaries and drivers and there is no provision made – expenses in connection with development of National Air Access Policy and expenses in connection with Vision 2030 Blueprint.

The Chairperson: Hon. Mrs Selvon!

Mrs Selvon: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Under item 22120.017, could the hon. Prime Minister explain why there has been a considerable increase in the legal fees for 2018-2019?

The Prime Minister: It is the provision to meet the cost of training for staff, fees to consultants and there are legal fees also. There are hearings to be held by the ICJ in the Hague; assistance to third parties; travelling and hotel expenses for 9 external lawyers in the Hague and other associated expenses.

The Chairperson: Hon. Ms Sewocksingh!

Ms Sewocksingh: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Item 22900.964 *Citizen Support Services*, can we have some more information about this item?

The Prime Minister: Yes, the online Citizen Support Portal was developed by Mauritius Telecom. It enables citizens to register their complaints online through a unique reference number on a 24-7 basis wherever they are. The complaint is registered on the database managed by the Citizen Support Unit. I can give a list of details with regard to the amount of money.

The Chairperson: Hon. Osman Mahomed!

Mr Osman Mahomed: Again, in that item 22120.017 - *Legal fees* for which we are being given to understand that the surge to Rs34 m. has to do with the ICT case in Hague and then subsequently, it is going to be Rs10 m. Can we know from the hon. Prime Minister whether this year is the year when we can expect an outcome on this case, because it seems a lot is happening this year?

The Prime Minister: Madam Chairperson, the case will be heard on the 03 September. First of all, we don't know how long it will take for the hearing and it will depend on the International Court of Justice to deliver judgement. That is beyond our own control.

The Chairperson: Hon. Adrien Duval!

Mr A. Duval: Yes, page 38, Madam Chairperson.

The Chairperson: Page 37!

Mr A. Duval: Yes, I have one on page 38.

The Chairperson: *Non!* Okay, hon. Quirin!

Mr Quirin: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Item 22900.964 - *Citizen Support Services*, can we know why the amount earmarked has doubled from 2017/18 to 2018/19?

The Prime Minister: Because there are additional provisions required for upgrading of the portal, training, communication campaign and purchase of equipment and events material.

The Chairperson: Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Yes, thank you, Madam Chairperson. *Item 311122.814 Acquisition of Air-Conditioning Equipment*, may I know from the hon. Prime Minister who won the tender for the supply of these equipment?

The Prime Minister: They relate to the fixing of the three chillers. Tender not yet launched, awaiting specifications.

The Chairperson: Page 38, hon, Henry!

Mr Henry: Item 22900.901 - *National Day Celebration*, j'aurai aimé savoir de l'honorable Premier ministre combien de contribution qu'ils ont eu des secteurs privés ou des corps paraétatiques et quelle est la somme totale dépensée l'année dernière parce qu'il y a une somme de R 75 million qui a été votée.

The Prime Minister: Which page?

Mr Henry: 22900.901!

The Chairperson: *National Day Celebration - 22900.901.*

The Prime Minister: *National Day Celebration*, decrease in provision as Rs75 m. was exceptionally allocated to mark the 50th Anniversary of the Independence of Mauritius.

(Interruptions)

I said Rs75 m. was allocated.

Mr X. L. Duval: Madam Chairperson, I think we want to know how much the National Day Celebration Company collected. What was the total cost of the National Day Celebration? Obviously, much more than Rs75 m.! We all know that.

The Prime Minister: Yes, I have contributions from the private sector and other bodies from 01 July 2017 to 04 June 2018. I can circulate the list. I believe if there is other information, I will provide.

The Chairperson: Hon. Quirin!

Mr Quirin: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Page 38, item 21110.005 -*Extra Assistance*, there is an amount of Rs11 m. earmarked for 2017/18. Can we know to whom this sum has been paid, and why there is an increase from Rs11 m. to Rs17.5 m. for the next financial year?

The Prime Minister: Well, provision for payment of salaries; the fund of casual, annual, vacation leaves; travelling allowances; bonus and contribution to National Savings Fund at the rate of 2.5% of basic salary to the following advisers. I can circulate the list of advisers.

The Chairperson: Hon. Mrs Perraud!

Mrs Perraud: Page 38, item 22170 - *Travelling within the Republic*, can I know this Budget is for whom? Because I can see this item on page 38 and also on page 40. This is why I am asking this question. And also, how many overseas travels within the Republic have been made?

The Prime Minister: So, provision for payment of air tickets and accommodation for hon. Prime Minister and officers proceeding on missions to Rodrigues. The hon. Prime Minister proceeded to Rodrigues on two occasions, 17 to 18 November 2017 and 23 to 25 February 2018.

The Chairperson: Hon. Baloomoody! Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Last item 22900.901 *National Day Celebration*, for this year's celebration there was a committee set up. So, may I know from the hon. Prime Minister whether for next year's celebration, there would be a committee set up? What would be the composition of that committee and whether directives will be given to the committee to ensure that this time the Creole language is used in our National Celebrations?

The Prime Minister: Well, this will be decided in due course.

The Chairperson: It is a policy matter! Page 39, hon. Dr. Boolell!

Dr. Boolell: Madam Chairperson, thank you very much. I am rather surprised that all those vacancies are yet to be filled. I have in mind, of course...

The Chairperson: Which item, hon. Dr. Boolell?

Dr. Boolell: 21110.001 (6) to 21110.001 (11), all the vacancies that need to be filled more so since we are dealing with the Counter-Terrorism Unit, and I would like to ask the hon. Prime Minister why the delay and why provisions have not been made for the filling of these posts?

The Prime Minister: So, the CTU is currently staffed and manned by Police Officers from the National Security Service. Following the amendments to the Prevention of Terrorism Act 2016, a new organisational structure has been created to assist the CTU as the nodal agency of the Government in the prevention and combat of terrorism and related matters, both at local and international levels. New posts have been created so as to add impetus to and enhance the human capabilities of the unit. My Office has drafted the schemes of service for the different posts and the process for prescription of these schemes will be initiated soon after the Budget is approved.

The Chairperson: Hon. Baloomoody!

Mr Baloomoody: Under the same item, are we going to recruit people from the Police Service or independent persons will be recruited for these posts? Will it be advertised for other people outside Police Service can join these units?

The Prime Minister: I don't know. Both, I am told.

(Interruptions)

Both! So, from the Police and outside.

The Chairperson: Hon. Mrs Perraud!

Mrs Perraud: Item 21110.001 (14) *Migration Coordinator and Researcher (New)*, can we know why there is no fund for this post?

The Prime Minister: It is to ensure proper coordination and implementation of the different measures proposed in the Migration and Development Policy.

The Chairperson: Why no funds have been earmarked?

The Prime Minister: The post is not yet established. Once it is established, the Scheme of Service will be prescribed and financial provisions will be made available prior to filling of the post.

The Chairperson: Page 40, hon. Mrs Selvon!

Mrs Selvon: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. *Item 22900.909 - Expenses related to Counter Terrorism Unit.* Could the hon. Prime Minister explain why there has been a considerable increase in the estimates?

The Prime Minister: The expenses include provision for training and capacity building, rental and communication services, acquisition of office equipment, allowances for officers, maintenance of security equipment.

The warrantee and moratorium periods of certain security equipment, which were acquired earlier, have now lapsed. Hence, additional funding is required for maintenance of these equipments.

The Chairperson: Hon. Adrien Duval!

Mr A. Duval: In relation to *Item 22120 - Fees*, may we know what type of fees we are talking about, paid to whom, the amount, and for what services? The specifics of the fees.

The Prime Minister: Provision is for the payment of fees to Chairperson and members of Boards and Committees. There is the Prime Minister's Relief Fund, under which, there are the Departmental Bid and Bid Evaluation Committees, the Due Diligence Committee. Then, there are fees for training and fees to consultants. There is a long list. So, I will circulate.

The Chairperson: Hon. Quirin!

Mr Quirin: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Under *Item 22060 - Maintenance*, a huge amount was earmarked for 2017-18. Can we know if the whole amount has been spent and if the hon. Prime Minister can also table a breakdown of the amount spent, please?

The Prime Minister: Yes, it is another list, which I can table. But just to say that increase in provision by Rs7 m. is to cater for complete restoration of Sir Harilal Vaghjee Memorial Hall. I will circulate the detailed list.

The Chairperson: Hon. Ms Sewocksingh!

Ms Sewocksingh: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Under *Item 22070 -Cleaning Services*, may I know from the hon. Prime Minister who has been awarded this contract, the name of the company?

The Prime Minister: For cleaning services at New Government Centre, Government House, the supplier is Very Clean Contracting Ltd.

(Interruptions)

Rs209,875, including VAT monthly, on a month-to-month basis.

The Chairperson: Hon. Baloomoody!

Mr Baloomoody: *Item 22130 - Studies and Surveys*. More than 100% increase for next year, from Rs16 m. to Rs33 m. May we know the reason why?

The Prime Minister: Provision is made for consultancy services, that is, electrical system, fire alarm, plumbing and generator at Old Government House; conduct an overall survey for the restoration of Clarisse House, online gambling, introduction of electronic passport to replace the current machine- readable Mauritian passport.

The Chairperson: Page 41!

Mr X. L. Duval: *Item 26313.148 - Economic Development Board*. May I just ask the hon. Prime Minister whether the amount for this year includes payments for McKinsey Report and how much McKinsey has been paid, and also payment for Lord Desai and his

team on the FinTech Report; whether amounts paid for these two reports can be given to us, please?

The Prime Minister: Concerning this Item, provision is being made for the running cost of the Economic Development Board, and the -

- (a) Speed to Market Scheme, Rs120 m.;
- (b) Export Market Development Support, Rs110 m.;
- (c) Refund to the SMEs for participation, Rs40 m.;
- (d) Freight Rebate Scheme for Africa, Rs20 m., and
- (e) Credit Guarantee Insurance Subsidy Scheme for Africa, Rs2 m.

Mr X. L. Duval: Madam Chairperson, I am not going to ask where are the fees for every single one. Perhaps the hon. Prime Minister can help us and tell us where these fees are and give it; otherwise, I will have to ask every single item.

The Prime Minister: It is not there!

Mr X. L. Duval: Where is it?

The Prime Minister: McKinsey is paid by FSC, not EDB.

The Chairperson: Page 41, hon. Rughoobur!

Mr Rughoobur: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. *Item 26313.148 - Economic Development Board of which (c) Refund to SMEs for Participation*, I need a clarification from the hon. Prime Minister as to whether this is for refund in participation in fairs overseas and whether this is being done jointly with SME Mauritius.

The Prime Minister: Lord Desai is also being paid by FSC. Refund to SMEs participation, well, I have a lot of information with regard to that. I can circulate.

The Chairperson: Hon. Baboo!

Mr Baboo: For *Item 26313.020 - Gambling Regulatory Authority*, can the Prime Ministry provide us all the licences awarded by the GRA?

The Chairperson: On page 41?

Mr Baboo: Yes.

The Chairperson: Item 26?

Mr Baboo: *Item 26313.*

The Prime Minister: So, this is provision made for the running cost of GRA. The increase in provision is being made to cater for the recruitment of additional staff and purchase of office equipment and furniture for the additional staff.

Mr Baboo: And all the licensees?

The Prime Minister: This does not come under this item, Madam Chairperson. How can I give the name of licensees when we are voting for a specific item with regard to the running of the GRA?

The Chairperson: Hon. Osman Mahomed!

Mr Osman Mahomed: Thank you. My question is with regard to the item relating to Speed to Market Scheme, which the hon. Prime Minister has referred to, for which we are being asked to vote an exceptional sum of Rs120 m.

Can I ask the hon. Prime Minister whether this grant, which is intended to exporters, is meant for those who are only on CIF basis, meaning it benefits only two to three companies or it is going to be across the board for even companies operating on FOB basis?

The Prime Minister: There are defined criteria, Madam Chairperson. We can request the EDB to furnish those criteria and then the hon. Member will know on which basis it is being given.

The Chairperson: Sure. Hon. Abbas Mamode!

Mr Abbas Mamode: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. *Item 31121 -Transport Equipment* and *Item 31122 - Other Machinery and Equipment*. I would like to know the amount spent last year.

The Chairperson: No, one by one, please!

Mr Abbas Mamode: The number and type of vehicles to be acquired and the type of equipment.

The Chairperson: On *Item 31121*?

(Interruptions)

The Prime Minister: *Item 31121.801 - Acquisition of vehicles (a) Home Affairs*, the provision is for the purchase of one van, and for *(b) Security Division*, provision is for the purchase of 4X4 vehicles. For the National Security Services, it is provision for the replacement of motorcycles which are no longer suitable for security operations.

The Chairperson: Hon. Quirin!

Mr Quirin: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Under item 26313 *(d) - Freight Rebate Scheme for Africa*, can we have some details pertaining to this item?

The Prime Minister: Freight Rebate Scheme for Africa, Rs20 m. Well, it is three pages, I will circulate it.

The Chairperson: The Prime Minister will circulate it?

The Prime Minister: There is a summary. I can probably read this summary. Provision made for sea freight rebate scheme for exports to Africa, Madagascar and Reunion

Island. The scheme provides for refund of 25% of the basic freight cost to the maximum of 300 USD per 20-foot container and 600 USD per 40-foot container exported to eligible ports in Africa, Madagascar and Reunion Island. Exporters of goods produced, manufactured in Mauritius and Freeport operators exporting goods locally manufactured or goods manufactured in the Freeport zones are eligible for this scheme.

The Chairperson: Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Thank you. Under item 26313.148 – *Economic Development Board*, there is a total amount of Rs655 m. and then it is broken down in five subdivisions. May we know from the hon. Prime Minister - because it does not appear under one of these subdivisions - what is the amount budgeted for the promotion of financial services, what used to be the Mauritius FSPA before it went under the Economic Development Board, because there is no subheading for promotion of financial services?

The Prime Minister: Madam Chairperson, let me say that we have set up an Economic Development Board. We make financial provisions for their requirements and it will be for them to decide how much money will be earmarked for the promotion of financial services and for the other sectors. How can I now and already give any figure? Unless I can say how much has already been spent, but the Economic Development Board has just come into life recently.

The Chairperson: Page 42, hon. Mrs Perraud!

(Interruptions)

I am sorry! Hon. Adrien Duval, we are bound by the time allocation that has been agreed upon! Right?

Mr A. Duval: Madam Chairperson, you can't be selective!

The Chairperson: *Non!*

Mr A. Duval: It should be taken out of turn!

The Chairperson: No! It is for me to decide as to how I am conducting the business! We have agreed on a time allocation and I am going by the time allocation that has been agreed!

(Interruptions)

Page 42, hon. Mrs Perraud!

Mr A. Duval: You are being bias and selective!

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Now, I ask you to withdraw your comment!

(Interruptions)

Please, withdraw your comment!

(Interruptions)

Withdraw!

(Interruptions)

If you don't want to withdraw, then I will have to take sanctions!

(Interruptions)

I am sorry, please withdraw your comment!

Mr A. Duval: I have withdrawn.

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Stand up and say it then!

Mr A. Duval: Madam Chairperson, I hope that you will give me the same consideration as everyone! My name has to be taken out of turn!

The Chairperson: Do you withdraw your comment or not? Do not argue with me!

(Interruptions)

Do not argue with me! You withdraw or not?

Mr A. Duval: I said I withdraw. How many times do I have to do it!

The Chairperson: Okay! You have to say it, but don't argue with me!

(Interruptions)

Page 42 ! Hon. Mrs Perraud!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Mrs Perraud!

Mrs Perraud: Page 42, item 21110.001 - (1) Secretary, Equal Opportunities Commission, I can't find funds for this post. Can the hon. Prime Minister just explain why?

The Prime Minister: Well, on page 42, I don't see the item which the hon. Member is referring to. Which one is it? Madam Chairperson, may I, which item?

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Page 42, which item?

Mrs Perraud: At page 42, under item 21110 Basic Salary .001 - (1) Secretary, Equal Opportunities Commission.

The Prime Minister: The Deputy Permanent Secretary has been assigned the duties of Secretary to Equal Opportunities Commission.

The Chairperson: Hon. Baloomoody!

Mr Baloomoody: On page 42, under item 31132.103 - E-Business Plan. I don't see any provision for the coming years. Has the plan been completed?

The Prime Minister: The E-licencing platform?

Mr Baloomoody: The *E-Business Plan*, item 31132.103.

The Prime Minister: Well, I have it that PMO has approached EDB to look into the possibility of having the modules in the E-Business project on the E-licencing platform. The expenses to be incurred by PMO will be in terms of additional hardware equipment. The business process reengineering is currently being undertaken by Deloitte, a consultant that has been appointed by EDB and it concerns the module for residence permit and citizenship. Implementation will start as from next year.

The Chairperson: Hon. Adrien Duval!

Mr A. Duval: Thank you. With regard to item 22090.002 – *National Security Services*, can the hon. Prime Minister confirm whether there is now two National Security Services, one which reports directly to the hon. Prime Minister and to DCP Jhugroo, and the other one which reports to the other way, the Commissioner of Police and the Rt. hon. Minister Mentor? Can he confirm that?

The Prime Minister: There is only one.

The Chairperson: Hon Henry!

Mr Henry: *L'item 21110.005 – Extra Assistance, il y a une somme de R 7.9 millions qui a été votée, on voudrait avoir des détails sur cette somme.*

The Prime Minister: For the *Extra Assistance*, it is provision for the payment of salaries, special judicial allowance of 15% of basic salary to the Chairperson, bonus, refund of leave, contributions to the National Savings Fund at the rate of 2.5% of basic salary for the Chairperson and three members of the Equal Opportunities Commission. I have a list of the details of these expenses. Can I circulate?

The Chairperson: Hon. Uteem! Hon. Armance!

Mr Armance: Item 21110.004 – *Allowances*, can we have some more details?

The Prime Minister: This is the answer that I have just given with regard to allowances. I will circulate the answer.

The Chairperson: Hon. Dr. Boolell!

Dr. Boolell: Madam Chairperson, in respect of item 22090.002 - *National Security Services*, can I ask the hon. Prime Minister why this massive increase compared to Estimates of 2017/18 from Rs12 m. to Rs18 m.?

The Prime Minister: Well, the information pertaining to National Security is by nature classified, it cannot be divulged.

The Chairperson: Page 43. Hon. Armance!

Mr Armance: Under item 22060 - *Maintenance*, may we know why there is a huge increase from Rs370,000 to Rs2.1m?

The Prime Minister: Well, they are provisions for the maintenance and repairs of other minor works at New Government Centre. We have a list, I will circulate the list.

The Chairperson: Hon. Baloomoody!

Mr Baloomoody: Under item 22030 – *Rent*, I see for last year, it was Rs1.590m, for this next year it will Rs1.7m, then it comes to Rs2.290; a continuous increase of Rs200,000-Rs300,000 per year. May we know why?

The Prime Minister: Rent, so provision for the rental of office space on the 1st floor, Belmont House at the rate Rs109,251 per month and proposed relocation of the offices. Rental also of parking slots; rental of 2 parking slots at level 2 of Newton Tower for an amount of Rs6,500 plus VAT. The owner is Nex Teracom. Ltd.

The Chairperson: Page 44! No question? Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Page 44, under item 22100.005 - *Publications and Stationery of which Public Notices*, may I know from the hon. Prime Minister if he can table a list of the newspapers where these publications are placed?

The Prime Minister: We can circulate the answer.

The Chairperson: Page 44! Hon. Henry!

Mr Henry: Sous l’item 22060 – *Maintenance*, il y a une augmentation de Rs750,000 à Rs1,250,000. Peut-on avoir des détails dessus s’il vous plaît?

The Chairperson: Page 44!

The Prime Minister: Maintenance - increase in provision is for the replacement of Freon gas used by some air conditioners in the office of DC Invertor Technology Control as the gas is detrimental to health, based on the recommendation of the Energy Services Division.

The Chairperson: Page 45! No question?

Page 46! Yes, hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Under item 22060.005 - *Maintenance of which IT Equipment*, there is a budget of Rs100m earmarked for next year, May I know from the hon. Prime Minister what equipment do that relate to and who was awarded the contract for maintenance?

The Prime Minister: Yes, there is a long list but the decrease in provision is because there is less maintenance agreement fee that will be paid. But I can circulate the list or I can mention if you want, to cater for maintenance as follows –

- maintenance charges for MNIS System as per the scheduled Contract with Singapore Corporate Enterprise;
- maintenance agreement of Central Population Database, payable to SCE annually;
- scanning system of hardware and software of State Informatics Limited;
- Civil Status Division System;
- Civil Status Hardware Enterprise Information Solution Limited, and
- Server and Anti-Virus licence to Anglo-Africa and other maintenance repairs on IT.

And I will circulate the relevant budgetary provisions.

The Chairperson: Page 47, hon. Armance!

Mr Armance: Under item 31112.401 - *Setting up of a Marriage Hall*, there was Rs7.6 m. project, Rs5 m. for last year. May we know what about the project and where matters stand?

The Prime Minister: The non-citizen marriages are also being celebrated at the Central Office of the Division of Emmanuel Anquetil Building, in line with Government Vision to promoting Mauritius as a wedding and honeymoon destination. Provision has been made to set up new and modern marriage hall at the ground floor of the EAB. So, tenders were floated in November 2017 and December 2017 through restricted bidding and open advertised bidding respectively. Both bids being unresponsive, tenders will be floated again with new specifications and scope of works. So, the expenditure as at May 2018 is nil but provision for the financial year is Rs2.5 m.

The Chairperson: Hon. Dr. Boolell!

Dr. Boolell: Madam Chairperson, in respect of item 28212.007 - *Savings Culture Campaign*, there is a sum of Rs1 m. earmarked. I would like to know what has been the outcome of this campaign more so since we know that savings is going down. How effective has this campaign been?

The Prime Minister: It is the provision to meet payment of Rs200 per child born in line with the Savings Culture Scheme introduced by Government since January 1997. The Scheme is implemented through MauBank and given that the number of claims is decreasing since the two past years, the same provision is maintained for 2018/19. So, we are promoting, we are telling people to have more children.

The Chairperson: Hon. Ms Sewocksingh!

Ms Sewocksingh: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Under item 31132.404 - *Revamping of Systems – CSD Application*, the project value is Rs21 m. May we have some more details about this item?

The Prime Minister: Provision is made for the revamping of the Civil Status Division System in order to improve operations, make better tactical and frontline decisions, strategic and big picture decisions to automate real-time business processes, manage risks security and privacy.

The Chairperson: Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Under item 28211.015 - *Muslim Family Council*, may I know the composition of the Muslim Family Council?

The Prime Minister: I can circulate the composition and also the number of meetings held and so on. There is a full list.

The Chairperson: Hon. Mrs Perraud! No? Hon. Osman Mahomed!

Mr Osman Mahomed: Again, with respect to item 31132.404 - *Revamping of Systems – CSD Application*, only Rs1 m. is catered for this year for a project which is worth Rs21 m. and the bulk of the investment is going to happen next financial year. Can we have some more details about the nature of the project, is it a building?

The Prime Minister: Rs1 m. is earmarked for consultancy services.

Vote 2-1 Prime Minister's Office (Rs1,877,000,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Vote 2-2 National Development Unit was called.

The Chairperson: Page 48, hon. Mrs Perraud!

Mrs Perraud: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Under item 21110 - *(15) Citizen's Advice Bureau Organiser*, can the hon. Prime Minister give us the list of all the CAB organisers?

The Prime Minister: I can circulate.

The Chairperson: Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Under item 21 - *Compensation of Employees*, I see that the number of funded position is actually increasing to Rs321, but at the same time we know that the capital expenditure is going to be reduced and being carried out by the National Environment Fund. So, may I know from the hon. Prime Minister, whether the staff under the National Development Unit will also be seconded to the National Environment Foundation?

The Prime Minister: No.

The Chairperson: Hon. Mrs Selvon!

Mrs Selvon: Item 21110 - (15) *Citizen's Advice Bureau Organiser*, can I know from the hon. Prime Minister how many have been recruited already for 2017/2018?

The Prime Minister: There must be 38 Organisers actually. There are 38, yes.

The Chairperson: Hon. Baloomoody!

Mr Baloomoody: Item 21110 - (13) *Citizen's Advice Bureau Co-ordinator*, I find that we are not making any provision for this post, can we know why?

The Prime Minister: Two vacancies will be filled by the MCAR and part provision, for 6 months, has therefore been made.

The Chairperson: Page 49, hon. Baboo!

Mr Baboo: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Item 21110.004 – *Allowances*, and it has moved from Rs3 m. to Rs3.2 m. and then it goes back to Rs3 m. May we know the reasons why? And also, is hon. Aliphon getting extra allowances as he is ...

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Ask your question please!

(Interruptions)

Mr Baboo: Item 21110.004 – *Allowances*, page 49

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Order please, so that we can listen to the question! Page 49, item 21110.004 – *Allowances*.

The Prime Minister: Provision has been made for the payment of the following –

- allowances to Office Auxiliaries;
- responsibility allowance to eligible officers;
- *ad-hoc* allowances to Confidential Secretaries – attached to PS and PPS Offices, and
- disturbance allowance for officers posted in CAB Rodrigues.

The increase in provision is therefore due to payment of allowances to the additional staff. So, there is no additional allowance to PPS.

The Chairperson: Hon. Mrs Perraud, page 49!

Mrs Perraud: Page 49, item 22030 – *Rent*, can we know for whom and to whom the rent is paid?

The Prime Minister: Madam Chairperson, there is a list. So, can I circulate the list.

The Chairperson: Can you circulate it? Hon. Adrien Duval!

Mr A. Duval: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. With regard to item 21110.005 - *Extra Assistance*, can we have the particulars of this item, in terms of to whom it is being paid and the amounts?

The Prime Minister: Provision made for the payment of an all-inclusive allowance to five trainee engineers under the Pre-Registration Trainee Engineering Scheme and also to assist project managers and project officers in the implementation of projects. The decrease in provision is accounted for by the number of trainee engineers which has been reduced to five. The number of project assistant is being increased from 17 to 20 to assist project managers and project officers.

The Chairperson: Page 50, hon. Rughoobur!

Mr Rughoobur: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Item 31113.045 - *Construction and Upgrading of Amenities*, may I know from the hon. Prime Minister if this upgrading of amenities also includes provision of street lightening facilities?

The Prime Minister: Let me read it so that you know, construction and upgrading of office buildings and provision made also for construction of a new CAB at Rose-Hill and maintenance work in other CABs. So, I don't see - construction and upgrading of Cremation Ground, cemeteries, no lighting. No.

The Chairperson: Hon. Armance!

Mr Armance: Item 26313.144 - *Land Drainage Authority (LDA)*, I see there was an amount of Rs5 m. last year, Rs25.5 m. this year. May we know if the Land Drainage Authority has been set up? Who are the consultants and how much have been paid so far?

The Prime Minister: Provision for Land Drainage Authority, I have a list of all these costs. I can circulate it.

The Chairperson: Hon. Baloomoody!

Mr Baloomoody: On *item 22090 - Security*, there is a sudden increase from Rs175,000 to Rs810,000. May we know why and who is that company providing the security?

The Prime Minister: Provision for Intruder Alarm System in CAB on a rental basis, including a 24-hour full response monitoring, the contractor is Brinks Mauritius Ltd and the duration is for 36 months with effect from February 2018. So, the increase in provision reflects the new contract price amounting to Rs810,000 per year.

The Chairperson: Hon. Osman Mahomed!

Mr Osman Mahomed: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Item 26313.144 - *Land Drainage Authority (LDA)*, for which we are being required to vote a total sum for

consultancy services of Rs87 m. There was one officer from the Ministry of Environment who was heading the Land Development Authority and he has returned back to the Ministry of Environment. Can I ask the hon. Prime Minister who is heading this department now? Because if there is no one who heads this department, those consultancy services will go to waste.

The Chairperson: Hon. Osman Mahomed, I would request you once more to be very brief in your questions.

The Prime Minister: Well, I must say since he is a very able and capable officer, he has been promoted, but I know my colleague, hon. Minister of Environment, will collaborate fully and we will try to retain him at the Land Drainage Authority.

The Chairperson: Hon. Henry!

Mr Henry: *Item 31113.045 - Construction and Upgrading of Amenities*, il y a une somme de R 95 millions qui a été votée. Je voudrais savoir si la relocalisation du CAB de Mahebourg est prévue dans cette somme.

The Prime Minister: There is a list. Mahebourg, no! It is in good condition, maybe.

The Chairperson: Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Thank you, Madam Chairperson! *Items 31113.003 – Construction & Upgrading of Roads* and *31113.045 - Construction and Upgrading of Amenities*, can the hon. Prime Minister, please, table the list of projects under these two items for the benefit of all hon. Members?

The Prime Minister: The first one is for the construction and upgrading of roads. I have an indicative list to be implemented, and the other one is for the construction and upgrading of amenities. I shall circulate both lists. In fact, they are being compiled and will be tabled in due course.

The Chairperson: Hon. Shakeel Mohamed!

Mr Mohamed: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Same issue as my learned friend, hon. Uteem, whether the hon. Prime Minister could table the list of the construction and upgrading of children's playgrounds.

The Prime Minister: It is being compiled and will be circulated.

The Chairperson: Hon. Mrs Perraud!

Mrs Perraud: It is the same question as my other colleagues, for Constituency No. 4. I mean, *Item 31113*, if the hon. Prime Minister could give a list of construction and upgrading of roads, drains and amenities in Constituency No. 4.

The Prime Minister: In fact, it is a complete list. So, we will do it also, probably by compiling all the items that have been earmarked.

(Interruptions)

We do not do it constituency wise. We do it on a regional basis here.

The Chairperson: Hon. Dr. Boolell!

Dr. Boolell: Madam Chairperson, thank you very much. In respect of *Item 31113.018*, why is it that there is no provision for road safety devices? Why is it that there is no provision for this financial year?

The Prime Minister: Because the provision has been made under the item of construction and upgrading of amenities, that is why.

The Chairperson: Hon. Adrien Duval!

Mr A. Duval: Especially with regard to the construction and upgrading of amenities, *Item 31113.045*, may we have the list of the amenities being constructed?

(Interruptions)

The Prime Minister: I said I will circulate.

The Chairperson: The hon. Prime Minister just replied! Hon. Baboo, I hope not the same question!

Mr Baboo: *Item 31113.003*, regarding the funds of last year, Rs250 m., may we know how much is left from the funds?

The Prime Minister: I hope none is left. The whole amount has been used. I am very happy.

(Interruptions)

Vote 2-2 National Development Unit (Rs610,000,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Vote 2-3 External Communications was called.

The Chairperson: Hon. Adrien Duval!

Mr A. Duval: Page 51, with regard to *Item 22030 - Rent*, may we have the details?

The Prime Minister: Provision is required for payment of rent on the first floor of Newton Tower, and the lessor is Belem Limited. I can circulate all the rates.

The Chairperson: Hon. Ms Sewocksingh!

Ms Sewocksingh: *Item 21111.002 - Travelling and Transport*, can the hon. Prime Minister give us more details, if there is any service provider?

The Prime Minister: Provision is made to cater for the refund of bus fares, petrol allowance, travel grant, PRB travelling and commuted travelling to staff.

The Chairperson: Page 52, hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. *Item 32145.520 - Loans, Cargo Handling Corporation Ltd.*, there was an amount earmarked last year to the tune of Rs300 m., next year, zero, and 2019, Rs184 m. So, may I know from the hon. Prime Minister why there is nothing next year and then the following year?

The Prime Minister: No provision has been made for financial year 2018-2019 as payment in respect of the state-of-art cranes, yard equipment, upgrading of ICT and CCTV system has already been effected in financial year 2017-2018.

The Chairperson: Hon. Adrien Duval!

Mr A. Duval: With regard to item 22120 - *Fees*, may we have the breakdown of the fees, to whom it has been paid and for what services?

The Prime Minister: First, there are fees for training of staff, and then fees for consultants. There is a long list of consultants. So, I can circulate the list.

The Chairperson: Hon. Osman Mahomed!

Mr Osman Mahomed: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. With regard to *Item 32145.521 - Airport Terminal Operations Ltd (ATOL)*, Rs525 m. advanced by Government to ATOL for implementation of projects, can we have some more details? Because in the next three years, there do not seem to be anything occurring there.

The Prime Minister: Not occurring? This one is the loan to Airport Terminal operations because the payment in respect of the China Exim Bank loan taken in 2009 for the construction of the new passenger terminal has already been effected in financial year 2017-2018.

Vote 2-3 External Communications (Rs29,000,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Vote 2-4 Civil Aviation was called

The Chairperson: Page 54! Hon. Baloomoody!

Mr Baloomoody: *Item 21110.001(24) - Trainee Air Traffic Control Officer*, there were apparently six trainee officers and now no provision is made for this post. May we know why?

The Prime Minister: It is because the six trainees are undergoing training for a period of 18 to 24 months with effect from May 2017. That is why no further provision has been made.

The Chairperson: Page 55. Hon. Armance!

Mr Armance: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. *Item 22120.008 - Fees to Consultants (b) Advance Passenger Information System*, I can see that Rs20 m. was budgeted

last year and again Rs25 m. this year. Is it that nothing has been done last year or does the consultants' project totals Rs45 m.?

The Prime Minister: Provision has been made for training of technical engineering and operational personnel of the Department. I have the details at (c). I can circulate the list.

The Chairperson: Yes, please. Hon. Rughoobur!

Mr Rughoobur: Thank you. Madam Chairperson. Under item No. 22120.007 - *Fees for Training*, I can see that annually there is a provision of Rs9 m. May we know from the hon. Prime Minister, out of this Rs9 m., how much has already been spent during this financial year?

The Prime Minister: I don't have the amount spent, Madam Chairperson.

The Chairperson: Can we take another question in the meantime?

The Prime Minister: Yes, another question in the meantime.

The Chairperson: Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Thank you. Under item No. 22120 .020 - *Inspection and Audit Fees*, may we know from the hon. Prime Minister, who carry out those inspections, which company, and how many of these sections have been carried out on a yearly basis?

The Prime Minister: Well, there is a long explanation Madam Chairperson. If the hon. Member does not mind, I can circulate it.

The Chairperson: Yes, please. Hon. Mrs Perraud!

Mrs Perraud: Page 55, under item .004-*Allowances*, can we know who will benefit from these allowances?

The Prime Minister: In the meantime, in reply to the question of hon. Rughoobur, the amount spent is Rs6,834,528.

With regard to allowances, I have a long list with regard to the grades of Engineers, Technicians, Riggers, shift workers, and rent allowance which I can circulate.

The Chairperson: Page 56, hon. Armance!

Mr Armance: Item No. 31122.999 - *Acquisition of Other Machinery (d) Replacement of batteries for solar power system for Agalega and St Brandon*. I see the project value was Rs8 m.; Rs5.4 m. budgeted last year, and again Rs7.2 m. this year, and Rs800,000 next year. So, may I take it that nothing has been done, so far?

The Prime Minister: The Repeater Stations of St Brandon and Agalega are powered by the solar system. The stations are used for the provision of batteries.. They have reached the end of their useful life time and provision of Rs6 m. was made for their replacement. The tender was launched in December 2017, but had not been successful as the offer was

technically non-compliant. The cost for the project has been revised to Rs8 m. and tender is now being re-launched.

The Chairperson: Hon. Adrien Duval!

Mr A. Duval: Madam Chairperson, under the same Item. There has been a letter sent to the Prime Minister, the Commissioner of Police and the Department of Civil Aviation with regard to drones that are now threatening ultra-light planes and helicopters. Has there been any provision under this item for the purchase of equipment to detect and control, and perhaps take down drones?

The Prime Minister: To which item is the hon. Member referring?

Mr A. Duval: Item No. 31122.999 - *Acquisition of Other Machinery and Equipment.*

The Prime Minister: But which one?

Mr A. Duval: That is what I am asking. Under that Item, has there been a provision, because there have been letters sent, and complaints by pilots?

The Prime Minister: No provision has been made under this Item. So, I can take it up with the authorities to see what is being done.

The Chairperson: Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Under item No. 31112.427 - *Upgrading & Refurbishment of Buildings of the Department of Civil Aviation*, can we know from the hon. Prime Minister who won the contract for refurbishment?

The Prime Minister: I see that a provision of Rs400,000 is being made for the payment of retention money in respect of emergency staircases and gatepost as detailed.

Emergency staircase at DCA Headquarters. The construction of the two emergency staircases was awarded to Modern Jurassic Building & Construction Ltd. for the sum of Rs4,611,000 in May 2017. The project has been completed in May 2018; funds of Rs250,000 are being earmarked as retention fee and will be released after the one-year defect-liability period in April 2019.

The other one is again for the extension of a gatepost of the Area Control Centre. This was awarded to Modern Jurassic Building & Construction Ltd. for the sum of Rs3,045,200 in June 2017. The project has been completed and a sum of Rs150,000 is being earmarked for retention money, and again, will be released in May 2019, if everything is okay.

Vote 2-4 Civil Aviation (Rs410,000,000) was on question put, agreed to.

Vote 2-5 Government Printing was called.

The Chairperson: Page 57! Hon. Uteem.!

Mr Uteem: Under item No. 21110.001 (2) - *Deputy Government Printer*, may I know from the hon. Prime Minister why is the position no longer being funded?

The Prime Minister: It has not been funded as there is no qualified candidate for the time being. The seniormost Senior Graphic Artist has been assigned the duties of the Deputy Government Printer with effect from 16 May 2016.

The Chairperson: Page 58, hon. Mrs Perraud!

Mrs Perraud: Under item No. 2207 0- *Cleaning Services*, can we know which company has been awarded the contract for Cleaning Services?

The Prime Minister: It was awarded to Good Cleaning Ltd. for the amount of Rs69,000 monthly for the period of 03 January 2018 to 02 January 2019.

The Chairperson: Hon. Baloomoody!

Mr Baloomoody: Under item No. 22090 - *Security*, may we know which company has acquired the contract for the security services?

The Prime Minister: The contract has been awarded after tendering procedures to RSL Security Services Ltd. for Rs131,000 monthly for the period, 01 February 2018 to 31 January 2019, and also for purchase of other security devices.

Vote 2-5 Government Printing (Rs229,600,000) was on question put, agreed to.

The Chairperson: I suspend the sitting for one hour.

At 9.00 p.m., the sitting was suspended.

On resuming at 10.07 p.m. with Madam Speaker in the Chair.

Vote 2-6 Finance and Economic Development was called.

The Chairperson: Page 61, no question! Page 62, hon. Dr. Boolell!

Dr. Boolell: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. In respect of *Compensation of Employees*, under item 21110 (14) – *Management Support Officer*, I would like to know from the Prime Minister as to the number that has been increased and the increase in the Estimates and if he could give an explanation as to the number that has been recruited.

The Prime Minister: The two additional posts have been provided to cater for the increase in workload at the Assessment Review Committee and the Overseas Missions Section. The Management Support Assistants provide general support to the various sections and units of the Ministry.

The Chairperson: Hon. Baloomoody!

Mr Baloomoody: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Under item 21110.001 (30), we find a reduction in the number of Financial Officer/Senior Financial Officer from 20 to 17. May we know the reason why, please?

The Prime Minister: Because the three posts of Financial Officer/Senior Financial Officer have been reduced against creation of additional post of Assistant Financial Officer.

The Chairperson: Hon. Ameer Meea!

Mr Ameer Meea: Yes, under item 21110.001(8) - *Analyst/Senior Analyst*, there has been an increase in the number of funded position from 105 to 107, that is, only 2, but the amount that has been budgeted; there has been a substantial increase from Rs36 m. to Rs42 m. May I know the reason for such an increase?

The Prime Minister: First of all, the two posts have been transferred from the Ministry of Business, Enterprise and Cooperatives to the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development to provide more flexibility in the posting of Analyst. The Analyst/Senior Analyst generally provides assistance to sector Ministries and support teams are posted in Ministries and Departments involved in the implementation of major projects. So, presently, there are 40 vacancies in the grade which have been reported to the PSC and it is proceeding with the recruitment exercise.

The Chairperson: Page 63, hon. Adrien Duval!

Mr A. Duval: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. With regard to item 2110.005 – *Extra Assistance*, may we have the breakdown? I believe this is for the Advisors, can we have the list and the allowances they draw and the other benefits?

The Prime Minister: Extra assistance, the provision made for remuneration of five advisors on contract and a commission for the protection of borrowers as detailed. I can mention the names also, or circulate the list, if you wish and their respective allowances also. Yes, we can circulate the list

The Chairperson: Hon. Ameer Meea!

Mr Ameer Meea: Yes, item 22120 – *Fees*, there is an amount of Rs24 m. that has been budgeted. May we know the details of this amount?

The Prime Minister: Fees to Chairperson and Members of Boards of Committees. The increase is due a change in rate now payable on an hourly basis to Chairperson and Members of Bid Evaluation Committees. The provision has been made for payment of fees to officers attending the following committees –

- Public Pension Advisory and Technical Committees;
- Sub-Committee on Borrowing Requirements of Government held at Bank of Mauritius;

- Departmental Bid and Bid Evaluation Committees and Audit Committee, and
- Public Pension Advisory Committee which has been set up under Section 19 of the Pensions Act to look into the implementation of the defined contribution pensions scheme applicable to public officers who have joined the public sector as from the 01 of January 2013 and is managed by SICOM Ltd.

I must say that there are also fees for training and fees to consultants. I won't go into that because of the number and there is a list.

The Chairperson: Hon. Dr. Boolell!

Dr Boolell: Thank you very much, Madam Chairperson. In respect of item 26210, can I have a breakdown as far as *Contribution to International Organisations* is concerned?

The Prime Minister: Contribution to international organisations. So, Collaborative Africa Budget Reform Initiative, the CABRI is a professional network aimed at supporting African senior budget officials in their reform efforts in delivering on the following objectives, namely –

- Accelerating Service Delivery, and
- Improving Budget Management, Public Financial Management Reforms and contributing towards the achievement of development goals.

The network is, in fact, open to all African countries and Mauritius has been an active member since 2005.

The Chairperson: Hon. Henry!

Mr Henry: *Item 22020 – Rent*, il y a une augmentation de R 1 million, peut-on savoir pourquoi?

The Prime Minister: Well, there is a list, I think, more than two pages. Can I circulate this list?

The Chairperson: You can circulate.

The Prime Minister: It is rent. I can mention maybe the buildings. Hanisa Building, Camp Benoît, Petite Rivière; Baroda Building at Sir William Newton, Port Louis; St James Court, Saint Denis Street, Port Louis and Belmont House.

The Chairperson: Hon. Baboo!

Mr Baboo: *Item 21110.004 – Allowances*, can we have the details about the allowances?

The Prime Minister: Provision made for the payment of *ad-hoc* responsibility duty, entertainment allowances and also allowances in lieu of duty remission on car to eligible staff as follows –

- Allowance in lieu of duty remission – Rs5 m.;
- Responsibility allowance – Rs700,000;
- Driver’s allowance – Rs1.2 m.;
- Extra Duty allowance – Rs2 m.;
- Allowance in lieu of official car – Rs2.7 m.;
- Entertainment allowance – Rs600,000;
- *Ad-hoc* allowance – Rs2.4 m., and
- Others – Rs5.2 m.

The Chairperson: Hon. Quirin!

Mr Quirin: Yes, thank you Madam Chairperson. Page 64, *item 31122.802 - Acquisition of IT Equipment*, a sum of Rs18 m. was earmarked for 2017/18. Can we get a breakdown of the IT equipment purchased in 2017/18, please?

The Prime Minister: Acquisition of IT Equipment, provision has been made for the purchase of two heavy duty photocopiers, PCs, laptops, heavy duty printers and two servers.

The Chairperson: Page 64, hon. Mrs Perraud!

Mrs Perraud: Item 26313.004 – *Board of Investment*, I see that there is a sum budgeted for Rs254 m. for year 2017/18, then there is no provision for this year and the following years; can you just explain why, please?

The Prime Minister: Well, because it has now been merged into EDB. A few institutions have got together and EDB is the new institution.

The Chairperson: Hon. Mrs Selvon! No? Hon. Adrien Duval!

Mr A. Duval: With regard to *Item 26313.043 - Mauritius Revenue Authority*, there are billions of rupees, Rs1.8 billion, Rs1.9 billion for the year after. Can the hon. Prime Minister, please, explain, first of all, what is the purpose voting this sum of money and the increases as well?

The Prime Minister: The Budget has increased, an increase of Rs186 m., mainly due to –

- (i) Filling of 32 additional posts, enlistment of 50 trainee Customs Officers, 133 unfilled funded positions, and also for payment of yearly increment that amounts to Rs172 m.;

- (ii) Additional cost for transport of staff and bank charges following the implementation of the Negative Income Tax Scheme - Rs6 m.;
- (iii) Rental of additional space for additional staff, call centre and landing steps – Rs4.1 m., and
- (iv) Renewal of contract of cleaning services, taking into consideration the minimum wage – Rs3.8 m.

The Chairperson: Hon. Baloomoody!

Mr Baloomoody: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Page 64, *item 31132.401 - Upgrading of ICT Infrastructure*, may I know from hon. Prime Minister from matters stand with regard to that project? There is a sum of Rs14 m., then for this year we are providing only Rs9 m.

The Prime Minister: Provision made for the upgrading of IT telephony system and network cabling at MOFED Offices and Old/New Government House and EAB. The contract has been awarded to Mauritius Telecom.

The Chairperson: Hon. Dr. Boolell!

Dr. Boolell: I know that the hon. Prime Minister will say, Madam Chairperson, that there is provision at the footnote in respect of *Item 26313.004 - Board of Investment* and *Item 26313.017 - Financial Services Promotion Agency*. I have been told that it is only when the recruitment of a CEO has taken place that these two institutions, which are now under the provisions of the Economic Development Board, will become functional. Can I ask him whether the EDB has delegated two members of the Board to assist in the recruitment exercise of a CEO at the cost of Rs7 m.?

The Prime Minister: No, EDB, it will be for the Board to recruit the new CEO. I know there is a process which is ongoing.

(Interruptions)

Well, I need notice of that question.

The Chairperson: Hon. Armance!

Mr Armance: *Item 31121.801 - Acquisition of Vehicles*, I see there was Rs4.5 m. budgeted last year. I would like to know how much has been spent and, if any vehicle has been acquired, the brand, has there been any tender exercise, and to whom the vehicle was allocated.

The Prime Minister: I do not have the details here. Well, I see that there is no need to purchase for the year 2018-2019. I suppose it has already been purchased.

The Chairperson: Hon. Ameer Meea!

Mr Ameer Meea: Madam Chairperson, I will come back to MRA. The hon. Prime Minister has given the reason why an increase but, in fact, there are two substantial amounts. The first amount, *Item 26313.043 - Mauritius Revenue Authority*, Rs1.8 billion, and a second amount, *Item 26323.043 - Mauritius Revenue Authority* under capital expenditure, Rs390 m., which adds up to Rs2.2 billion for MRA. So, my question to the hon. Prime Minister is, can we have a breakdown of this substantial amount, which accounts like a Ministry's expenditure? May we have details of this Rs2.2 billion of the MRA?

The Prime Minister: There is, Madam Chairperson, a list of items. This is the list. I can circulate because in my file also there is a long list. I will circulate that.

The Chairperson: Hon. Rughoobur!

Mr Rughoobur: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. I see that there is an *Item 22120 - Fees*. For the current year, the amount budgeted was Rs19,100,000. I would like to know from the hon. Prime Minister if there was any provision made for training under the Fees item and, if the answer is in the positive, what is the amount spent under training.

The Prime Minister: The increase in provision is due to change in rate now payable on an hourly basis to the Chairperson and members of the Bid Evaluation Committees. Earlier, I have stated what are the Committees, but let me repeat again. The Public Pension Advisory and Technical Committees, sub-committee on borrowing requirements of Government held at Bank of Mauritius, Departmental Bid and Bid Evaluation Committees and the Audit Committee.

The Chairperson: Hon. Ms Sewocksingh!

Ms Sewocksingh: *Item 22060.005 - IT Equipment*, may the hon. Prime Minister give us details why the sum has increased?

The Prime Minister: The increase is due to additional provision being made for the Inventory Management System. For buildings, there have been minor works at Government House and Emmanuel Anquetil Building; for the plant and equipment, repairs and maintenance of air conditioners, fax machine, photocopiers, water filters and so on; vehicles and motorcycles, for repairs of 10 official cars attached to Senior Civil Servants and 14 vehicles in the fleet of the Ministry. IT equipment is for hardware and software maintenance agreement and for repairs of PCs, laptops and printers. Well, there is a list of the equipment, which I can circulate.

The Chairperson: Hon. Adrien Duval!

Mr A. Duval: With regard to *Item 21110.005 - Extra Assistance*, may we have a breakdown of the fees paid to whom and for what services?

The Prime Minister: I have replied earlier, Madam Chairperson. Does the hon. Member want me to mention the names of the Advisers?

The Chairperson: Page 65 - Extra Assistance.

The Prime Minister: *Item 21110.005 - Extra Assistance*, provision is made for remuneration of five Advisers. Yes, I can give the hon. Member. Mr Gérard Sanspeur, Mr Guptar, Dr. Narainen.

Mr A. Duval: If I may, Madam Chairperson, I think the hon. Prime Minister is referring to the previous one. He already tabled the copy, but this one is at page 65, *Item 21110.005 - Extra Assistance*. It is for a figure of Rs2,400,000 for this year.

The Prime Minister: I have a different list here. But, anyway, let me maybe reply. For extra assistance, I see provision made for payment of salaries to two members on contract: Mr Reshad Jewon - Rs89,000 monthly, and Mr Bagwansingh Dabeesing - Rs89,000 monthly. I hope this is the correct answer.

The Chairperson: Hon. Ameer Meea!

Mr Ameer Meea: Madam Chairperson, just to draw the attention of the hon. Prime Minister to the item MRA. He gave a list for Rs390 m. for capital expenditure, but not the breakdown for Rs1.8 billion. If he does not have it, maybe he can circulate it.

The Prime Minister: I will circulate.

The Chairperson: Hon. Baloomoody!

Mr Baloomoody: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. With regard to *Item 22060.005 - IT Equipment*, there is an increase from Rs5,500,000 to Rs13,600,000. May we know the reason thereof, and who is the provider of this IT Equipment?

The Prime Minister: IT equipment. For hardware and payment for maintenance agreement for the e-procurement system after a warranty period of one year is USD 307,064, payable in 2018-2019 to Nextenders (India) Pvt. Ltd; IT security audit, Rs2 m.; system stress and performance test on e-procurement system, Rs500,000 - a one-off, and maintenance of IT equipment, PCs and printers, Rs100,000.

The Chairperson: Hon. Mrs Selvon!

Mrs Selvon: *Item 21110.004 - Allowances*, could the hon. Prime Minister provide details of the allowances paid?

The Prime Minister: *Item 21110.004 - Allowances*. It is provision that has been made for payment of Ad-hoc responsibility for Ag. Head of BOT and also allowances in lieu of duty remission on car to eligible staff.

Acting allowance: Rs240,000; Responsibility Allowance: Rs30,000; Driver's Allowance Rs115,000 and Duty Remission allowance Rs366,000.

I am informed that the increase in provision is due to a higher number of officers eligible to duty remission allowance.

The Chairperson: Hon. Henry!

Mr Henry: Item 22120 Fees ! Il y a une somme de R 19,100,000 qui a été votée dans le budget l'année dernière et dans le budget de cette année-ci une somme de R 9.6 millions a été votée. Peut-on savoir à qui ces *fees* ont été payés, s'il vous plaît?

The Prime Minister: Fees to Chairperson - I have a long list. I can circulate it.

The Chairperson: Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. At page 65, under Sub-Head 2-603: Independent review Panel. *Under item 21110.001 Personal Emoluments*, I don't see anything about the members. I see Secretary, Office Management Executive, Shorthand writer, a list of five, but nothing to the members. May I know who are the members of the IRP and how much they are paid?

The Prime Minister: The IRP Board consists of one Chairperson, one Vice-Chairperson and four members. The position for the Chairperson is vacant. The Vice-Chairperson is Mr Arassen Kallee. The members are Mr Virjanan Mulloo and Mr Ramsamy Rajana. There are two vacancies which will be filled shortly.

The Chairperson: Page 66, hon. Ms Sewocksingh!

Ms Sewocksingh: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Under Item 21110.005 *Extra Assistance*, can we have more details about this item?

The Prime Minister: It is provision made for payment of allowances to members of ARC; Rs86,845 monthly. I can circulate the list of members.

The Chairperson: Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Under *Sub-Head 2-604: Assessment Review Committee item 21 - Compensation to Employees*. May we know from the hon. Prime Minister the number of cases currently pending before this Assessment Review Committee?

The Prime Minister: Well, I have all the details here concerning the Customs VAT, IT and cases which have been disposed of and struck out and so on. I can circulate. The hon. Member can have it.

The Chairperson: Hon. Adrien Duval!

Mr A. Duval: Under the same item, can the hon. Prime Minister tell us the number of cases that have been heard for the last financial year? How many have been resolved favourably for the MRA, and how many obviously not?

The Prime Minister: Well, I will need notice of that question, Madam Chairperson.

The Chairperson: Page 67, hon. Baboo!

Mr Baboo: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Item 21110.001 (1), can the hon. Prime Minister tell us why this post is still vacant since last year and this year?

The Prime Minister: Which post?

Mr Baboo: Director-General, Strategic Policy and Planning.

The Prime Minister: The post was recommended within the structure of the strategic policy and planning department under the Prime Minister's Office. Following the transfer of the Strategic Policy and Planning to the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development as from July 2017, the structure is currently being reviewed.

The Chairperson: Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Page 67, *Sub-Head 2-605 Strategic Policy and Planning*, I see that under item 21110.001 (1) for *Director-General, Strategic Policy and Planning* there is no funded position. Is that because it will be taken over by the Economic Development Board?

The Prime Minister: I have just answered this! Yes.

The Chairperson: It has just been answered. Hon. Adrien Duval!

Mr A. Duval: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. At page 67, with regard to item 22030 - *Rent*. Now, there is a sum of Rs9.1 m. being earmarked. I know that the ARC has just moved to a new building since last year. With regard to the previous years, can the hon. Prime Minister tell us about the rent differences?

The Prime Minister: Rental of second and sixth floors of Hennessy Building and also parking slots.

The Chairperson: Page 68, hon. Armance!

Mr Armance: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Under item 22040 - *Office Equipment and Furniture*, I see that there is Rs1 m. budgeted. May we know why this sum has been budgeted?

The Prime Minister: It is provision made for the purchase of office equipment and furniture. The increase is due to provision made for 18 new offices.

Vote 2-6 Finance and Economic Development (Rs2,865,000,000) was called and agreed to.

Vote 2-7 Central Procurement Board was called.

The Chairperson: Hon. Ameer Meea!

Mr Ameer Meea: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Under *item no. 21110.005 - Extra Assistance*, there is an amount of Rs13 m. budgeted. May we have the details, the breakdown of this figure?

The Prime Minister: Which page?

The Chairperson: Page 69.

(Interruptions)

Hon. Ameer Meea, you got your reply? Not yet?

(Interruptions)

On page 69, yes! You had asked a question!

(Interruptions)

So, hon. Dr. Boolell!

Dr. Boolell: Thank you very much, Madam Chairperson. In respect of item *21110.001 (1) Chief Executive, Central Procurement Board*, can I as the hon. Prime Minister why it has taken so long for that Board to be constituted or set up? And can we have the names of the Chief Executive and members of the Central Procurement Board?

The Prime Minister: The Chief Executive of the Central Procurement Board has been appointed by the PSC on 19 June 2017.

The Chairperson: Hon. Adrien Duval!

Mr A. Duval: With regard to the same item, can we have the members of the Board and secondly, does he intend to review the salary of the Chief Executive to align it with other institutions. It appears to be lower than other institutions for the Central Procurement Board, which deals with very important matters.

The Prime Minister: The Chairperson is Mr Raj Hemansingh Prayag, the Vice-Chairpersons are Mr Hirendranath Rambhojun, Mr Krishna Mauremootoo and the members are Mr Kirsley Bagwan, Mrs Sharda Devi Dindoyal and Mr Abdool Sattar Aboobakar.

The Chairperson: Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: The question has been answered.

The Chairperson: Page 70, hon. Baloomoody!

Mr Baloomoody: Page 70, let me come back to the item *21110.005 - Extra Assistance*. May we know who are the beneficiaries of the extra assistance?

The Prime Minister: The provision is for the remuneration to 14 contract officers including one Chairperson, two Vice-Chairpersons, three members, four engineers, one mechanical engineer, one statistician, one IT Technician and one Central Procurement

Officer. The increase is due to the recruitment of one mechanical engineer and full year provisioning made for some contract officers.

Mr Baloomoody: The question was about the item 21110.005, *Extra Assistance*.

The Prime Minister: Yes, this is the answer.

The Chairperson: Hon. Henry! Page 70!

Mr Henry: Madame la présidente, sous l'item 21111.002 - *Travelling and Transport*, il y a eu une augmentation pour cette année-ci, peut-on savoir pourquoi ?

The Prime Minister: So, the provision is made for payment of travelling allowance, travel grant, commuted travelling, mileage and refund of bus fares to staff and officers on contract and the increase in provision is due to the recruitment of additional staff.

Vote 2-7 Central Procurement Board (Rs71,300,000) was, on question put, agreed to. (22.45)

Vote 2-8 Treasury was called.

The Chairperson: Page 71! No question on page 71! Page 72, hon. Mrs Perraud!

Mrs Perraud: Under item 22120 - *Fees*, can we have the breakdown for fees, please?

The Prime Minister: Fees are for training, fees to Resource Persons, training of staff, fees to consultants and refund of subscription fees to professional bodies, that is, provision made for refund to ACCA.

The Chairperson: Hon. Quirin!

Mr Quirin: Madam Chairperson, with regard to item 22060 – *Maintenance*, Rs22 m. was earmarked for 2017/2018, can we have some details, please?

The Prime Minister: They concern maintenance for IT equipment -

- renewal of Oracle Licences - Rs15,714,000;
- IT Applications and Oracle Support - Rs4,683,000, and
- Servers/PCs/Printers - Rs203,000.

There are also Plant and Equipment, the cleaning and servicing of Air Conditioners, Stand-By Generators/UPS, repairs and servicing of printers, photocopy, fax and other electrical machines and then for vehicles and motorcycles for repairs and servicing and maintenance of one vehicle.

The Chairperson: Hon. Adrien Duval!

Mr A. Duval: With regard to item 21110.010 - *Service to Mauritius Programme*, has the hon. Prime Minister decided to cease the Programme because we see no more funding for the years to come?

The Prime Minister: The provision for the *Service to Mauritius Programme* is now made under *Vote 27-1 Centrally Managed Initiatives of Government*. So, it will come later on.

The Chairperson: Page 73! No question!

Vote 2-8 Treasury (Rs129,500,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Vote 2-9 Statistics Mauritius was called.

The Chairperson: Page 74! No question! Page 75, hon. Baloomoody!

Mr Baloomoody: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. With regard to *Studies and Surveys*, item 22130, can we have some more details: Rs55 m. this year, Rs48 m. next year, Rs33 m. the year after? May we know for what purpose, please?

The Prime Minister: First of all, it is for the Continuous Multipurpose Household Survey. Then there is the Household Budget Survey, the Survey of Inbound and Outbound Tourists, the Census of Economic Activities, the Living Condition Survey, the Housing and Population Census of 2021 and Cartography Mission, Rodrigues and others.

The Chairperson: Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Under item 22120 – *Fees*, last year, it was Rs25 m., next year it is Rs11.2 m. May we know what those fees relate to?

The Prime Minister: There is a long list which comprises fees to Chairperson and members of Board and Committees, that is, Chairperson and members of the Statistics Board. There are fees for training. There are also fees for the Consultants of the World Bank Trust Fund for Statistical Capacity Building and for Consultants for Rodrigues Statistical Unit. That's it, but I can circulate the details.

The Chairperson: Hon. Baboo!

Mr Baboo: Under item 22030 - *Rent*, may we know what are the buildings that are being rented and their surface area?

The Prime Minister: Again, Madam Chairperson, I have a list of buildings, that is, LIC (the ground, the first and second floors), I can provide the details and then LIC (the fifth floor), I can also circulate the details.

Vote 2-9 Statistics Mauritius (Rs203,300,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Vote 2-10 Valuation Department was called.

The Chairperson: Page 76, hon. Baloomoody!

Mr Baloomoody: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Under *Item 21110.001(5) – Government Valuer*, we provided for 12 for this year and 15 for next year and yet the amount allocated is reduced from Rs7 m. to Rs6 m. May I know why?

The Prime Minister: It is provision made for funding of three unfunded posts to cope with the additional responsibilities with regard to the forthcoming valuation roll for the whole island and for reinstatement of rating work.

Mr Baloomoody: Why is there a reduction?

The Prime Minister: So, the increase in funded position, but decrease in provision is due to officers with lower salary in the grade joining the Department.

The Chairperson: Hon. Abbas Mamode!

Mr Abbas Mamode: Under *Item 21110.001(17) – Management Support Officer*, the number has not changed, but concerning the budget, there has been a huge decrease. May we know why?

The Prime Minister: It must be again joining at a lower grade, I am sure. Exactly, the same thing! Officers with lower salary in the grade joining the Department.

The Chairperson: Page 77, hon. Quirin!

Mr Quirin: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. With regard to *Item. 21111 – Other Staff Costs*, Rs20 m. was earmarked for 2017/2018. Can we have some details, please?

The Prime Minister: This is for travelling and transport, provision made for payment of travel grant, travelling allowance, mileage allowance and refund of bus fares to staff.

The Chairperson: Hon. Henry!

Mr Henry: Sous l'item 22030 – *Rent*, est-ce qu'on peut avoir les détails, s'il vous plait?

The Prime Minister: The decrease is due to refund of parking fees to officers attending official meetings, there is one rental of building at Nexteracom, rental of parking slots. I will circulate the details.

The Chairperson: Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Under *Item 21111.100 - Overtime*, last year there was an Estimate of Rs5 m. and then next year it will be Rs500,000. May I know from the hon. Prime Minister why was there such a big figure for last year, overtime Rs5 m. and now it is going to be Rs500,000.

The Prime Minister: The decrease is due as provision for officers being required to work after office hours to update the valuation roll is now made under item expenses in connection with valuation roll. So, provision has been made for payment of overtime to drivers, office auxiliaries and other staff.

The Chairperson: Hon. Ms Sewocksingh!

Ms Sewocksingh: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Under *item 22120*, can the hon. Prime Minister give us information about the fees and why there has been an increase?

The Prime Minister: The fees are for the Chairperson and members of Board of Committees. So, provision has been made for payment of fees in respect of Objection Unit Bid Evaluation, and Departmental Bid Committees. The Deputy Director of the Valuation Department or Lead Government Valuer or Senior Government Valuer acts as the Chairperson of the Objection Unit and is eligible for a fee of Rs1,995 per sitting and each member represented by Registrar General is eligible for a fee of Rs890 per sitting. I am informed that the increase in provision is due to a rise in the number of sittings. There are also fees for training. The increase is due for the training of a higher number of officers at the Civil Service College and for the Continuous Professional Development in accordance with the PRB Report 2016. There is also refund of subscription fees to professional bodies and the increase in provision is due to an increase in the number of staff eligible for refund and also for the Capacity Building Programme. A provision has been made for recruitment of one expert under the capacity building in computer assistance and in mass appraisal.

The Chairperson: Page 77, hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: The hon. Prime Minister just mentioned under *Item. 22900.983 – Expenses i.c.w Valuation Roll*. So, may I know from the hon. Prime Minister how long it will take to do the Valuation Roll? Because we have been provided for the three coming years Rs17 m., Rs 25 m. and Rs25 m.? How long it will take to update the Valuation Roll?

The Prime Minister: It will take around three years.

Vote 2-10 Valuation Department (Rs160,200,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Vote 2-11 Corporate and Business Registration Department was called.

The Chairperson: Page 78, hon. Baloomoody!

Mr Baloomoody: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Under *Item 21110.001 (12) - Senior Accounting Technician*, there was provision for one post and I see that we are not providing for any provision for the next financial year.

The Prime Minister: The post has been transferred to the Ministry of Justice, Human Rights and Institutional Reforms which is now the parent Ministry.

The Chairperson: Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Under *Item 22110.001 (4) – Manager XBRL* which I suppose is Cross Border, Receivership and Liquidation. Will this be funded this year?

The Prime Minister: Well, the grade of the Manager of XBRL was created in Budget 2017/2018. The provision has been made for one funded position as the scheme of service is

due to be prescribed. So, the Manager of the Extensible Business Reporting Language would be responsible for the efficient and effective management of the financial data fed into the XBRL system and then it goes to explain what is the XBRL.

The Chairperson: Page 79, Hon. Rughoobur!

Mr Rughoobur: I request the Prime Minister to clarify upon the Capital Expenditure

...

The Chairperson: Which Item?

Mr Rughoobur: *Item No. 31 ...*

The Prime Minister: Which page?

Mr Rughoobur: Page 79, under *Item No. 31132.401*, under *Capital Expenditure – Upgrading of ICT Infrastructure*. May I know from the Prime Minister if there has been a provision in the contract for upgrading of ICT infrastructure and whether is a separate maintenance contract and what is the value of that maintenance contract?

The Prime Minister: What I have here is the electronic document management system and the XBRL and provision has been made for the payment to Mauritius Network Services for electronic filing of financial statements in XBRL format for large companies so as to create a standardised format for financial reporting, but for maintenance and servicing, I can circulate.

The Chairperson: Hon. Adrien Duval!

Mr A. Duval: On the same item *31132.401 - Upgrading of ICT Infrastructure*, if the hon. Prime Minister could see to it that the only online website of the CBRD could be upgraded because, actually, today we can only download forms, but all the other departments of the website – if we can call it that – do not work properly. So, if he can see to it that this is upgraded as well - the website itself.

The Prime Minister: With regard to the comment that the hon. Member has made, of course, I shall check with the relevant authority to find out what is the issue.

The Chairperson: Hon. Baloomoody!

Mr Baloomoody: Page 79, *Item 31132.401(b) - Extensible Business Reporting Language*. Can we know more from the hon. Prime Minister? It was a project value of Rs68m. May we know where matters stand?

The Prime Minister: The provision is to meet payment to MNS for electronic filing of financial statements as per agreement signed between CBRD and MNS. The agreement was signed on 22 October 2015 for a period of five years. So, currently, taxonomy is being used to develop the e-file tool, which is a generic one. The second phase of XBRL will

concern the filing of financial statements to other institutions such as Bank of Mauritius, MRA, and so on. The filers will use the same platform, and enhancement needs to be effected in the system to give access to these regulators.

The Chairperson: Hon. Quirin, last question!

Mr Quirin: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Page 79, *Item 22060 – Maintenance*, Rs20.4 m. was budgeted in 2017/18. Can we have a breakdown of this amount?

The Prime Minister: There is a list of buildings, of plant and equipment, of vehicles and motorcycles, of IT equipment. I will circulate the list.

Vote 2-11 Corporate and Business Registration Department (Rs121, 400,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Vote 2-12 Registrar-General's Department was called.

The Chairperson: Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. The last item, *Item 31132.401 - Upgrading of ICT Infrastructure*. Every year, we keep budgeting for this ICT upgrade and for next year also, another Rs46 m. is budgeted. Can we have more details? Is it LAVIMS or is it something else?

The Prime Minister: This is the provision made for the replacement of the existing e-Registry project hardware. The system's hardware infrastructure components end of life cycle has already been announced and notified by the supplier. The end of life notice implies that back-to-back replacement of the concerned components, that is, the servers, storage, switch, backup storage, etc., will not be available. Therefore, the replacement of the hardware infrastructure is crucial in order to ensure a continuous service.

The Chairperson: Hon. Baloomoody!

Mr Baloomoody: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. *Item 22060 – Maintenance*. That is really a huge sum we are providing each and every year. Rs18 m. this year, Rs16 m. for the next financial year, Rs12 m. thereafter. May we know maintenance of what?

The Prime Minister: Provision is made to meet the cost of minor repairs and for the maintenance and upkeep of office space occupied by the Registrar General's Department at the Emmanuel Anquetil Building. The increase in provision is due to modification works to be carried out at cash counters and also for plant and equipment, for vehicles, for IT equipment. There is a list, which I will circulate.

Vote 2-12 Registrar-General's Department (Rs150,300,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Vote 26-1 Centrally Managed Expenses of Government was called.

The Chairperson: Hon. Mrs Perraud!

Mrs Perraud: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Page 350, *Item 22180 - Mission Expenses (Ministers, Delegates and Officials)*. Can the hon. Prime Minister give us a full breakdown of mission expenses, please?

The Prime Minister: Provision made for meeting costs of air tickets, hotel accommodation, *per diem* and other expenses as follows -

- Rs148 m. for overseas missions to be attended by Ministers, delegates and officials, and
- Rs12 m. for overseas training programmes attended by public officers.

I have the breakdown, which I will circulate.

The Chairperson: Hon. Ameer Meea!

Mr Ameer Meea: On page 350, *Item 28217.002 - Compensation arising out of Government Liability*. Last year, there was an amount of Rs50 m. that was budgeted and this year as well. May we know, for last year, how much has been paid and also the details to whom this liability has been paid and also this year what has been budgeted, what do you expect to pay as liability for Government?

The Prime Minister: Provision is made to cater for compensation, if any, to third parties in respect of accidents involving Government vehicles, injury on duty and medical negligence, Court cases and out of Court settlement. As at 15 June 2018, Rs102 m. have been spent as follows -

- Rs1.4 m. in connection with 25 cases of accidents involving Government vehicles, and
- Rs100.6 m. in connection with 5 Court cases, out of Court settlements. Out of this amount, Rs83.9 m. was provided to the Rivière du Rempart District Council for payment to Alphamix Ltd and Rs15.16 m. was in respect of compensation to Mr Raj Dayal.

The Chairperson: Hon. Armance!

Mr Armance: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. *Item 28211.024 - Financial Support to Religious Bodies*. May we have a list of all the beneficiaries and the amount that has been given to them?

The Prime Minister: They are beneficiaries under the per capita subsidy - there are two other religious organisations which do not take subsidy - and beneficiaries under the fixed grant scheme. I will circulate the list.

The Chairperson: Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Under *Item 22120.003 - Commissions of Enquiry and Committees* and *Item 22900.099 - Expenses icw Commission of Enquiry and Committees*, I see that Rs4 m. was budgeted last year and Rs4 m. next year. May I know from the hon. Prime Minister, up to now, how much has been paid to Commission of Enquiries, out of the Rs4 m. that has already been budgeted and the forthcoming?

The Prime Minister: As at 15 June 2018, an amount of Rs1.43 m. was spent as follows –

- Rs1.06 m. i.c.w Work Permit Committees;
- Rs0.17 m. i.c.w Independent Enquiry;
- Rs.08 m. i.c.w Bids Evaluation and Due Diligence Committees;
- Rs0.9 m. i.c.w Commissions of Enquiry, and
- Rs0.3 billion i.c.w Disciplinary Committees.

So, I am informed that no fee has yet been paid i.c.w Commission of Inquiry set up to enquire into the Drug Trafficking.

The Chairperson: Hon. Adrien Duval !

Mr A. Duval: In relation to that particular Commission of Enquiry on Drugs, can the hon. Prime Minister tell us how much has been claimed, so far, as fees? How much is due to pay them? And how much, if at all, has been paid?

The Prime Minister: I am not aware, but I do not believe that there has been any claim so far. Normally, it is at the end of the Commission of Enquiry when they have submitted their report that they will make the claim.

The Chairperson: Hon. Baloomoody !

Mr Baloomoody: Coming back to that issue of Commission of Enquiry, can I ask the hon. Prime Minister and Minister of Finance what provision has been made for the Commission of Enquiry of the conduct of our ex-President?

The Prime Minister: As I said, when the Commission of Enquiry will be over, then there will be a claim. And it is from the Centrally Managed Operations of Government that we will make the payment. Since we don't know how much, we can't budget for that.

Vote 26-1 Centrally Managed Expenses of Government - (Rs2,370,000,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Vote 27-1 Centrally Managed Initiatives of Government was called.

The Chairperson: Page 351! Hon. Baboo!

Mr Baboo: Under *Item 25210.019 (b) Export Market Development Support*. Out of Rs110 m. budgeted last year, can the hon. Prime Minister tell us how much has been spent?

The Prime Minister: For Export Market Development Support, I see estimates of Rs110 m. As at 31 May 2018, for the Export Market Development Support, Rs34.4 m. have been spent.

The Chairperson: Page 351! Hon. Ameer Meea!

Mr Ameer Meea: Page 351, under *item 21120.001 - Medical Insurance Scheme* where last year there was an estimated amount of Rs10 m. and this year Rs50 m. is being budgeted and the coming years it goes to Rs200 m. I know that this was announced during the last PRB Report. So, may we know where matters stand in relation to this Medical Insurance Scheme?

The Prime Minister: Well, unfortunately, Madam Chairperson, there have been delays in the implementation of the scheme as there has been no responsive bid, that is why now we have to start again. But, as I said, no amount has been disbursed again because the scheme has not yet been designed as such. We are working towards that.

The Chairperson: Hon. Dr. Boolell! Hon. Mrs Perraud!

Mrs Perraud: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Page 351, under *item 25210.019 Export Boosting Schemes - (c) Freight Rebate Scheme for Africa* where there was a sum Rs20 m. for last year. I would like to know how much has been spent and the list of beneficiaries for this scheme.

The Prime Minister: As at 31 May 2018, Rs5 m. has been spent. I don't have the details. I can obviously circulate who are the beneficiaries.

The Chairperson: Hon. Adrien Duval!

Mr A. Duval: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. With regard to *item 21110.010 - Service to Mauritius Programme*, can the Prime Minister tell us, first of all, how many people are employed under this scheme and can he remind the House of the conditions of this scheme, because I know it has changed throughout the years?

The Prime Minister: Well, first of all, the provision is being made for payment of allowances to 200 interns. Presently, there are 171 interns who have been posted in various Ministries. 29 additional interns will be recruited in the course of the year.

The STM targets graduates and post-graduates who have achieved at least 2nd Class 1st Division from a University or its equivalent in scarcity areas in the Civil Service, laureates who opt to study locally for their undergraduate studies, including beneficiaries of the Bursary Scheme, skilled professionals, that is, post graduates and PhDs who are willing to

share their expertise and valuable experience towards the achievement of Government's objective. The duration of the programme for the internship agreement is for an initial period of one year which may be renewed for another two years, subject to the satisfactory performance. For laureates, the internship is limited to two years in line with the provisions of the Education Act. I can give the allowance payable also.

The Chairperson: Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Under the same *item 21110.010 - Service to Mauritius Programme*, may I know from the hon. Prime Minister - if he has the figures - how many persons with disabilities have been recruited under this Programme?

The Prime Minister: I don't have this information. I don't think officers also have the information, but we can find out and circulate later on.

The Chairperson: Page 351, hon. Armance!

Mr Armance: Under *item 22130 - Studies and Surveys*, may we have some more details about the Rs10 m. which is budgeted every year?

The Prime Minister: Under *Item 22130 - Studies and Surveys*, as at 31 May 2018, Rs0.3 m. has been paid to Philip Baker for his advice and comments of the Forum of Harmful Tax Practices Secretariat on the proposed reforms to our foreign tax credit regime and for his services regarding the review of the current tax regime applicable to GBL 1 License Companies in Mauritius.

The Chairperson: Hon. Dr. Boolell!

Dr. Boolell: Madam Chairperson, in respect of *item 28216 - Transfers to Regional/International Organisations*, I know what our contribution is, but if we can be told as to the benefits accruing from the transfer to a regional and international organisation.

The Prime Minister: Yes, this is for the Regional Multi-Disciplinary Centre for Excellence. The provision is made as per the host agreement between Government and the RMCE to meet operational expenses of the Centre such as renting of buildings, utilities, stationeries, salaries, staff and so on. So, actual spending as at 31 May 2018: Rs2.5 m.

The Chairperson: Hon. Henry! Page353!

(Interruptions)

No, page 353! Hon. Henry, page 353!

(Interruptions)

Yes, I know. The allotment of time has already...

(Interruptions)

We have already exceeded the allotment of time.

(Interruptions)

Page 353, hon. Henry!

(Interruptions)

Mr Henry: Sous l'item 32145.200 *Development Bank of Mauritius Ltd icw setting up of SME Parks*, je vois qu'une somme de R 150 millions a été votée. Je voudrai savoir si le SME Park de Plaine Magnien est dedans?

(Interruptions)

The Prime Minister: *Development Bank of Mauritius Ltd icw setting up of SME Parks*. So, the project status..

(Interruptions)

With regard to the Plaine Magnien?

(Interruptions)

Mr Henry: Yes.

The Prime Minister: Yes. So, the bids evaluated and letter of acceptance to the successful bidder will be issued soon.

The Chairperson: Hon. Armance!

Mr Armance: Madam Chairperson, if I may insist, I would like to come back to page 352. There are so many questions that all the hon. Members of the Opposition want to ask and I am sure the hon. Prime Minister will accept if we can come back to page 352.

The Chairperson: Can I rule on that! At the time the discussions were being held between the Whips, I think, you should have asked for more time on this item. Why didn't you ask?

(Interruptions)

Why is it that you didn't ask when discussions were held? Now, I don't see how...

(Interruptions)

You have asked you know for how much! I have given you already 10 minutes on this item and you asked for only 5 minutes. This is what you asked for! So, that is why I am moving to the next page.

Mr Armance: Under item 32155.061 *Metro Express Ltd.*, can I have the details of expense of Rs4.5 billion and what has been planned for with the Rs4.8 billion this year?

(Interruptions)

The Prime Minister: It is Metro Express! Sorry, can the hon. Member repeat again!

Mr Armance: Under item 32155.061 *Metro Express Ltd*, I would like to know the details of the expenses of Rs4.5 billion last year and what has been planned with the Rs4.8 billion this year?

The Prime Minister: The provision represents equity injection by Government in Metro Express Ltd as follows – Rs4.7 billion for implementation of the Metro Express and Rs0.1 billion for construction of Ebène Park. The equity injection for Metro Express Project is being financed by grant from India to the tune of USD275 m. So far Government has injected Rs3.2 billion: Rs1.4 billion for year 2016-2017 and Rs1.8 billion in the current financial year as at May 2018. A further amount of Rs1.6 billion is expected to be injected by 30 June 2018.

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Hon. Ms Sewocksingh!

Mr Armance: Madam Chairperson, if I may. The answer is not clear to me. My question is: give me details of the Rs1.8 billion that has been spent in the current financial year. I got the figure, but I do not have the details.

(Interruptions)

The Prime Minister: I will get the details with regard to the Rs1.8 billion. They are payments to contractor for construction.

The Chairperson: Hon. Mrs Perraud. You don't have! Hon. Ms Sewocksingh!

Ms Sewocksingh: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Under item 32155.063 *Mauritius Multisports Infrastructure Ltd*, can the hon. Prime Minister give us full details of this item?

(Interruptions)

32155.063!

The Prime Minister: What is the question?

Ms Sewocksingh: The question is: can we have more details about this item?

(Interruptions)

The Prime Minister: I can circulate all the details that I have here.

(Interruptions)

Okay, you want to have the details. Provision is required for equity injection in the Mauritius Multisports Infrastructure Ltd in connection with the construction of the new Multisports Complex at Côte D'or. The project includes: construction of an aquatic centre; a football stadium and athletics track; a gymnasium. The cost of the project including off-site

works and consultancy is estimated to cost Rs3.9 billion and I have the breakdown which I can circulate.

The Chairperson: Hon. Adrien Duval, last question!

Mr A. Duval: Under the same item *32155.063 Mauritius Multisports Infrastructure Ltd*, when you add up the cash injection, it ends up to about Rs4.2 billion and we know that Rs3.2 billion was to be financed from Mauritius and Rs1 billion is Chinese contribution from the Republic of China. Why is it then that the injection amounts to the full paid-up price of Rs4.2 billion by the Mauritian Government itself?

The Prime Minister: From what I have here, the project was initially estimated to cost Rs3.2 billion. The project value has increased now by Rs700 m. to reach Rs3.9 billion at contract award stage.

(Interruptions)

The Government of People's Republic of China will provide financial assistance amounting to Rs1.8 billion.

Vote 27-1 Centrally Managed Initiatives of Government (Rs9,345,000,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

Vote 28-1 Contingencies and Reserves was called.

The Chairperson: Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. In his summing up – there is only one item – the hon. Prime Minister mentioned that according to IMF he has to provide contingency for Betamax case and not incur it as a debt. So, may I know from this amount budgeted, how much has been provided as contingency in the case of Betamax?

The Prime Minister: No, the hon. Member is wrong. I said that according to IMF, we don't have to provide such contingencies and it is also for the STC as and when there is going to be a finality in the judgment, then they will be able to - we don't know what is going to happen, what is going to be the outcome.

The Chairperson: Hon. Adrien Duval!

Mr A. Duval: To pick up on the same question, with regard to the cases that are right now being litigated in Court and there is a high risk, let's say, if it does happen that we have to pay Betamax and the others, then where will the hon. Prime Minister and Minister of Finance and Economic Development take this money from, where will he make arrangements to pay?

The Prime Minister: Madam Chairperson, if we say 'let's say', but let's say!

(Interruptions)

It can go otherwise also.

(Interruptions)

So, you can't come and say 'let's say'! We are not in a market place here.

(Interruptions)

You can't just come and say 'let's say'...

(Interruptions)

Let us not speculate!

(Interruptions)

The Chairperson: Hon. Baloomoody!

Mr Baloomoody: Can I in that case ask the hon. Prime Minister, Minister of Finance on what does he base himself to make an allocation of Rs700 m. for this project?

The Prime Minister: This is on what I base myself. This is, Madam Chairperson, the usual practice to make provision. We don't know how much money we normally put in that Fund. But we have to, at least, cater for unexpected events, and there are number of instances where we will need to finance different measures in the course of the financial year, that is, the standard, the usual practice and it is the practice by any Government for that matter, it is not unique, exceptional for this Government. If you look at the previous Budgets presented by other Ministers of Finance, it has been like that.

Vote 28-1 Contingencies and Reserves (Rs700,000,000) was, on question put, agreed to.

The Prime Minister: Madam Chairperson, I beg to move that you do report progress and ask leave to sit again.

Question put and agreed to.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Members, I have an announcement to make. I wish to inform the Committee that I have acceded to a request from the hon. Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities that consideration of the vote under his Ministry be carried out on Wednesday morning. I take it that hon. Members have no objection. We will, therefore, start tomorrow's business with consideration of the vote under the Minister Mentor's Office. Thank you.

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

ADJOURNMENT

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, I beg to move that this Assembly do now adjourn to Tuesday 26 June 2018 at 10.30 a.m.

Mr Gayan rose and seconded.

Question put and agreed to.

Madam Speaker: The House stands adjourned.

At 11.34 p.m., the Assembly was, on its rising, adjourned to Tuesday 26 June 2018 at 10.30 a.m.