

MAURITIUS

Fifth National Assembly

FIRST SESSION

Debate No. 9 of 2011

Sitting of Tuesday 24 May 2011

The Assembly met in the Assembly House, Port Louis,

at 11.30 a.m

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

CWA - WATER SUPPLY

The Leader of the Opposition (Mr P. Bérenger) (*By Private Notice*) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to water, he will -

- (a) for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Central Water Authority, information as to the –
 - (i) reasons for the increase in water losses, since 2007;
 - (ii) sums spent yearly on pipes replacement, since 2005;
 - (iii) reasons for delays in the construction and rehabilitation of dams and drilling of new boreholes, and
 - (iv) status of the Mare Longue/Mare aux Vacoas Project;
- (b) for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Waste Water Management Authority, information as to the volume of treated waste water discharged into the sea;
- (c) state the impact of deforestation on the supply thereof, and

(d) state the remedial measures that will be taken.

The Ag. Prime Minister (Dr. R. Beebeejaun): Mr Speaker Sir, I thank the hon. Leader of the Opposition for raising the water situation in the House and give an opportunity to provide information accordingly.

The House would like to know that over the years, in fact, over the last 60 years, there has been a gradual decrease of around 11% in rainfall including the catchment area of Mare aux Vacoas reservoir. This year has been exceptional: Summer rainfall between November to mid-May has been deficient and the Mare aux Vacoas region has recorded only around 60% of normal.

Our potable water supply depends 50% on boreholes and 20% on river off-take both of which are subject to seasonal fluctuations and the remaining 30% from stored water.

With regard to part (a)(i) of the question, the figures for water losses strictly speaking are not available as such. I am talking of water losses. We have figures for non-revenue water which is a sum of technical losses and commercial losses which includes illegal abstraction. The House has on many occasions and the hon. Leader of the Opposition has mentioned it himself that often the figures mentioned are subject to a lot of skepticism about the apportionment and about the leaks. A study carried out by Severn Trent between 2004 and 2006 underlines the difficulties to establish the baseline data. The Severn Trent report states that it has not been able to identify any recognisable audit trail or validation process applied to the data gathered for non-revenue water purposes.

Mr Speaker, Sir, concerning part (a)(i) of the question, in reply to PQ 1B/203 of 2010, I informed the House that the increase in the level of non-revenue water could be mainly due to the state of the water supply network which in some regions dates back to more than 100 years. Some 1800 kms of network is made up of asbestos cement, cast iron and steel pipes which have since long outlived their economic and technical life span. The cost of replacement of these inefficient pipelines is estimated at around Rs10 billion.

The level of non-revenue water which was estimated at 44.4% in 2007 and is estimated to have reached 49% in 2010 could be due partly to an increase in the hours of supply, especially in 2009. Action has been initiated since last year for the replacement of pipelines in regions where the level of non-revenue water has become critical.

In the 2010 Budget, a provision of Rs640 m. was made to finance the first phase of the Action Plan to reduce non-revenue water. The pipelines being replaced are as follows -

- (i) Camp Fouquereaux-Alma
- (ii) Camp Thorel-Salazie
- (iii) Plaine des Papayes-Triolet
- (iv) Pierrefonds
- (v) Beemanic-Balisson
- (vi) Old pipelines in Port Louis
- (vii) Quartier Militaire-Mont Ida
- (viii) Mont Ida-Unité

Furthermore, under the ongoing Plaines Wilhems Sewerage Project, some 185 kms of water pipes will be replaced. Phase II of the Action Plan to reduce non-revenue water will require an investment of Rs896 m.

As regards part (a)(ii) of the question, I am informed by the CWA that the sum spent yearly on Rehabilitation and Water Distribution network are as follows -

<u>Financial Year</u>	<u>Sum (Rs M.)</u>
2005-2006	325
2006-2007	348
2007-2008	254
2008-2009	170
2009-2010	324
2011	900
TOTAL	2,321

Since 2005, some Rs2.5 billion have been provided for the rehabilitation of the network. In 2011, nearly Rs1 billion has been budgeted for the replacement of old water pipelines.

With regard to part (a)(iii) of the question on construction and rehabilitation of dams, studies for the safety analysis of dams were carried out for five (5) dams of Mauritius and the Municipal Dyke from 1997 to 2000. Rehabilitation of three (3) dams/dyke the Mare aux Vacoas Dam, La Nicolière Dam and the Municipal Dyke at Pailles are already completed.

Consultancy services for the rehabilitation of La Ferme are currently under evaluation and will be awarded soon. The rehabilitation process – I have already mentioned this in the

House - has been delayed due to the presence of squatters downstream of the dam. The Ministry of Housing and Lands is working on the relocation of squatters.

In my reply to a recent Private Notice Question, I provided extensive information to the House on the implementation of the Bagatelle dam. I do not wish to go back again to what I said, except to say that between 2000 and 2004 after a feasibility study, the site of the dam was changed and we had to start all over again, but I am glad to say that now it is going smoothly and the contract for Bagatelle will be awarded shortly and works are expected to start before the end of this year.

The dam is expected to be operational by the end of 2014.

Mr Speaker, Sir, in order to improve water supply in the south, the construction of a dam at Rivière des Anguilles is planned.

The consultancy services for the supervision of works for the Rivière des Anguilles dam are being evaluated at the level of the Central Procurement Board. Bids for the works contract will be launched early next year. The project which will be funded by the AFD will be completed by 2015.

Construction is being looked into by the Consultant carrying the Master Plan for the development of water resources. The inputs are awaited.

Mr Speaker, Sir, in reply to previous PQs, I gave information to the House regarding boreholes. Some 73 boreholes were drilled between the period 1996 to 2000. This campaign identified major sources including deep boreholes to supplement potable water supply by some 40 Mm³ yearly. After this major ground water investigation campaign, other boreholes sites are being developed yearly at the rate of 4 to 5 boreholes for both monitoring of aquifers and potable water supply.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I wish to reiterate, once again, the explanation I gave recently that during wet season pumping tests for borehole cannot be carried out and this was not carried out in 2009 because we did not have a dry season. In dry season we do tests of boreholes and 2009 was such a good year that there it was not possible to carry out borehole tests. So, the tests were carried out in 2010.

In addition, private borehole licences were granted for industrial and agricultural purposes where CWA cannot meet the demand.

Presently, ground water resources are harnessed through 406 boreholes, 114 for potable water supply, 136 for industrial use and 156 for irrigation.

As regards part (a)(iv) of the question, the feasibility for the transfer of water from Mare Longue to Mare aux Vacoas was considered for the first time in 2007. However, priority was given to the transfer of 10M m³ yearly of water from Rivière du Poste to Mare aux Vacoas as compared to about 2M m³ from Mare Longue. And this is one of the reasons why the Mare Longue/Mare aux Vacoas project was given as a second priority, the first priority being from Rivière du Poste to Mare aux Vacoas.

The contract for the transfer of water from Mare Longue to Mare aux Vacoas has been awarded as an emergency procurement to Sotravic Ltée on 04 May 2011. The contractor has physically mobilised on site on 20 May 2011 and the works are expected to be completed by September 2011. Upon completion of the works, around 20,000 m³ of water will be transferred from Mare Longue to La Marie Treatment Plant.

I would like to remind the House here, Mr Speaker, Sir, that for the project of Mare Longue to Mare aux Vacoas, since October of last year we have not released any water from Mare Longue in expectation that it might come in useful if the rainfall does not improve.

The decision to proceed with implementation of the project was taken in March 2011. Pursuant to this decision, my Ministry had a meeting with Médine Sugar Estate and other planters in the region to ensure adequate water supply for irrigation from other sources such as La Ferme and St Martin treated effluent to cater any shortfall from Mare Longue.

As from 25 March 2011, the Ministry had several meetings with the planters along the pipe route to acquire way leave. I personally chaired a meeting with the large planters and obtained their support. As to date, most of the way leaves have been acquired by the CWA and negotiations are ongoing with a few planters. The CWA, in consultation with the Ministry of Agro Industry, will compensate the planters whose crops will be damaged during the pipe-laying works.

Mr Speaker, Sir, as to part (b), treated effluents, out of the five treatment plants of the WMA, only St Martin and Grand Bay Sewerage Treatment plants treat effluents up to tertiary level which may be used for irrigation. In the case of Grand Bay, on the advice of experts, the effluent is injected in boreholes to prevent sea water intrusion in land. Since January 2006, the

Wastewater Management Authority and Irrigation Authority signed an agreement for the sale of treated effluents at 80cts/m³ with the La Ferme and Magenta Water Users Association

Mr Speaker, Sir, over the period 2006 to 2010, the effluents were being supplied for irrigation of sugar cane mixed with raw water on a ratio of 1:1. However, given that the price charged by the Wastewater Management Authority was 80cts per m³ for treated effluents, as compared to the price of raw water supplied by the CWA - raw water, I repeat - at 1.5 cents per m³, the Association never made any payment with an accumulated debt of Rs24 m. due to the WMA.

Since 2010, the Treatment Plant at St Martin was under repair and the works were completed in March 2011. The WMA has now resumed release of treated effluents about 25,000 m³ per day for irrigation purposes at a nominal price of 7 cents per m³.

The use of the treated effluents for irrigation will result in the release of less water from La Ferme reservoir. The Association has also agreed to make optimal use of water resources from La Ferme and Mare Longue in order to allow for a strategic storage at Mare Longue reservoir for transfer to the Mare Aux Vacoas system.

Mr Speaker, Sir, part (c) – Impact of Deforestation on Water Supply. It is common knowledge that deforestation has an impact on climatic conditions including water resources. I am informed by the Forestry Services that several measures have been taken to reverse the process of deforestation. The whole programme is being overseen by the Prime Minister himself who, on many occasions, have stated that for every single tree felled down for development purposes, two trees should be planted. He gave the strong signal with the Vallée de Ferney project.

I am informed, Mr Speaker Sir, that some 47,185 hectares were under forest in 2005 as compared to 47,159 hectares in 2009. Around 47% of land under forest is State-owned.

Mr Speaker Sir, I now come to part (d) of the question. I wish to inform the House that the water situation is being closely monitored by the Water Resources Monitoring Committee at my Ministry. However, since November 2010, a Ministerial Committee chaired by me and comprising the vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development, the Minister of Agro Industry and Food Security, the Minister of Tourism and Leisure, the Ministry of Industry and Commerce, the Mauritius Meteorological Services, the Irrigation Authority, the

Joint Economic Council, MEXA and AHRIM has been set up to examine the water supply situation and consider short and medium term measures to mobilise and save water.

A Technical Committee chaired by my Ministry and comprising the same organisations has been meeting regularly to ensure implementation of measures identified and obtain the collaboration of the private sector.

I wish to stress here, Mr Speaker, Sir, that this meeting held every month and sometimes more often, has yielded a very collaborative programme from which we are going ahead with the Ministry of Agro-Industry and the Ministry of Tourism as well.

The measures being taken by the Central Water Authority: since October 2010, the following actions have been taken to ensure adequate water supply distribution and mobilise additional water resources –

- (i) My Ministry enlisted the services of a Hydrogeological expert who worked on the hydrogeology mapping in Mauritius from 1996 to 2002, Mr Loic Giorgi, to advise on the management of ground water with a view to mobilising additional water resources. Based on his advice, additional boreholes, including deeper ones, have been drilled at Beaux Songes, and Petite Rivière. New sites for boreholes have also been identified at Bonne Veine, Beau Bois, and Plaisance regions;
- (ii) The Central Water Authority has with the collaboration of the private sector and other organisations mobilised additional water from rivers and boreholes in different parts of the island to improve water supply namely –
 - (a) installation of a pump of higher capacity at La Cure Reservoir to supply a larger service zone in Vallée des Prêtres and commissioning of a borehole at Beaux Songes;
 - (b) extension of a pipeline to feed Montagne Longue region with improvements in Camp la Boue, Ruisseau Rose regions;
 - (c) putting into operation a connection from Ruisseau Jamblon to increase water supply in Lallmatie region;
 - (d) tapping of water from La Nicolière Feeder Canal at Melrose and Mont Ida to compensate shortage from Piton du Milieu and operation of a new borehole at Petite Retraite;

- (e) tapping of water from Union Ducray to supplement flow to Souillac and Riambel and putting into operation borehole provided by Rose Belle Sugar estate to improve water supply in the South;
- (f) use of new borehole at Minissy to improve water supply in Moka, Montagne Ory, Réduit and St Pierre, and
- (g) use of borehole at Tamarin River and borehole of Médine Sugar Estate and use of boreholes of DBM and Soniawear.

Mr Speaker, Sir, without these measures, the water supply would have suffered considerably. The Central Water Authority has been making very serious efforts to mobilise additional water resources and to maintain a reasonable supply throughout the country.

The situation at Mare aux Vacoas is still critical as the rainfall in the catchment area of the reservoir has remained deficient during the summer period, as I have already mentioned. Water supply in the Upper Plaines Wilhems and other regions supplied by Mare aux Vacoas is presently limited to once daily that is, between 04.00 to 10.00 hours. The present level of storage represents about 100 days of normal supply.

Accordingly, release of water from this reservoir will have to be reduced gradually so as to ensure supply until the next rainy season. Action has already been taken to reduce the normal release of 110,000 m³ daily to 80,000 m³ daily and a further reduction to 70,000 m³/day will be applied shortly.

In order to address the problem of acute water shortage in Mare aux Vacoas, the following steps have been taken -

- (i) an expert from the International Atomic Energy Agency, Mr Hernandez, visited Mauritius from 11 to 15 April to assess any possible dam leakage, if any, at Mare aux Vacoas reservoir. During his visit, samples were taken in the reservoir and downstream boreholes and water courses to carry out isotopic analyses of Oxygen 18 and Deuterium to assess any leakage from the dam. Preliminary assessment of the expert indicates that there is no leakage from the dam. His final report is expected in June.
- (ii) The Water Resources Unit, the Central Water Authority, the Ministry of Agro Industry and Food Security, the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development and the Forestry Department will conduct site visits to ensure that

there is no unauthorised abstraction from the feeder canals and rivers upstream of the Mare aux Vacoas reservoir;

(iii) The Central Water Authority has taken steps to mobilise additional water under emergency procedure and I have a list of measures here, Mr Speaker, Sir, and I just run through them -

- Pumping of water from Rivière Sèche (near La Marie);
- Diversion of water from Rivière du Rempart to La Marie Treatment Plant;
- Abstraction from River Bassin AZA Profonde, Verdun;
- Diversion of water from Rivière du Poste into the Mare aux Vacoas reservoir;
- New Borehole at Camp Auguste, St Pierre;
- Use of Borehole of Development Bank of Mauritius at Phoenix

There is a long list and I will go through them.

Mr Speaker: I will ask the hon. Ag. Prime Minister to circulate the information.

The Ag. Prime Minister: I will circulate the information.

Mr Speaker: In so far as the measures are concerned.

The Ag. Prime Minister: What it shows, Mr Speaker, Sir, is that a tremendous effort has been taken at all quarters to have additional water supply during this critical period. The transfer of water from Mare Longue to Mare aux Vacoas is, as we say, a project to supplement and relieve the water resources from Mare aux Vacoas reservoir and to enable the Central Water Authority to ensure the supply of water during the coming dry season. I had a meeting with the representatives of Médine Sugar Estate and other ...

(Interruptions)

If you are aware of it, I will not go through it.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order please! We are losing time for nothing.

The Ag. Prime Minister: There has been, Mr Speaker, Sir, a proposal to desilt the Mare aux Vacoas reservoir and the expert opinion is that this is not advisable.

Finally, Mr Speaker, Sir, the setting up of small dams. This has been a subject of much debate...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order! The question is a fairly comprehensive one.

(Interruptions)

We have to allow the Ag. Prime Minister to answer the question. It is very fairly long, let him answer. I will give some time.

(Interruptions)

Order! I don't want any comment. I will give the hon. Leader of the Opposition some more time because this is a matter of national interest.

The Ag. Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, there has much interest in the setting up of small dams and this is being examined by consultants

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order! If you are losing time then I will not give additional time.

The Ag. Prime Minister: ...a master plan for water resources. Mr Speaker, Sir, as the House is also aware, we are also envisaging a complete reform of the water sector. Following the visit of the Prime Minister to Singapore in September 2010, and the high level talks that he had with the Singapore authorities, we have approached the Singapore Public Utilities Board to assist us and to improve the management of the water services. Government has approved that the Singapore Public Utilities Board be appointed to develop an integrated water management framework in Mauritius, with a view to improving the management of our water resources, reducing water losses, achieving better planning to meet future demands and ensuring water supply on a 24/7 basis.

This consists in rationalising the presently fragmented water management structure and optimising our water resources.

Given the low water storage at Mare aux Vacoas affecting the water supply in the Plaines Wilhems region, the Central Water Authority is initiating a restricted bidding process to appoint a specialised private firm to address the problem of Non Revenue Water in the Upper Plaines Wilhems region. Firms with extensive experience in water management and addressing water loss problems will be invited to bid. Thank you.

Mr Bérenger: Mr Speaker, Sir, the fact remains that over four short years, the amount of water losses moved from 44.7 in 2005 to 49.6 in 2009, that is, 5% over four years mainly because we have been under spending on replacement of old pipes. The hon. Ag. Prime Minister

said that a sum of Rs640 m. has been provided for pipes replacement in this 2010 Budget, which is behind us. Can I know how much has been spent?

The Ag. Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, the projects started in 2010, most of them have been spent, but there are still some projects which are ongoing. I will provide the figures.

Mr Bérenger: The Mont Ida Unité old pipes; the replacement works were to have been completed by May 2011, that is, this month. Are we on target before I move to other?

The Ag. Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I will provide the information, but for sure there are always problems with way leaves or obtaining a permission, especially when it implies roadside works. A delay of one or two months will not surprise me, but I will consider that as acceptable.

Mr Bérenger: Will there be delays also in replacing pipes, Camp Thorel - Salazie, Plaine des Papayes - Triolet, Port Louis - Pierrefonds and Port Louis Centre?

The Ag. Prime Minister: The short answer is that we do not expect any delays, especially for Plaine des Papayes, I think that we will go ahead quite quickly.

Mr Bérenger: Mr Speaker, Sir, the main reason that we are in this trouble is that we have not replaced old pipes as we should have. As far as rehabilitation and new dams are concerned, did I hear that the contract for Bagatelle has still not been awarded? Are we still discussing the Rs3.4 billion claimed by the contractor and the Rs3.1 billion estimate by the Government Ministry concerned?

The Ag. Prime Minister: I expect the award would take place this week or next week, but it is being awarded.

Mr Bérenger: But have we managed to bring the price down?

The Ag. Prime Minister: Yes.

Mr Bérenger: As far as Rivière des Anguilles is concerned, is the land survey completed? What will happen to the planters who are to be re-allocated and has funding been confirmed?

The Ag. Prime Minister: The funding will be from AFD, it will be confirmed and they have taken a strong commitment for the funding.

Mr Bérenger: For the land surveys?

The Ag. Prime Minister: The land surveys are ongoing. We have no problem with Rivière des Anguilles and exceptionally it is going on very well.

Mr Bérenger: The re-allocation of planters?

The Ag. Prime Minister: We will address the issue as it comes.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Only the hon. Leader of the Opposition is putting questions, you understand that. Keep Quiet!

The Ag. Prime Minister: I can assure the hon. Leader of the Opposition that we have a lot of experience in dealing with planters and we will deal with them fairly.

Mr Bérenger: As far as Rivière du Poste diversion is concerned, the consultants were appointed in August 2010 and it was supposed to be completed by March 2011. Are we on target? Of course not!

The Ag. Prime Minister: The consultancy service is on target.

Mr Bérenger: It was supposed to be completed.

The Ag. Prime Minister: Not the work itself, we have spent Rs100 m. so far on it and it is a project of Rs200 m.

Mr Bérenger: If I can move on to this Mare Longue/Mare aux Vacoas project, we wasted years since we have been informed that it is in 2007 that the project immerged. Can I know whether another such project, that is, using Midlands Dam more for drinking water purposes by having, for example, a treatment plant there? I know that these proposals have been made for a certain amount of time already. Are they being considered urgently?

The Ag. Prime Minister: May I ask having a treatment plant where?

Mr Speaker: Midlands Dam.

The Ag. Prime Minister: The Midlands Dam is doing very well. The northern water supply is probably the best in the country at the moment.

Mr Bérenger: That is not the point. The point is water from Midlands Dam is being treated, a small amount thereof for the North, a lot for irrigation. I understand proposals have been made for a much bigger treatment plant that would supply Plaines Wilhems and the Mare aux Vacoas system.

The Ag. Prime Minister: No, Midlands Dam does not supply Mare aux Vacoas system. The short answer is: the treatment plant capacity is being increased and is being funded.

Mr Speaker: Yes, it is being increased.

Mr Bérenger: We are running out of time, on the situation in general, we hear now that the Singapore experts are going to do this and that. Mr Speaker, Sir, the Water Resources Master Plan, the part relating to water was due by December 2010 and the part of that Water Resources Master Plan on water rights was due by March 2011. Where are we as far as this master plan is concerned?

The Ag. Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, this Master Plan will be incorporated and discussed with the Singapore authorities.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order!

The Ag. Prime Minister: I have personally met the Legal Consultant, and he has come up with the difficulties concerning the project. This water right issue has been going on for years and years, for decades. We will be addressing it, and I will come to the House very soon to state what we are deciding. But this is one issue that we are addressing at the moment.

Mr Bérenger: I understand that a Water Resources Bill was sent to the State Law Office a long while ago. Can we know where matters stand?

The Ag. Prime Minister: It's stuck with the water rights issues.

Mr Bérenger: Mr Speaker, Sir, can I remind the hon. Ag. Prime Minister that, on 16 November last year, he stated -

“I agree we have to relook at the CWA. We are taking our responsibility; we are going to do it, and we are going to do it in a radical way”.

Will he agree that nothing of the sort has taken place? There is still no General Manager at the CWA, and it's business as usual.

The Ag. Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I underlined the importance of the Singaporean team coming here. Cabinet has approved, and they are coming. We don't want to start something which we will have to change in a couple of months. So let's wait. We have at the moment an Acting Chairman who is doing very well in terms of addressing the water issues, and I think everyone recognizes it.

Mr Bérenger: I listened carefully to the remedial measures that are being taken, but I did not hear the Ag. Prime Minister mentioning schools. Is he aware that, already, water has to be supplied by water tankers in quite a number of schools, and things are getting more and more

difficult? Will special measures be taken? Otherwise, schools are going to close down before long.

The Ag. Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, hospitals and schools have always had priority, and they are supplied, according to needs, by water tankers, and I can assure the House that these two will have priority.

Ms Deerpalsing: Mr Speaker, Sir, in his answer, the Ag. Prime Minister talked about the Water Resources Unit monitoring the situation of water. Can the Ag. Prime Minister inform the House whether there is any coordination, and whether the Water Resources Unit is monitoring the works of the Wastewater Authority in Quatre Bornes? Because in Sodnac area, for example, people have trickles of water in their homes but, when they walk on the streets, water is gushing out; wastewater is damaging the pipes, and water is gushing out. Is there any coordination between the Water Resources Unit and the Wastewater Management works in Quatre Bornes?

The Ag. Prime Minister: The coordination is between the CWA and the Wastewater. We have a special unit do deal with this particular issue. This has given rise to a lot of problems in the past, and I hope that any complaints will be lodged accordingly.

Ms Deerpalsing: Just to follow up on this answer, Mr Speaker, Sir, can I appeal to the Ag. Prime Minister that there is a street by street coordination? Because there is a lot of water being wasted by the Wastewater Management works.

The Ag. Prime Minister: The point is taken, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Speaker: Put short questions, please. Hon. Lesjongard!

Mr Lesjongard: Mr Speaker, Sir, may I ask the Ag. Prime Minister to confirm whether, with regard to the present water situation at the Mare aux Vacoas Reservoir, one of the main reasons is that there has been partial obstruction or, in certain cases, disappearance of feeder drains to the reservoir, by extensive works being carried out by excavators or lorries on plots of lands which have been allocated to political agents or activists in that area for agricultural purposes?

The Ag. Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I wish the question was more basic than that. Added to the deficient rainfall, the real issue is what is happening to Mauritius in terms of water capture. IRS projects - not political agents; I am talking of big IRS projects - are influencing our groundwater system, and we have to be careful about how we plan it.

Mr Speaker, Sir, may I take this opportunity to clarify one point raised by the hon. Leader of the Opposition, which is about the water rights. At the moment, one of the difficulties is that we cannot obtain data in relation to water rights holders, and we have to introduce legislation. They are refusing to give data. So, we have to introduce legislation to make them give data.

Mr Bhagwan: Mr Speaker, Sir, from what we have witnessed during the past years, and also through replies given by the hon. Ag. Prime Minister here and outside, one thing is clear: *avec les petites misères du peuple, les travaux...*

Mr Speaker: I have asked to put short questions because of time constraint, please.

Mr Bhagwan: Will the Ag. Prime Minister agree that the people of Mauritius have lost confidence in the way the CWA and Government have been handling this problem of water management?

The Ag. Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am not aware of what the hon. Member has said. But I will say one thing. We do have to face the water situation over the next 20 years. The population is expanding; the demand is increasing; the economic activities are increasing, and we are faced with water shortage from deficient rainfall. We have to take a non political, a non partisan approach to this issue.

Mr Dayal: Mr Speaker, Sir, I have heard the Ag. Prime Minister mentioning the replacement of water pipes from Camp Fouquereaux to Alma. Can I know from the hon. Ag. Prime Minister where matters stand and what is the tentative date of completion?

The Ag. Prime Minister: I will provide this information, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Ganoo: From the remedial measures which have been enumerated by the hon. Ag. Prime Minister, I would have thought that Government would mention the advisability of legislating - and the Ag. Prime Minister just referred to that issue - or laying an obligation on the promoters of the hotels and the IRS to set up their own desalination plants. Anahita, Valriche, Tamarina...

Mr Speaker: There is no need to mention all this.

Mr Ganoo: Therefore, that would have saved the CWA so much of water! Can the hon. Ag. Prime Minister then think about legislating or compelling these promoters to desalinate their own water?

The Ag. Prime Minister: The Ministry of Tourism is working on having clusters of desalination units. But I would like to stress on one point. The problem of water is often

seasonal. We had a bad year in 1999, good years since, too much of water in 2008, and again a drought now. Part of the problem with the hotels is that, when there is water supply, they want to use a cheaper source. We have to legislate for them to use desalinated water and only desalinated water.

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, at this critical juncture, the CWA needs strong and competent effective leadership. Can the Ag. Prime Minister explain why the delayed preparation of a Master Plan on use of water resources should be an obstacle to an open advertisement within CWA, nationally, internationally if need be, to obtain the best person to be appointed in a substantive capacity at the head of the CWA?

The Ag. Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, this reply will come within a month or so when the Singaporean team will come.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order!

Mr Guimbeau: M. le président, je voudrais une petite confirmation. Nous avons entendu des membres du gouvernement à la radio proposant de pomper l'eau de Mare Longue pour envoyer à Mare aux Vacoas. J'aimerais savoir du Ag. *Prime Minister* d'où vient cette aberration, M. le président?

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order!

Mr Bérenger: Because we have wasted a lot of time, we are in the trouble we are in and we are told that there is worse to come, Mr Speaker, Sir. In spite of that, we are still firefighting; running left, right and centre. Can I ask the Ag. Prime Minister when will Mauritius have a holistic approach for this water problem and when will the CWA be reorganised in a radical way as he himself said last November?

The Ag. Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, the reply is in the visit of the Prime Minister to Singapore and the arrival of the team in the days to come and we will start on that.

Mr Speaker: Questions addressed to Dr. the hon. Prime Minister!

(Interruptions)

Order! Order now!

The Table has been advised that Parliamentary Questions Nos. B/367, B/368 and B/370 have been withdrawn and Parliamentary Question No. B/414 will be replied by Dr. the hon. Ag. Prime Minister! Hon. Mrs Ribot!