



SIXTH NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

PARLIAMENTARY

DEBATES

(HANSARD)

(UNREVISED)

FIRST SESSION

TUESDAY 26 MARCH 2019

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THE CABINET

(Formed by Hon. Pravind Kumar Jugnauth)

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

Hon. Soomilduth Bholah	Minister of Business, Enterprise and Cooperatives
Hon. Marie Roland Alain Wong Yen Cheong, MSK	Minister of Social Integration and Economic Empowerment
Hon. Premdut Koonjoo	Minister of Ocean Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping
Hon. Soodesh Satkam Callichurn	Minister of Labour, Industrial Relations, Employment and Training
Hon. Purmanund Jhugroo	Minister of Housing and Lands
Hon. Marie Cyril Eddy Boissézon	Minister of Civil Service and Administrative Reforms
Hon. Dharmendar Sesungkur	Minister of Financial Services and Good Governance

PRINCIPAL OFFICERS AND OFFICIALS

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

MAURITIUS

Sixth National Assembly

FIRST SESSION

Debate No. 01 of 2019

Sitting of 26 March 2019

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

The National Anthem was played

(Madam Speaker in the Chair)

OBITUARY – MR JAYA KRISHNA CUTTAREE

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, it is with deep regret that we have learnt of the demise, on Wednesday 19 December 2018, of Mr Jaya Krishna Cuttaree, former Member of Parliament, at the age of 77.

Mr Jayen Cuttaree, as he was commonly known, was born on 22 June 1941 at Rose Hill. He attended the primary section of the New Eton College of Rose Hill and the Saint Enfant Jésus Roman Catholic School before gaining admission to the Royal College of Curepipe. In January 1961, he secured employment as a science teacher at the Technical Institute, which a few years later became the John Kennedy College. In September 1962, he left Mauritius and was admitted to Edinburgh University in Scotland where he obtained a BSc in Ecology in 1965. In 1966, he was awarded a Master's Degree in Ecology at the Uppsala University in Sweden.

On 06 June 1966, he was employed as Assistant Conservator of Forest whilst pursuing his studies for a PhD in Ecology.

In May 1969, he obtained his doctorate in plant ecology.

In May 1970, Mr Cuttaree was awarded a Postgraduate Diploma in Development Studies by Cambridge University in England. In 1971, he left Mauritius to work as Natural Resources Officer at the Organisation of African Unity in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. In 1974, he returned to Mauritius and became the General Manager of the Sugar Planters Mechanical Pool Corporation.

In May 1975, he left Mauritius to work as Programme Specialist in the Division of Ecological Sciences at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris.

In order to fulfil his childhood dream of becoming a barrister, Mr Cuttaree studied law in Paris and sat his Barrister's examinations in London. In 1979, he qualified as Barrister-at-Law at Lincoln's Inn in London.

In 1980, he was sworn in as Barrister-at-Law and joined the Gujadhur Chambers.

Mr Cuttaree joined active politics in 1980, and became a member of the MMM. In 1982 General Elections, he was elected as First Member in Constituency No. 19, Stanley and Rose Hill under the banner of the MMM-PSM Alliance. He was then appointed as Minister of Labour and Industrial Relations. He was again elected as First Member in the same Constituency during the 1983 General Elections.

In 1985, Mr Cuttaree was elected in Ward One of Beau Bassin-Rose Hill during the Municipal Council Elections. He ran for the 1987 General Elections in Stanley-Rose Hill under the banner of *Union MMM/MTD/FTS* and was elected as First Member.

On 23 December 1987, he became Mayor of the town of Beau Bassin-Rose Hill. In 1988, he was elected in Ward One of Beau Bassin-Rose Hill during the Municipal Elections.

After the General Elections of 1991, when he was elected as First Member under the banner of MSM/MMM Alliance, he was appointed Attorney General and Minister of Justice. From 1992 to 1993, he held the portfolio of Housing, Lands and Town and Country Planning. In 1993, he became the Deputy Leader of the MMM.

In the General Elections of 1995, Mr Cuttaree was elected as Third Member in Stanley-Rose Hill under the banner of the Labour Party/MMM Alliance.

From January to November 1996, he held the portfolio of Industry, Industrial Technology, Scientific Research and Handicraft. In December, he became the Minister of Industry and Commerce, a portfolio which he held until June 1997.

In the 2000 General Elections, he was returned as Second Member in Stanley-Rose Hill under the banner of the MSM/MMM Alliance.

Between September 2000 and December 2003, he served as Minister of Industry and International Trade. From December 2003 to July 2005, he held the post of Minister of Foreign Affairs, International Trade and Regional Cooperation. In 2004, Mr Cuttaree was in the running for the position of the Director-General of the World Trade Organisation but he was not successful.

Mr Cuttaree stood as a candidate for the General Elections for the last time in 2005 under the banner of the MSM/MMM Alliance in Stanley-Rose Hill and was elected Second Member.

Mr Cuttaree had a long and enriching educational, professional and political life.

Madam Speaker, may I request you to kindly direct the Clerk to convey the deep condolences of the Assembly to his wife and his two children.

The Leader of the Opposition (Mr X. L. Duval): Madam Speaker, I associate myself to the tribute made by the hon. Prime Minister to the late Dr. Jayen Cuttaree. In addition to his long record of public service, I will remember him as an excellent orator, and I

had the occasion to hear many, many of his speeches in his House. I will also request the Clerk to convey our condolences to the bereaved family.

Mr P. Bérenger (Third Member for Stanley & Rose Hill): With your permission, Madam Speaker, I will say a few words. Of course, I join with what the hon. Prime Minister and the hon. Leader of the Opposition have said and would request you to convey my own and our feelings to the bereaved family.

The MMM has lost a part of itself with the death of Jayen Cuttaree, and I have lost a lifelong personal friend. I am sure that all of us in this House who have known Jayen already miss him immensely.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Members, I associate myself to the tribute paid to late Mr Jaya Krishna Cuttaree, former Member of Parliament, by the hon. Prime Minister, the hon. Leader of the Opposition and hon. Bérenger, and I direct the Clerk to convey to the bereaved family the deep condolences of the Assembly.

OBITUARY - MR SANJIT KUMAR TEELock

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, it is again with deep regret that we have learnt of the demise of Mr Sanjit Kumar Teelock on Saturday 16 March 2019 at the age of 58.

Mr Teelock was born on 11 February 1961. As his father was the High Commissioner of Mauritius in London, he was brought up in England. From 1965 to 1977, he studied at the Lycée Français Charles de Gaulle in London. He later joined the Imperial College of London, where he obtained a degree in Mathematics. He returned to Mauritius in 1982. He joined politics and in 1984, he became the Deputy Secretary General of the Labour Party. In 1987, he left the Labour Party and became one of the founder members of the Mouvement Travailleuse Démocrate. In 1988, he was elected Municipal Councillor for the town of Curepipe and in 1989 he became the Mayor of Curepipe.

Mr Teelock worked as a teacher of Mathematics until 1991 when he was elected in Constituency No. 17, Curepipe-Midlands, under the banner of the MSM/MMM Alliance during the General Elections. He later became Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly. Following his retirement from active politics in 2008, Mr Teelock acted as President of the English Speaking Union. In 2010, he became Adviser to the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands.

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

The Leader of the Opposition (Mr X. L. Duval): Madam Speaker, I associate myself to the tribute made by the hon. Prime Minister to the late Mr Sanjit Teelock, former Member of the National Assembly. I knew him well, especially at the time when he was an Adviser at the Ministry of Local Government and I chaired the Committee on Local Government Reform. We were all impressed by his intelligence, dedication, hard work and detailed knowledge of the Local Government legislation.

I will also request the Clerk to convey our condolences to the bereaved family.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Members, I associate myself to the tribute paid to late Mr Sanjit Kumar Teelock, former Deputy Speaker, by the hon. Prime Minister and the hon. Leader of the Opposition, and I direct the Clerk to convey to the bereaved family the deep condolences of the Assembly.

ANNOUNCEMENT

HON. S. MOHAMED - 'RADIO PLUS' - COMMENTS ON MADAM SPEAKER'S CHARACTER & PERSONALITY

Hon. Members, in the course of the Programme: *Le Journal de 0700* broadcast on Radio Plus on 05 March 2019, the hon. First Member for Port Louis Maritime and Port Louis East (Mr Mohamed) made certain comments against my character and personality in the discharge of my functions as Speaker following my decision to disallow the notice of motion given by the said Member by letter dated 12 December 2018 and which reads as follows -

“That the comments of the Electoral Supervisory Commission and that of the Electoral Commissioner, in line with Section 41(3) of the Constitution in relation to the Constitution (Amendment) Bill (No. XXII of 2018), be laid before Parliament.”

I am tabling a certified copy of the transcript of the relevant extract from the morning news bulletin of Radio Plus on 05 March 2019.

I wish first of all to state that the said motion has been disallowed on the basis of strict procedural rules.

A perusal of the transcript of the relevant extract reveals that the hon. Member accused me of being partial and unfair towards the Opposition, in particular, that I have denied the Opposition the opportunity to debate the above-mentioned motion and, inferred

that, in doing so, I manoeuvred to conceal the comments submitted by the Electoral Supervisory Commission and the Electoral Commissioner to Government. The hon. Member also made outrageous inferences against my competency, my character and my personality in the discharge of my functions as Speaker and was elected Speaker, in his views, only by reason of my family appurtenance.

Hon. Members will appreciate that this Assembly stands governed by a set of rules that regulate its internal proceedings to preserve its integrity and allow the conduct of its business with the required dignity and decorum.

Albeit recognizing that Members of this Assembly are allowed to exercise their rights, including that of criticism, as well as their privileges to the fullest, the standard is that same must be exercised within the four corners of the basic norms which govern this very Assembly.

Moreover, hon. Members will equally appreciate that the Chair cannot climb on a political platform to vindicate its integrity.

Inasmuch as our rules prevent whoever to reflect on the character and conduct of the Chair on account of its duties in the House, I consider that, in the present case, the accusations and inferences of the hon. Member against the Chair are unwarranted, unjust, disturbing and contemptuous.

Such behaviour, if not dealt with severely, will bring the house in ridicule and disrepute.

Therefore, I wish to kindly ask the hon. First Member for Port Louis Maritime and Port Louis East (Mr Mohamed) whether he is prepared to tender his unreserved apologies regarding the accusations and inferences made against my character and personality in the course of the programme and, if so, inform him that he may do so now, failing which, I shall consider his refusal as an offence of disregarding the authority of the Chair, and then I will have no other option than to initiate the procedure provided for pursuant to Standing Order 49 (1) of the Standing Orders and Rules of the National Assembly.

Mr Mohamed: Madam Speaker, I have listened to your comments, and I must also take note of the very conciliatory tone that you have adopted. And in so doing, I, therefore, apologise.

Madam Speaker: The matter is, therefore, closed.

PAPERS LAID

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

A. Prime Minister's Office

- (a) Certificate of Urgency in respect of the Mental Health Care (Amendment) Bill (No. I of 2019). (In Original)
- (b) The Digest of Education Statistics 2017.
- (c) The Digest of Crime, Justice and Security Statistics 2017.
- (d) The Digest of Demographic Statistics 2017.
- (e) The Finance and Audit (Permanent Resident Investment Fund) (Revocation) Regulations 2018. (Government Notice No. 166 of 2018)
- (f) The Finance and Audit (Amendment of Schedule) Regulations 2018. (Government Notice No. 167 of 2018)
- (g) The Land (Duties and Taxes) (Amendment of Schedule) (No. 4) Regulations 2018. (Government Notice No. 168 of 2018)
- (h) The Freeport (Amendment No. 2) Regulations 2018. (Government Notice No. 173 of 2018)
- (i) The Investment Promotion (Smart City Scheme) (Amendment) Regulations 2018. (Government Notice No. 174 of 2018)
- (j) The Finance and Audit (Prime Minister's Cyclone Relief Fund) (Amendment) Regulations 2018. (Government Notice No. 175 of 2018)
- (k) The Finance and Audit (Prime Minister's Relief Fund) (Revocation) Regulations 2018. (Government Notice No. 176 of 2018)
- (l) The Finance and Audit (Amendment of Schedule) (No. 2) Regulations 2018. (Government Notice No. 177 of 2018)
- (m) The Financial Statements of the Build Mauritius Fund for the period 01 July 2016 to 30 November 2017.

- (n) The Annual Report 2017/2018 of the Central Procurement Board.
(In Original)
- (o) The Digest of Public Finance Statistics 2016/2017.
- (p) Virement Warrant Return–Quarter 2(October – December 2018)
Nos. 2-4 (In Original)
- (q) Virement (Contingencies) Warrant-Quarter 2 (October - December
2018) Nos. 3 and 4 (In Original)
- (r) Virement Certificates Return Quarter 2 (October - December 2018)
Vote/Sub-Head (Certificates Nos.): 1-9 (2),1-10 (1), 2-4 (1-2), 2-6 (1),
3-1 (2-6), 7-1 (1), 8-2 (1), 11-1 (1-4), 13-2, (1-2), 18-1 (3-6), 18-1 (2-
4), 21-1 (1) and 27-1 (2) (In Original)
- (s) The Digest of International Travel & Tourism Statistics 2017.
- (t) The Pensions (Amendment) Regulations 2019. (Government Notice
No.21 of 2019)
- (u) The Civil Aviation (Security) Regulations 2019. (Government Notice
No. 25 of 2019)
- (v) The Statutory Bodies Pension Funds (Amendment) Regulations
2019.(Government Notice No. 26 of 2019)
- (w) The Statutory Bodies Pension Funds (Amendment No. 2) Regulations
2019. (Government Notice No. 27 of 2019)
- (x) The Banking (Processing and License Fees) (Amendment) Regulations
2019. (Government Notice No. 36 of 2019)
- (y) The Gambling Regulatory Authority (Personal Management Licence)
(Amendment) Regulations 2019. (Government Notice No. 45 of 2019)
- (z) The Annual Digest of Statistics 2017.
- (aa) The Digest of Agricultural Statistics 2017.
- (bb) The Digest of Road Transport and Road Accident Statistics 2017.
- (cc) The Annual Report of the Development Bank of Mauritius for
Financial year ended 30 June 2018.

- (dd) The Report of the Director of Audit on the accounts of the Republic of Mauritius for the Financial year 1 July 2017 to 30 June 2018.
- (ee) The Report of the Director of Audit on the accounts of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly for the Financial year 01 July 2017 to 30 June 2018.
- (ff) National Audit Office-Activity and Performance Report for Financial year 01 July 2017 to 30 June 2018.
- (gg) Annual Statements of the Government of the Republic of Mauritius for the year ended 30 June 2018.
- (hh) Annual Statements of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly for the year ended 30 June 2018.
- (ii) Performance Audit Reports on:
 - (a) Government Response to Mitigate the Impact on Flooding;
 - (b) Preparedness for Implementation of Sustainable Development Goals;
 - (c) Effectiveness of Internal Audit Function and Audit Committees in Ministries and Government Departments; and
 - (d) Moving Towards Sustainable Artisanal Fishery in Mauritius.

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

The Annual Report 2017 of the Probation and Aftercare Service.

C. Ministry of Local Government and Outer Islands

Ministry of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare

- (a) The District Council of Savanne (cemetery/Crematorium) (Amendment of schedule) Regulation 2018. (Government Notice No. 171 of 2018)
- (b) The District Council of Savanne (Environmental Health) Regulations 2018. (Government Notice No. 172 of 2018)

- (c) The Municipal City Council of Port Louis (Collection and Disposal of Waste) Regulations 2019. (Government Notice No. 24 of 2019)
- (d) The District Council of Grand Port (Fees for Classified Trades) Regulations 2018. (Government Notice No. 30 of 2019)
- (e) The District Council of Grand Port (Market) (Amendment) Regulations 2019. (Government Notice No. 31 of 2019)
- (f) The District Council of Grand Port (Fair) (Amendment) Regulations 2019. (Government Notice No. 32 of 2019)
- (g) The City Council of Port Louis (Engineer Market/Fair) Regulations 2019. (Government Notice No. 46 of 2019)

D. Ministry of Public Infrastructure and Land Transport,

Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade

- (a) The Port Louis (Decaen Street) (End of Public Use) Regulations 2019. (Government Notice No. 28 of 2019)
- (b) The Double Taxation Avoidance Convention (L'Union des Comores) Regulations 2019. (Government Notice No. 29 of 2019)

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

- (a) The Education (Amendment) Regulations 2018. (Government Notice No. 179 of 2018)
- (b) The Annual Report of the University of Mauritius for the 18 months' period ended 30 June 2017.

F. Ministry of Health and Quality of Life

- (a) The Dental Council (Medical Institutions) (Amendment) Regulations 2019. (Government Notice No. 20 of 2019)
- (b) The Nursing Council (Registration of Nurses and Midwives) (Amendment) Regulations 2019. (Government Notice No. 33 of 2019)

G. Ministry of Arts and Culture

- (a) The Annual Report and Financial Statements of the English Speaking Union for the period 01 July 2017 to 30 June 2018.
- (b) The Annual Report and Audited Financial Statements of the Hindi Speaking Union for the periods 01 January to 31 December 2014 and 01 January to 31 December 2015.
- (c) The Annual Reports of the Mauritius Film Development Corporation for the years 2013 and 2014.
- (d) The Annual Report of the Mauritius Council of Registered Librarians (MCRL) for the 18-month period ended 30 June 2017.
- (e) The Annual Report of Le Morne Heritage Trust Fund for the 18 months' period 01 January 2016 to 30 June 2017.
- (f) The Annual Reports of the Islamic Cultural Centre Trust for the years 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014 and 2015.
- (g) The Annual Report of the Conservatoire National de Musique François Mitterrand for the period 01 January 2016 to 30 June 2017.

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

The Environment Protection (Amendment of Schedule) Regulations 2019. (Government Notice No. 9 of 2019)

I. Ministry of Agro-Industry and Food Security

- (a) The Annual Report of the Agricultural Marketing Board for the 18-month period 1st January 2016 to 30 June 2017.
- (b) The Mauritius Cane Industry Authority (Sale Price of Molasses) Regulations 2019. (Government Notice No. 39 of 2019)
- (c) The Sugar Insurance Fund (Reduced General Insurance Premium) Regulations 2019. (Government Notice No. 41 of 2019)

J. Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Consumer Protection

- (a) The Consumer Protection (Price and Supplies Control) (Amendment of Schedule) (No. 4) Regulations 2018. (Government Notice No. 169 of 2018)
- (b) The Rodrigues Consumer Protection (Chilled, Fresh and Guttled Fish) (Maximum Price) Regulations 2018. (Government Notice No. 170 of 2018)
- (c) The Rodrigues Consumer Protection (Control of Price of Taxable and Non- taxable Goods) (Amendment No. 33) Regulations 2018. (Government Notice No. 178 of 2018)
- (d) The Consumer Protection (Price and Supplies Control) (Amendment of Schedule) (No. 5) Regulations 2018. (Government Notice No. 181 of 2018)
- (e) The Annual Reports of the Fashion and Design Institute for the periods 01 January to 31 December 2014 and 01 January to 31 December 2015.
- (f) The Consumer Protection (Price and Supplies Control) (Amendment of Schedule) Regulations 2019. (Government Notice No. 1 of 2019)
- (g) The Consumer Protection (Control of Price of Taxable and Non-taxable Goods) (Amendment) Regulations 2019. (Government Notice No. 2 of 2019)
- (h) The Rodrigues Consumer Protection (Control of Price of Taxable and Non-taxable Goods) (Amendment) Regulations 2019. (Government Notice No. 3 of 2019)
- (i) The Rodrigues Consumer Protection (Control of Price of Taxable and Non-taxable Goods) (Amendment No. 2) Regulations 2019. (Government Notice No. 4 of 2019)
- (j) The Rodrigues Consumer Protection (Control of Price of Taxable and Non-taxable Goods) (Amendment No. 34) Regulations 2018. (Government Notice No. 5 of 2019)
- (k) The Consumer Protection (Control of Manufacture and Sale of Bread) Regulations 2019. (Government Notice No. 6 of 2019)

- (l) The Rodrigues Consumer Protection (Control of Price of Taxable and Non-taxable Goods) (Amendment No. 3) Regulations 2019. (Government Notice No. 10 of 2019)
- (m) The Rodrigues Consumer Protection (Control of Price of Taxable and Non-taxable Goods) (Amendment No. 4) Regulations 2019. (Government Notice No. 22 of 2019)
- (n) The Rodrigues Consumer Protection (Control of Price of Taxable and Non-taxable Goods) (Amendment No. 5) Regulations 2019. (Government Notice No. 23 of 2019)
- (o) The Rodrigues Consumer Protection (Control of Price of Taxable and Non-taxable Goods) (Amendment No. 6) Regulations 2019. (Government Notice No. 40 of 2019)

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

- (a) The Revision of Laws (Revised Subsidiary Legislation of Mauritius) (Volumes 1 to 6) (Supplement – Issue 3) Regulations 2019. (Government Notice No. 7 of 2019)
- (b) The *Institutions Agréées* (Amendment) Regulations 2019. (Government Notice No. 42 of 2019)

L. Ministry of Business, Enterprise and Cooperatives

The Co-operatives (Financial Assistance to a Secondary Society and Tertiary Society) Regulations 2019. (Government Notice No. 8 of 2019)

M. Ministry of Social Integration and Economic Empowerment

- (a) The Social Integration and Empowerment (Child Allowance Scheme) Regulations 2019. (Government Notice No. 12 of 2019)
- (b) The Social Integration and Empowerment (School Materials Scheme) Regulations 2019. (Government Notice No. 13 of 2019)
- (d) The Social Integration and Empowerment (Free Examination Fees Scheme) Regulations 2019. (Government Notice No. 14 of 2019)

- (e) The Social Integration and Empowerment (School Premium Scheme) Regulations 2019. (Government Notice No. 15 of 2019)
- (f) The Social Integration and Empowerment (Crèche Scheme) Regulations 2019. (Government Notice No. 16 of 2019)

N. Ministry of Labour, Industrial Relations, Employment and Training

- (a) The Additional Remuneration and Other Allowances (2019) (Payment of Allowance) Regulations 2019. (Government Notice No. 17 of 2019)
- (b) The National Minimum Wage (Amendment) Regulations 2019. (Government Notice No. 18 of 2019)
- (c) The Export Enterprises (Remuneration Order) (Amendment) Regulations 2019. (Government Notice No. 19 of 2019)
- (d) The Employment Rights (Working from Home) Regulations 2019. (Government Notice No. 37 of 2019)

O. Ministry of Housing and Lands

- (a) The Annual Report of the Town and Country Planning Board for the financial year ended 30 June 2018.
- (b) The State Lands (Amendment of Schedule) Regulations 2019. (Government Notice No. 38 of 2019)

P. Ministry of Financial Services and Good Governance

- (a) The Financial Services (Consolidated Licensing and Fees) (Amendment No. 3) Rules 2018. (Government Notice No.180 of 2018)
- (b) The Annual Report of the Competition Commission of Mauritius for the period 2016/2017.
- (c) The Financial Services (Global Business Corporations) Rules 2019. (Government Notice No. 11 of 2019)
- (d) The Financial Services (Amendment of Schedule) Regulations 2018. (Government Notice No. 34 of 2019)

- (e) The Financial Reporting (Reporting on Compliance with the Code of Corporate Governance) Guidelines 2019. (Government Notice No. 35 of 2019)
- (f) The Financial Services (Consolidated Licensing and Fees) (Amendment) Rules 2019. (Government Notice No. 43 of 2019)
- (g) The Financial Services (Custodian Services (digital asset)) Rules 2019. (Government Notice No.44 of 2019)

The Leader of the Opposition (Mr X. L. Duval): Madam Speaker, before I start, let me say that our thoughts today in Parliament will be with our brothers and sisters who are bearing the intense Cyclone Joaninha in Rodrigues.

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

CUREPIPE & FOREST SIDE – WATER SUPPLY

The Leader of the Opposition (Mr X. L. Duval) (*by Private Notice*) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to the ongoing water crisis in Curepipe and Forest Side, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Central Water Authority, information as to if complaints were received in relation to water supply in the said regions since December 2018 and, if so, indicate the actions taken as a result thereof, if any, indicating the –

- (a) reasons for the deterioration of water supply thereat, and
- (b) urgent remedial measures being envisaged, if any, to address same.

The Deputy Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, the water supply network in the region of Curepipe and Forest Side is one of the oldest in Mauritius. The areas of Curepipe and Forest Side, including Attlee, Bonnefin, Joachim, Commerson, La Croix and other areas are served by a reservoir at La Brasserie. Water to La Brasserie Reservoir is pumped from La Marie Treatment Plant through two steel pipes of diameter 450 mm. each. These pipes are very old. They date back to more than 100 years. One of these pipes is in a derelict condition with heavy leakages. This has resulted in a significant deficiency in terms of volume of water pumped into La Brasserie Reservoir and this has severely impacted on the water distribution in these areas.

In July 2018, the Central Water Authority started procedures for the replacement of these steel pipes. Preparatory works started at that time for such replacement.

On 25 January 2019, an open advertised bidding exercise was initiated. This exercise was for the replacement of the two old pipes by a 600 mm diameter ductile iron pipe. The new pipeline will have a maximum carrying capacity of 30,000 m³ to cater for existing and future demand in the concerned regions. Bids were closed on 27 February 2019 and are now being evaluated at the Central Procurement Board. Works are expected to start by May 2019 for a duration of about 12 months.

In the meantime, the situation was worsening and hours of supply were being gradually reduced. This was around December 2018 when the Central Water Authority did note a significant increase in the number of complaints relating to water supply in that area. On 04 February 2019, a meeting was held in the offices of the Central Water Authority between officials of the CWA and representatives of the inhabitants. The CWA informed these representatives that CWA was to install a temporary pipe, pending the replacement of the old existing pipes.

As from 31 January 2019, the CWA resorted to valve operations such that between 5.00 a.m. to 8 a.m., water was supplied to the regions of La Croix, Curepipe Town Centre, Commerson, Rochecouste, Celicourt Antelme and Maurice Martin.

And from 16.00 hours to 20.00 hours, water was supplied to the remaining areas. In addition, regular water distribution was ensured by means of water tankers.

Madam Speaker, the CWA has now laid a temporary pipeline of about 2.3 km of 250 mm HDPE pipe from La Marie to La Brasserie. This is expected to eliminate the water leakages and improve the supply to the above regions.

On Friday 22 March 2019, the Central Water Authority proceeded with the connection works at La Marie. During the works, the CWA had to switch off the pumps feeding the La Brasserie Reservoir. This resulted in interruption of water supply as from Friday afternoon.

On Saturday 23 March, the works were completed and the pumps were re-started. However, it was noted that there were still certain losses in the newly laid pipes. The pumps had to be switched off again to allow the CWA to undertake repairs.

Communiqués were issued to the public and 11 water tankers were deployed in the region. The works were completed in the evening of Sunday 24 March 2019.

It is, therefore, not correct to say that there is an ongoing water crisis in that area. As at this morning, only two complaints were registered and these were from non-domestic consumers.

Mr X. L. Duval: Madam Speaker, it is clear that the promise of 24/7 water is yet another broken electoral promise by the *Lepep* Government. Can I ask the hon. Deputy Prime Minister, firstly, why is it that it took 4 years for a tender to be floated for the replacement of the pipe La Marie to La Brasserie of 4 Kms? Why did he have to take 4 years?

The Deputy Prime Minister: This is going to be almost an own goal. In 2012, when you were in Government, Rs800 m. were spent precisely on that area. 1% efficiency resulted from that huge amount of money. You cannot do everything at one go. Water replacement programmes is a national effort and it has been continuing and ongoing in the whole of Mauritius.

With regard to Curepipe, there was a programme which has been respected and the programme was that the tender was to start in 2019. But, in the meantime, the pipes deteriorated.

Mr X. L. Duval: Madam Speaker, let me ask the hon. Deputy Prime Minister, a few days ago, he made a statement - as if he was proud - that 155 kms of pipes had been replaced for the four years he is being here. Is that a typing error? Because that is far less than even what the previous Government did. Is that a typing error that he only did 155 in four years?

The Deputy Prime Minister: Well, that does not arise from the question which is restricted to Curepipe. I have prepared to answer questions on Curepipe and...

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Please, no interruptions! No interruptions! I would just remind the Leader of the Opposition that his question is on Curepipe and Forest Side. So, I would ask both Leader of Opposition and the Deputy Prime Minister to remain within the precincts and the parameters of this question.

Mr X. L. Duval: Madam Speaker, the hon. Deputy Prime Minister opened the debate and he is ashamed of his record. This is the truth. Madam Speaker, let me ask the hon. Deputy Prime Minister, now, December, there are issues - serious issues - regarding water supply in Forest Side; January - serious issues - water tankers going everywhere and delivering, Madam Speaker, dirty water to the population of Forest Side without any warning, I must say, to the credit of CWA, that these are private water taxis delivering these undrinkable water. What did the hon. Deputy Prime Minister...

Madam Speaker: Hon. Leader of the Opposition, I will just remind you once more, after a long vacation, I am just reminding you, that you are taking the time of the House to make statements instead of asking questions. You are losing your own chances of asking more questions.

Mr X. L. Duval: It makes me upset, Madam Speaker, with all this rubbish. Madam Speaker, what did the hon. Deputy Prime Minister do? Was he aware that such undrinkable water was being delivered to the people of Curepipe and Forest Side?

The Deputy Prime Minister: I have heard this uncouth propaganda coming from PMSD circles - only PMSD circles, I must say - that the water comes from the river. Now, all the water comes from La Marie reservoir where they are hooked and they receive clean water. This water has been checked by the Ministry of Health and has been found to be clean. It is not true and it is irresponsible for persons in serious positions to spread fake rumours. You may maintain what you want, it is not true; it is fake just like you know who.

Mr X. L. Duval: Madam Speaker, had the hon. Deputy Prime Minister who was Ag. Prime Minister had the courage to go and meet the people of Curepipe, he would have been told exactly what I have been told today, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Ms Sewocksingh, please don't get excited about it.

Mr X. L. Duval: Madam Speaker, isn't there an issue that the CWA, in the present state that it is in, is unable to exercise any supervision or control on the private water taxies delivering water to the population all over the island?

The Deputy Prime Minister: That is not true, this is again propaganda, fake propaganda spread by the PMSD and the last test was on 25 March, when the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life confirmed that the water met the WHO standards. Therefore, whatever abuse maybe made of the situation, and I regret now that the Leader of the Opposition never heard that before, any Leader of the Opposition, this is bound to create serious discontent through the spreading of false rumours. The private water tankers are certified by the CWA. A record is kept as to each time that they take water and where they go and deliver.

Mr X. L. Duval: Madam Speaker, he is in no position to say anything because he ran away from the situation and never attended Curepipe at all despite the incompetence of the CWA in providing the service. Madam Speaker, I would like to ask the hon. Deputy Prime Minister, from December onwards till that meeting in the CWA office, till, in fact, the people went on a street protest on Wednesday 30 January, what did the CWA do or did it require a street protest, and another one, much worst two months later, for the CWA to act.

The Deputy Prime Minister: The meeting of the 04 February was indeed a very fruitful meeting with those inhabitants, very responsible people, as I read the notes of

meeting, who explained their problem. We have every sympathy with people who run short of water. We understand that situation. When we are short of water, it is not a pleasant experience. So, efforts were made to make sure that in a bad situation we can make the best of it. And this is where, after discussions, the inhabitants came with suggestions which were taken on-board, and this led to an improvement, and I pay tribute to them. Not only to these inhabitants, but also to some other people who helped. I have in mind persons like Jocelyn Rama, etc. who, although they were demonstrating, did try to make the situation better, and help to improve the situation, compared to others whose only agenda was to try and stir trouble. That is the difference between responsible and irresponsible Government.

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Order, please!

(Interruptions)

Mr X. L. Duval: His cheap remarks from such an incompetent Minister makes no difference, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: Please!

Mr X. L. Duval: Such an incompetent Minister! Record incompetent Minister!

Madam Speaker: No, hon. Leader of the Opposition, please!

Mr X. L. Duval: Madam Speaker, he attacked me also.

Madam Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition cannot treat the Minister as being incompetent. This is not to be said.

(Interruptions)

No, because then what will happen, hon. Leader of the Opposition, is that the exchange of views and comments will become acrimonious. It is not good for democracy! Please!

Mr X. L. Duval: I would like to ask the hon. Deputy Prime Minister, Madam Speaker, whether he took street protest in end of January for the CWA to take the plight of the population seriously and then decide to install that famous bypass which even yesterday was leaking. Did he take the street protest in January for the CWA to install the bypass or if not when was the bypass installed?

The Deputy Prime Minister: If the highly competent Leader of the Opposition, the best Leader of the Opposition we have ever had...

(Interruptions)

... had listened to the answer, he would have heard that since July 2018, the matter had been attracting the attention of the CWA. Now, this PNQ is related to a very specific question and I shall restrict myself to this specific question and not try and make a competition of competence with the hon. Leader of the Opposition. We'll do that another time.

Mr X. L. Duval: Madam Speaker, the competent Deputy Prime Minister did not answer a simple basic question: when did work start to install the bypass? *Tuyeau remplacement!* As from when was it installed?

The Deputy Prime Minister: I have already said it.

Mr X. L. Duval: I am sorry, Madam Speaker, when was the bypass installed?

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Order!

(Interruptions)

Order, please!

Mr X. L. Duval: Did it take street protest for the CWA to take into account the desperate plight of the population? Did it take street protest in January for them to install the bypass and then put the social fabric of this whole country at risk by the incompetence of the Minister and the CWA a month later with riots in Curepipe? When was the bypass installed?

The Deputy Prime Minister: Not at all, not at all! It is true, as I have said, well before January 2019 works had started, the pipes had to be procured and the procurement process continued in order to do that work. You are an incompetent Leader of the Opposition!

Mr X. L. Duval: Madam Speaker, terribly incompetent! He cannot even tell us when the bypass was installed at La Marie so that people would start getting water and that is, Madam Speaker, an invitation to the population to riot because of the incompetence and insensitivity of the CWA, Madam Speaker. And I would ask - this is the question - whether the Deputy Prime Minister will not review completely the crisis management and complaints procedure of CWA before, Madam Speaker, *ce pays est mis à feu et à sang*.

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Hon. Leader of the Opposition...

(Interruptions)

Please, both the hon. Leader of the Opposition and the hon. Deputy Prime Minister, regarding competence, I don't want this to be discussed in this House. If you have to discuss about the competence of anybody in this House, it is good that you discuss it in the corridor, please!

The Deputy Prime Minister: I am very sad and surprised that a person who is after all the Leader of the Opposition, which means the Leader of all the Opposition, should make references to *à feu et à sang* and riot, when we know precisely that there were two groups; one group which was engaged in peaceful protest which is quite legitimate when people do not have water, and another group fomented by the PMSD ...

(Interruptions)

... trying to riot, putting ...

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Order, please! Can I ask the second row to be less noisy please? Hon. Thierry Henry! Hon. Thierry Henry, I am addressing myself to you! Please!

The Deputy Prime Minister: Luckily, the inhabitants of the area, only less than 10%, I must say, followed the PMSD and their acolytes. I have to pay tribute at the same time, not only to these Members but other ex-candidates, for instance, of the Labour Party, and members of the MMM, ex-members, etc., who acted responsibly and tried to quell the fire, and succeeded because on the other side, they had only less than 10%.

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Hon. Mrs Perraud!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Mrs Perraud, you are looking at me and then you are still continuing in your remarks! Please!

Mr X. L. Duval: But, Madam Speaker, at him also to make some remarks!

Madam Speaker: No. On both sides of the House, we want some order, but I don't want anybody from a sitting position to make remarks!

Mr X. L. Duval: It was thanks to us that the situation did not deteriorate whilst the Deputy Prime Minister ran away even as Acting Prime Minister.

Madam Speaker, is the Deputy Prime Minister aware that even people in the CWA are criticising the unprofessional way in which that bypass has been installed? The pipe being too small, the engineering being bad and even the equipment, Madam Speaker, being inadequate, is the reason why this pipe is bursting every day or so.

Madam Speaker: What is the question?

The Deputy Prime Minister: Again, that is fake. Yes, when you place a pipe, there is always - even when you do it in your house - a problem. But as from yesterday, this water is running through the pipe, it is being monitored, the engineers are certifying that the work is being done and the evidence is that there is no complaint as at this morning.

Mr X. L. Duval: Is it not a fact that the work was badly done because under his stewardship, there has been a great brain drain at the CWA? Even yesterday, in the papers, it is stated that 15 qualified Engineers had left the CWA over the last years and had retired or sought employment elsewhere. Is it not the fact that the bad workmanship reflects the brain drain and the incompetence of the people now remaining at CWA?

The Deputy Prime Minister: I mean that is just again talk which I am not going to reply. It does not arise of the question. The brain drain is everywhere in Mauritius, in all sectors, all over the world. That is another debate. It is a serious debate admittedly, but not now.

Mr X. L. Duval: It is perfectly relevant because my point is that the pipe is inappropriate and has been badly installed because the CWA does not have the competence anymore because of the brain drain to do such work properly. This is my question.

The Deputy Prime Minister: Everybody in this world is incompetent except for the Leader of the Opposition.

(Interruptions)

Mr X. L. Duval: For a Minister *qui se gargarise avec* 155 kms over five years of replacement pipes, then, Madam Speaker, I let the population itself be the judge of that.

Madam Speaker, there has, obviously, here been gross negligence in the way that the CWA has communicated. Always promising, promising, promising and never delivering. In the way - if you were to study it, he may not be aware of it - that the bypass pipe has been

installed, in the delay that has been taken for this very old pipe to be changed, is not it time, Madam Speaker, for the Deputy Prime Minister and for the Government - he is not competent enough - maybe the Prime Minister will look at it, maybe the Prime Minister could chair a Task Force on water in Mauritius, which was the main promise of this *Lepep* Government, so that, Madam Speaker, we avoid such hardship to the population in future?

The Deputy Prime Minister: I don't want to go into generalities. It is clear that we are just running round and round because there are no more questions to ask, so we just go round.

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Hon. Leader of the Opposition, there are other Members also who have asked. Hon. Rutnah!

Mr Rutnah: Can the hon. Deputy Prime Minister state to the House and to the population, the La Brasserie pipe, how old were they and whether ...

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: The hon. Member has got the right to ask a question.

Mr Rutnah: ... post-independence, any successive PMSD Government who has formed part of, has made any effort to change those pipes?

The Deputy Prime Minister: First of all, according to my information, these two pipes are more than 100 years old. There has been one effort under the PMSD Government in 2012. They spent Rs800 m. and the result is there. That is competence!

(Interruptions)

These are competent people!

Madam Speaker: Hon. Shakeel Mohamed, you want to ask a question?

Mr Mohamed: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I have been really enjoying the gesticulating...

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: No comment!

Mr Mohamed: ... Deputy Prime Minister.

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: No comments, please!

Mr Mohamed: It was not very sexy, I must say. But then again, there was one issue which I wanted to ask, Madam Speaker, and it is the following. Now, I have written down the answer given by the Deputy Prime Minister to the question of the Leader of the Opposition and it is that the CWA has now laid down temporary pipe line from La Marie to La Brasserie and that is what he said. Now, he did not give a date, he did not say when. And to that also, the question was asked, he did not answer that question. He was trying to drown the fish in 2012.

Madam Speaker: Please put your question!

Mr Mohamed: But my question is: why is it, after he had promised 24/7 water in the elections and when he became Minister in 2015, the work started, all good. 2015 went by, 2016, 2017, 2018, why is it that all those years passed by and it is only in 2019, 25 January, and not before...

Madam Speaker: No lengthy statement, please!

Mr Mohamed: ... that this open advertised bidding for replacement of two old pipes were made public? Why not before?

Madam Speaker: We have understood your question.

The Deputy Prime Minister: A journalist asked this question to the Prime Minister yesterday and the answer is correct. If you start carving up old Mauritius at one go in 2015, then it may end. There must be a plan, there must be a strategy and everything cannot be done at one time, in one year, in one moment. So, there was a time for such things to be done. This is how it happened. We can talk on another occasion of everything that has been done, but this does not arise of this question.

Mr X. L. Duval: Since the Deputy Prime Minister introduced the question of carving up the country, why is it that only two years ago in a public meeting, he promised at the end of his mandate to have 24/7 water? Was he not then aware that it was not possible to have it? Why did he lie to the population two years ago in a public meeting to say that he would deliver 24/7 water by the end of this year?

The Deputy Prime Minister: Hedge your bets, any bet you want, this is going to happen. It is happening now!

(Interruptions)

Now, 70 % of the population is getting 24/7. 70%! The hon. Leader of the Opposition will see. There is no harm in being patient. I am patient and those who laugh will know who laughs the last.

Mr X. L. Duval: Two years ago, he promised on 01 May, he promised 24/7 before the end of this mandate and now we know that only a tenth of the pipes have been replaced out of the 1,600 kms of pipes needing to be replaced. Who is here joking and who is not talking seriously, Madam Speaker?

Madam Speaker, let me repeat, maybe the question was not clear.

Madam Speaker: You have got one minute to go.

Mr X. L. Duval: Yes. Maybe the question was not clear enough, I will repeat it. Only two years ago, the Minister, himself, – does he want me to table – promised to the population in two years' time water 24/7 and now there are complaints all over the country, riots all over the country because of his inability to deliver that promise. So, what will he say to the population that he lied two years ago when he promised 24/7 water?

The Deputy Prime Minister: The lie is not on this side. False propaganda is not on this side...

(Interruptions)

... stupid laughter is not on this side, 10% is not on this side. What is happening is that they don't know what to ask. They have nothing to say on the economy, on other subjects. They take La Brasserie to come with a PNQ. They don't know what is a PNQ. There is no lie, the programme is under control and we are doing the work as it has got to be done.

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Order!

Mr X. L. Duval: I will repeat my question. No answer apart from insults. He is very good at insults and he has got no answer.

The question is, two years ago he told us he would deliver 24/7 water, water all during the day and for seven days a week. If he does not understand, I will tell him, 24/7 water he will deliver this year. Forget about the PMSD, his 2%, 1%, 0%, that is his problem. Our problem is he promised two years ago. After two years in Government he repeated that

promise, that he would deliver. Was that a downright lie he made to the population of Mauritius? That is the question!

The Deputy Prime Minister: The Leader of the Opposition is running out of steam, that is not my fault. I have replied to this question. He just goes on and on like a machine with a young kid. Stop it now!

Madam Speaker: Time is over!

(Interruptions)

Time is over! Hon. Adrien Duval, what is that remark that you are remarking?

(Interruptions)

No, but you cannot say that that he is lying. You can say that his statement is incorrect, but you cannot say that he is lying.

Hon. Members, the Table has been advised that PQ B/8 in regard to the recommendation of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination of the United Nations for Mauritius will be replied by the hon. Attorney General, Minister of Justice, Human Rights and Institutional Reforms.

PQ B/15 in regard to synthetic drugs will be replied by the Rt. hon. Minister Mentor, Minister of Defence, Minister for Rodrigues.

PQ B/18 in regard to the National Insurance Company Ltd. will be replied by the hon. Minister of Financial Services and Good Governance.

MBC – RECRUITMENT

(No. B/1) Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Home Affairs, External Communications and National Development Unit, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to the Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain therefrom, information as to the number of staff recruited thereat since January 2015 to date, indicating –

- (a) the names of the recruit and in each case, the qualifications held, post occupied and terms and conditions of contract, and
- (b) if the approval of the Board thereof was obtained prior to the recruitments.

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, the information which may be disclosed according to law is being compiled and will be placed in the Library.

Mr Bhagwan: I have two supplementary questions, Madam Speaker.

Can I know from the hon. Prime Minister concerning the post of the Director General, whether that post is still vacant? Because from a reply which I received, PQ B/615, we were told that the post is vacant since April 2018 and that somebody was appointed as officer-in-charge. Can the hon. Prime Minister inform the House where matters stand concerning the filling of that post of Director General?

The Prime Minister: Yes, it is the same situation, Madam Speaker. There is an officer-in-charge right now.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Bhagwan!

Mr Bhagwan: This is being compiled, but those who were recruited at the MBC TV, can I know from the Prime Minister whether one Mr Ajagen Rungen was recruited and he conducted an interview defiling the sanctity of a sacred place like the Tombeau Père Laval?

Madam Speaker: Hon. Bhagwan, please come back to the main question about recruitment. You are perfectly right in asking a question about the recruitment of Mr Rungen, but no mention is stated in your question about activities. So, you come back to your question.

Mr Bhagwan: Madam, I am asking in the performance of his duties. Somebody who has been recruited, a political agent, who writes books on the Government personalities as pastime, and he has done something which is highly condemnable by the population. Is the hon. Prime Minister prepared to inform the country where matters stand concerning that individual, whether he is still an employee of the MBC TV and, if not, why no severe action has been taken, and if yes, whether because he is a political agent who writes books on the Prime Minister, this is why he is still there?

The Prime Minister: With regard to whether one Mr Ajagen Rungen has been recruited by the MBC, as I have stated, the information is being compiled, but I do have at least some information, but I do not see the name of Ajagen Rungen in the list. So, the hon. Member should get his question right.

(Interruptions)

What is he talking about from a sitting position? He should get his question right and then he asks me! Is he challenging my answer?

Mr Bhagwan: Everybody knows the hon. Prime Minister is hiding on an individual. He knows perfectly! This is why I am asking, the whole population wants to know what actions, whether that Mr Rungen is still there. He is an MSM; he was recruited to do some particular job. So, can you inform the House where matters stand, what action has been taken?

The Prime Minister: I do not know but I am happy if the hon. Member says so, that he is an MSM supporter. There are so many MSM supporters nowadays. But from what I have here is one Kumalen Rungen has been recruited on contract basis for a period of two years and as far as the other issues are concerned, if the hon. Member will come with a specific question - in fact, there is already a specific question by another hon. Member - of course, I will answer.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Armance!

Mr Armance: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Regarding the recruitment and equal opportunity for everyone, on the website of the MBC, there is an option for online registration. May we know from the hon. Prime Minister how many applications have been received through the online registration and how many have been entertained in the list he is providing?

The Prime Minister: Well, it is a bit difficult for me to know how many applications have been received online. I shall certainly find out from the MBC and I can circulate the answer later on.

Madam Speaker: Last question, hon. Bhagwan!

Mr Bhagwan: Madam Speaker, the MBC Act Section 4(a) provides that the Corporation should give independent and impartial broadcasting services. Can the hon. Prime Minister inform the House and the country, among those persons who have been recruited, political agents, whether he has received complaints? Everybody knows that the MBC is not giving news in an impartial manner. Can the hon. Prime Minister inform the House whether clear actions, clear directives have been given to the MBC/TV not to cover only activities of the Prime Minister?

The Prime Minister: Of course, the MBC operates according to the regulations that are spelt out and the Act itself. Now, the hon. Member is saying that all those who have been recruited are political agents. Well, there are about 120 people who have been recruited. So, are you saying that 120 political agents of the MSM or the *Alliance Lepep* have been recruited? I do not think it is proper to make such kind of statement. I, myself, I do not know what political opinion those people have, but they are not employed because of political opinion, they are employed because of their competencies - talking about competencies.

That is why I said the information with regard to their qualifications and the terms and conditions of their employment is being compiled and, of course, will be tabled in the National Assembly so that the hon. Member will have a look and will see whether these people are qualified enough to be able to assume such responsibility.

Madam Speaker: Next question, hon. Osman Mahomed!

**PRIME MINISTER & MAURITIAN OFFICIALS - HUAWEI
TECHNOLOGIES CO. LTD. - VISIT**

(No. B/2) Mr Osman Mahomed (Third Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Home Affairs, External Communications and National Development Unit, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to the Huawei Technologies Co. Ltd., he will state if he has visited the facilities thereof in China, either in his present or previous capacities and, if so, indicate in each case, the –

- (a) date and purpose of the visit;
- (b) names of the accompanying Mauritian officials, and
- (c) outcome thereof.

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, in regard to part (a) of the question, during my attendance at the 2018 Summit of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) in Beijing from Monday 03 to Tuesday 04 September 2018, and in the context of this same FOCAC Summit, I, on the invitation of Huawei Technologies Co. Ltd., visited its Research and Development Centre in Beijing on Sunday 02 September 2018.

Madam Speaker, as the House may be aware, Huawei has a branch Office in Mauritius since 2004, and is served by some 300 personnel, and I considered it of importance and of technical and technological interest to see the latest technology in the ICT field.

In regard to part (b) of the question, I am tabling the names of the accompanying members of the Mauritian delegation during the visit.

In regard to part (c) of the question, the visit to the Research and Development Centre of Huawei was, as I have said, of technical and technological interest. Since there was no commitment whatsoever on either side, the question of any outcome, therefore, does not arise.

Madam Speaker, I wish to inform the hon. Member that out of the 52 Heads of State and Government who attended the FOCAC Summit, around 30 of them seized the opportunity - of course, upon invitation - to visit the Huawei Research and Development Centre.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Osman Mahomed!

Mr Osman Mahomed: Thank you. Madam Speaker, Huawei is also the ultimate contractor on the Safe City Project, which is going to cost Rs17 billion over the next 20 years, and Huawei benefitted this contract through Mauritius Telecom, through which...

Madam Speaker: Hon. Osman Mahomed, I have told you several times not to make a statement before you ask a question. Question Time is not Statement Time. Please, explain. I will give you certain leeway just to explain your question, but please ask your question.

Mr Osman Mahomed: Madam Speaker, everybody was given the chance to lay the foundation for their questions.

Madam Speaker: Excuse me, I have given my ruling on this. It is specified in the Standing Orders that lengthy questions cannot be accepted. Ask your question intelligibly!

Mr Osman Mahomed: This was through direct award on the basis of national security issue by the Prime Minister under the Public Procurement Act. Can I ask the hon. Prime Minister whether there were any contacts between the Government of Mauritius and Huawei before the award of the contract by Mauritius Telecom to Huawei for the Safe City project?

The Prime Minister: I can answer for myself, as Prime Minister. I have had no discussion whatsoever with Huawei prior to the contract being signed between Mauritius Telecom and Huawei. As I have stated in my answer - he should have a look, and maybe I should refresh the memory of the hon. Member - the Safe City project was announced in the 2016-2017 Budget Speech. I do not need to read what was announced.

Madam Speaker: Please, do not!

The Prime Minister: But my visit to the Research and Development Department is much later than what was announced in the Budget.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Osman Mahomed!

Mr Osman Mahomed: Thank you. Several governments have raised questions about Huawei. Without prejudging, can I ask the hon. Prime Minister whether he has reassessed the situation in light of his visit? Because I read from the official website of Huawei whereby the Prime Minister has said that Huawei is a trusted partner of digital transformation in Mauritius, and furthermore that –

“Huawei's expertise proves to us again that it is a trusted partner of Mauritius. I hope Huawei can build a larger business presence in our country.”

Has the hon. Prime Minister had the chance to reassess the situation in light of what has been said at international level?

The Prime Minister: Well, I thought that the hon. Member would raise this issue again, because he has raised it in the past and I have replied. But let me say, and not to mention any governments which he is thinking of, and which have raised concerns about Huawei, but he has to mention also that Germany has said that Government will not exclude Huawei or any other company from helping to develop 5G in Germany simply because they come from China. Not only Germany, the UK! I can cite France; I can cite other countries also. But he just cannot come to this House and simply say governments have been showing concern with regard to Huawei, and even that one government has banned Huawei. Well, they have their own problems. They are at war. There is a trade war between one country and another country, and he just wants Mauritius to come in the middle of that and says that we should show concern. Show me! Table to this House, show me what are the concerns that we should take into consideration and then, of course, I am here to look at those concerns and then to act!

Madam Speaker: Hon. Uteem, last question!

Mr Uteem: Thank you, Madam Speaker. May I ask from the hon. Prime Minister whether, when he visited Huawei, that was before, during or after the contract for Safe City project was awarded to them? Was he accompanied by any Director from Mauritius Telecom or any officer from Mauritius Telecom?

The Prime Minister: Well, to cut short any speculation that one might have. I have replied and I have stated that my visit was of a technical and technological interest, both to me and to my delegation. And since Huawei is settled in Mauritius and is employing 300 people, I thought that it was not only fit, but also relevant to show that Mauritius supports such kind of companies coming and investing in Mauritius, developing new technologies, employing more people. I can say that nothing was discussed with regard to any contract that had been given or any contract that probably Government might have envisaged in the future.

Mr X. L. Duval: Madam Speaker, being given that Huawei is going to install very, very powerful cameras around the island, facial recognition, number plate recognition, thousands of cameras, can I ask the hon. Prime Minister what arrangements, what legal provisions are being proposed so that the very sensitive information is not misused and diverted for political purposes?

The Prime Minister: Well, here again, if the hon. Leader of the Opposition comes with a specific question, I shall look into the technical aspects of this question and I shall provide him with them. But I can assure him that we have taken all the necessary care and precaution. First of all, we are not trying to attain a political objective with the Safe City project. The Safe City project is about safe city, is a about security of people, and he will see because it is being implemented, it is going to happen. So, I am sure people will appreciate, in terms of the number of crimes that are being committed, how people are concerned with security matters, once this is implemented. But if the hon. Member has any specific qualms with regard to data, because I know there is another question with regard to data and so on, I shall provide him with the right security reasons to allay his own concern.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Osman Mahomed, next question!

LANDSCOPE (MAURITIUS) LTD - MERGERS - OPERATIONAL COSTS

(No. B/3) Mr Osman Mahomed (Third Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Home Affairs, External Communications and National Development Unit, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to Landscape (Mauritius) Ltd., he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain therefrom, information as to –

- (a) the main findings of the consulting firm Verso on the restructuring thereof ;
- (b) the number of new recruits thereat as from the date of the merger and table copy of the organigram thereof, and

- (c) if the operational costs thereof are lower than the total operational costs of all the merged entities prior to the merge.

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, Landscape (Mauritius) Ltd. was set up following the amalgamation of the State Property Development Company Ltd (SPDC), the Business Parks of Mauritius Ltd (BPML), the Tourist Villages Company Ltd., and Les Pailles International Conference Centre Ltd. into the State Land Development Company Ltd. (SLDC) on 01 December 2016.

The Board of Landscape (Mauritius) Ltd. decided that the legal and institutional merger was the first step in the creation of one single, sound and sustainable company. In order to unleash the synergies and achieve the set objectives behind the merger, it was imperative to achieve a full-fledged merger of all the resources at the disposal of the new company.

As a second step, the Board decided to regroup the majority of the staff under one roof in the Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee Tower in Ebène. This was achieved in September 2017.

Thirdly, the Board decided in August 2017 to appoint a consultant to assist, *inter alia*, in –

- (a) developing a coherent and sustainable strategy for the company;
- (b) undertaking an operational restructuring, and
- (c) improving the efficiency of the organisation and the profitability of its asset portfolio.

L'Agence Française de Développement decided to support this exercise and has financed the total cost of the consultancy assignment. Following a tendering exercise, the contract was awarded to Verso Consulting on 20 March 2018.

Madam Speaker, with regard to part (a) of the question, I am tabling a copy of the Verso Consulting Report dated 20 July 2018 which contains the findings and recommendations of the consultant.

With regard to part (b) of the question, the Consultant has identified the need to, *inter alia*, recruit –

- a dedicated Human Resource Manager;
- a Head of Finance and Information Technology;

- a Manager for the Office Buildings, and
- a Manager for the Industrial Buildings.

The Consultant also recommended to bolster the marketing and project development teams.

Accordingly, the Board recruited 5 new employees at senior level, namely –

- Head of Human Resources and Administration;
- Head of Finance and Information Technology;
- Manager - Premises and Facilities;
- Manager - Retail and Commercial;
- Assistant Development Executive.

Prior to the Verso Consulting Report, in March 2017 the Board had already recruited two Development Managers who were required in connection with the renovation of the Port Louis Waterfront, New Supreme Court Building and the road at Les Salines/Rivière Noire and the various other projects of Landscape (Mauritius) Ltd.

Madam Speaker, I am tabling a copy of the present organigram of Landscape (Mauritius) Ltd.

With regard to part (c) of the question, I am informed that the operational costs, after the merger as reported in the Audited Financial Statements for the Financial Year ending 30 June 2018, was around Rs252 m., that is, an average of Rs21 m. per month. This compares to an operational cost in the Audited Financial Statements of the companies prior to the merger at an average of some Rs27.5 m. monthly. It, therefore, represents a decrease of Rs6.5 m., that is, 24% in the monthly operational cost after the merger.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Osman Mahomed!

Mr Osman Mahomed: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Following the report, Mr Gérard Sanspeur has said: *‘Il y a une culture de manque de résultat chez Landscape.’* Mr Gérard Sanspeur is the Chairman of Landscape. Can I ask the hon. Prime Minister whether a study was done prior to the merger because, for sure, all the five companies do not have the same company culture - because he talked about culture and also of performance level – and whether any study was done before the merger?

The Prime Minister: Well, I believe that Mr Sanspeur, maybe, he is not happy with himself, his performance, if he finds that he is not delivering up to what we should expect.

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Please, not on this side! No provocations!

The Prime Minister: So, I think the figures speak for themselves. I have stated that in terms of operational costs, there is a decrease. There is an increase in terms of profitability. We are looking at the human resources, that is why the consultant has been recruited in order to restructure this organisation, and I think in all mergers, Madam Speaker, the process of merging is difficult. It is something which is, I must say, quite complex, especially when you have so many organisations getting together, and more so, for the officers of all those organisations because, obviously, one is always worried about what will happen in the future. But we have been able to keep everybody, of course, apart from those who have decided to resign, a few of them, I must say, but, otherwise, the process of merger *a été bien enclenché*. And now, with this report, I can say, probably 80% of the recommendations of the consultant have already been implemented; the others are in the course of being implemented.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Osman Mahomed!

Mr Osman Mahomed: The hon. Prime Minister has said that, maybe, Mr Gérard Sanspeur is not happy about his own performance, but can I ask the hon. Prime Minister whether he himself is happy from where we were before the merger and the way Landscape is performing today?

The Prime Minister: As I have said, when I look at the figures, I must say I am satisfied with the performance but, of course, more need to be done. I am not saying that we are all contented with what they have done so far. We need progress, we need more profitability and we need to see to it that we get value for money, especially in terms of productivity, and that is why, again, a lot of emphasis is being put on the advice of a consultant who is advising us on restructuring it.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Dr. Joomaye!

Dr. Joomaye: Thank you, Madam Speaker. In the same vein, I would like to ask the hon. Prime Minister, what was the declared profit of the amalgamated companies before the merger and what is the profit of Landscape (Mauritius) now after the merger?

The Prime Minister: Well, that is ...

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Please! Hon. Bhagwan!

The Prime Minister: It is good that this question is being asked because, as I say, prior to the amalgamation, the five ...

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Hon. Hurreeram!

The Prime Minister: Five individual companies made a loss of around Rs98,572,000, as reported again in the Audited Financial Statements that were prepared as at 30 November 2016. Now, for the Financial Year ended 30 June 2018, for 12 months, I must say - but for the previous Audited Financial Statements, for four companies it concerns a period of 11 months, and for one company, five months; but still, we can see the difference - Landscape realised a profit, after taxation, of some Rs44,896,000.

I think it is good also to give another figure, Madam Speaker, if you can bear with me. With regard to the revenue increase, on a monthly average prior to merger, it was around Rs18,723,000. Now, for financial year 30 June 2018, the monthly average has increased to nearly Rs21 m., Rs20,968,000, that is, an increase of Rs2,244,000; an increase of about 12%.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Bhagwan! Hon. Bhagwan has asked the floor several times; let me give him the opportunity to ask his question.

Mr Bhagwan: Of course, thank you.

Madam Speaker: Last question!

Mr Bhagwan: To me?

Madam Speaker: Yes, but please be quick.

Mr Bhagwan: I did not want to cause any embarrassment to you because last time when I asked a PQ, you were not here.

Madam Speaker: No, I don't mind.

Mr Bhagwan: Can I know from the hon. Prime Minister whether he is aware, from what we have heard, we are talking about public money, Landscape or whatever, the agencies, there is open warfare between the Acting CEO and the Chairperson *sur toute la place*? Can the hon. Prime Minister inform the House whether the consultant recommended

an increase in salary to the actingship, from what we have heard and we have read, and whether the Board approved and whether the Prime Minister, through his representatives on the Board, gave approval to that increase, if ever there has been an increase from what has been reported in the Press?

Madam Speaker: Hon. Bhagwan, let me tell you first of all that this does not cause any embarrassment to me, but this question does not relate to the main question. What I would ask you is that you come with a substantive question on the increase of salary addressed to the Prime Minister. I am sure that the hon. Prime Minister will be very pleased to reply to this question and moreover, I prefer not to be in the Chair when the hon. Prime Minister will reply to your question. So, I grant you this, if you send the question for next week, I grant you priority on this.

(Interruptions)

The Prime Minister: If there is a specific question, I shall answer.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Ramano, next question! Hon. Ramano, do you wish to ask your question?

Mr Ramano: Yes, question B/4, please.

**CONSTITUTION (AMENDMENT) BILL (NO. XXII OF 2018) - COMMITTEE
STAGE & THIRD READING**

(No. B/4) Mr K. Ramano (Third Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Home Affairs, External Communications and National Development Unit, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to the Constitution (Amendment) Bill (No. XXII of 2018), he will state when same will be scheduled for Committee Stage and Third Reading.

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, as the House is aware, on 04 December 2018, I introduced the Constitution (Amendment) Bill (No. XXII of 2018) into the National Assembly, embodying the Government's proposals on electoral reform.

However, hon. Members from the Opposition side who intervened on the Bill, including hon. Ramano himself, were unwilling to support the Bill.

It became clear, therefore, that the Bill was not going to secure the required majority for it to be passed by the National Assembly.

Consequently, at the close of the debates, I moved, pursuant to Standing Order 55 (2) that the Committee stage of the Bill be taken at a later sitting.

Madam Speaker, Government will, at the appropriate time, decide on the way forward in regard to this Bill. However, as matters stand now, we cannot move ahead with the Bill, unless, of course, hon. Members of the Opposition are ready to change their stand, but I must say Government, on our side, we have done our part and it is now, of course, for the Opposition to walk the talk and to demonstrate what it stands for.

Madam Speaker: Yes, hon. Ramano!

Mr Ramano: Merci, Madame la présidente. Suivant les points contentieux soulevés lors des débats sur la réforme électorale, est-ce que je peux savoir de l'honorable Premier ministre s'il compte entamer des consultations afin de trouver un consensus sur la réforme électorale proposée ?

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, the proposal was made public; the proposal was sent to parties of the Opposition, including independent Members also. Well, we wanted to have any counter proposal. We debated this Bill in this House. I must say we are still open. Now, when I say we are still open, it depends. If any counter proposal is going to be far away from what we have proposed, then there is going to be no meaningful discussion.

However, if there is any proposal, which maybe, is as close to our stand, well, we are willing, ready to engage with whomever, if it is the hon. Member or if it is any other party. So, let us see, I hope and I can invite, seize this opportunity again to invite, Members of the Opposition to come with concrete proposals, but, as I say again, nothing which is so far away from each other, otherwise there is no point.

Madam Speaker: Hon. Adrien Duval!

Mr A. Duval: Madame la présidente, la dernière fois c'était clair pendant les débats qu'il y avait un consensus absolu de la Chambre sur la représentation des femmes d'un tiers. Étant donné que le Premier ministre n'a pas pu avoir la majorité nécessaire pour le projet de loi, pourquoi n'introduit-il pas seulement cette partie sur la représentation des femmes ? Nous venons de commémorer la Journée de la Femme.

Madam Speaker: The hon. Member has put his question.

Mr A. Duval : On lui a demandé la dernière fois, il n'a pas répondu. On lui redemande. Emmenez le *Bill* séparément, nous allons voter ici en tout cas, de ce côté de la Chambre.

Madam Speaker: Yes, we have understood.

The Prime Minister: Madam Speaker, *nous tenons beaucoup, bien sûr, à promouvoir la femme au niveau de la politique.* The hon. Member is saying, and the Labour Party as well has been in Government for so long, why is it that they did not come with an amendment to the...

(Interruptions)

What "Ah! Ah!?" So many years they have been here and now "Ah! Ah!"

(Interruptions)

In the Opposition, they are wiser now!

Madam Speaker: No exchange ...

(Interruptions)

Please, allow the hon. Prime Minister to reply!

The Prime Minister: In fact, the Bill included what the hon. Member is saying. Now, we agree, at least, on this aspect of the Bill. At least, let us see whether we can agree on other aspects of the Bill also?

Madam Speaker: Hon. Ganoo!

Mr Ganoo: Can I ask the hon. Prime Minister in view of the fact that this Bill was not carried through because the Government did not have the required three quarters majority and now it would seem that the Government has lost another vote with the resignation of Mr Lutchmeenaraidoo, this Bill is not carried through as the hon. Prime Minister reflected on this specific issue of this legal requirement of mandatory declaration of a candidate of his community as a condition of eligibility to stand as a candidate, what does Government propose to do if there is no electoral reform?

The Prime Minister: Well, Madam Speaker, I must say I had the privilege of being in this House before together with the hon. Member, we and so many other Members had both intervened on this Bill. The hon. Member knows my position, the stand that I have taken on this Bill at that time and I still maintain my stand today. It is not because I am in

Government that I change opinion. In fact, I did vote; you can recall that I did vote under protest because I was not satisfied with what was being done, but one thing that tilted the balance, I might say on the side of the MSM at that time, was that I believe that in 2018 and years to come, it is unacceptable that when you have to stand as a candidate for General Elections, you have to declare your community. That was something that was then optional, I must say, but I must say also, unfortunately, and I am sorry, I have to say it here, that was optional. The purpose was that we do not communalise General Elections or as far as possible, we do not try to have a law which obliges somebody to declare his community.

But what happened after we voted the amendment? Members at that time of the MMM and the Labour Party at that time, everyone, they declared their community. I did not declare and I took the commitment in this House that I was not going to declare and I did so and fulfilling the very purpose of voting that amendment.

(Interruptions)

Well, for next time. Well, I say I am not willing, but this is again my opinion, Madam Speaker. We have to discuss in Government, there might be other views, but my opinion on this is still the same.

Madam Speaker: I will allow a last question to hon. Shakeel Mohamed.

Mr Mohamed: Just picking up from where hon. Ganoo has just asked the last question, has the hon. Prime Minister taken legal advice on the issue as to whether the next General Elections will not be able to take place unless there are proper amendments that are brought to the law and to the Constitution as it was done on the last occasion?

The Prime Minister: I am sorry, I have not had any advice in that sense, but I speak also maybe as a lawyer. I do not see any problem in holding the next General Elections. What is the problem with holding the next General Elections? What is there to prevent us?

(Interruptions)

No! *Mini amendment!* Again, the hon. Member is wrong.

(Interruptions)

No!

Madam Speaker: No counter arguments!

The Prime Minister: Anyway, Madam Speaker, I have a lot to say about this, but I do not want to take the time of the House. If the hon. Member comes with a substantive question, I shall have ample time to talk about it. But suffice it for me to be brief. The pronouncement does not prevent us from holding General Elections. What the pronouncement says is that if we want to apply the Best Loser System in a fair manner, then we have to update our census. We have stated, and I know that there is, at least, one party in the Opposition also having stated that we are not for updating that census. So, what do we do? The other thing to do is to amend the Best Loser System. This is what we have proposed. We have come with a Bill, okay, fair enough! You have not agreed with us, but we have tried. We have not got the required majority, but that does not mean to say that we cannot hold General Elections next time. I do not see the point.

(Interruptions)

Madam Speaker: Please, not from a sitting position! I have just been informed that PQ B/10 has been withdrawn. Time is over! I suspend the sitting for one and a half hours.

At 1.02 p.m., the sitting was suspended.

On resuming at 2.36 p.m. with the Deputy Speaker in the Chair.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Members, the Table has been advised that PQ B/61 in regard to the agreement signed with the Japanese authorities for fish catching will be replied by the hon. Minister of Ocean Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping.

Hon. Bhagwan!

POLICE FORCE – DISCIPLINE & EFFICIENCY

(No. B/20) Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Rt. hon. Minister Mentor, Minister of Defence, Minister for Rodrigues whether, in regard to the Mauritius Police Force, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to the actions initiated to enforce discipline and increase the efficiency of police service delivery.

The Prime Minister: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that pursuant to section 90 (2) of the Constitution and Regulation 26 of Part IV of the Disciplined Forces Service Commission (DFSC) Regulations GN 204 of 1997, the DFSC has delegated its power for upholding of discipline to him.

The Commissioner of Police has already made, under section 6 of the Police Act 1974, Standing Orders 21 – ‘Discipline Code’ which constitute, among others, the following offences -

- (a) Discreditable Conduct;
- (b) Insubordinate or Oppressive Conduct;
- (c) Disobedience to orders;
- (d) Neglect of Duty;
- (e) Falsehood or Prevarication;
- (f) Breach of confidence;
- (g) Corrupt Practice;
- (h) Unlawful or Unnecessary exercise of authority;
- (i) Malingering;
- (j) Drunkenness, and
- (k) Drinking on duty or soliciting drink.

Administrative Orders are regularly updated/issued for the better enforcement of discipline.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the following additional measures have been taken by the Commissioner of Police to uphold and enforce discipline as well as increase the efficiency of service delivery as follows -

- (a) Recruitment of Police Officers;
- (b) Training;
- (c) Safe City Project;
- (d) Community Policing;
- (e) Police Internal Assessment Cell (PIAC);
- (f) Capacity Building;
- (g) Discipline Enforcement Officers;
- (h) Close supervision by senior officers;

- (i) Partnership with stakeholders;
- (j) Installation of CCTV Cameras in Police Stations;
- (k) New Vehicles for the Mauritius Police Force, and
- (l) Police Hotline 148.

I am tabling details of each of the areas I have just mentioned.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am further informed by the Disciplined Forces Service Commission that several meetings were held with the Responsible Officers of competent institutions, that is, the Ministry of Civil Service and Administrative Reforms, the Ministry of Defence and Rodrigues, the Mauritius Police Force, the Mauritius Prison Service, the Mauritius Fire and Rescue Service, the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life and the Solicitor General in the context of the 2018 common selection exercise for appointment in the entry grades of the Disciplined Forces to discuss certain issues, including discipline and training needs.

The objectives of the meeting were to harmonise and professionalise the recruitment system, to appoint the best candidates, retain them in the disciplined forces and ascertain that they maintain the required high standards. Accordingly, recommendations were made to improve service delivery and reinforce discipline as follows –

- (i) Over and above the mandatory requirement for Police and character clearances with respect to all shortlisted applicants with a view to identifying those involved in offences of a serious nature prior to appointment, candidates are, henceforth, required to undergo medical/psychological tests, including blood/urine tests for drug misuse during their training period or, as and when required, to assess their fitness to serve the Police Force.
- (ii) Existing provisions to assess the fitness of Police Officers are being reviewed.
- (iii) Random, spontaneous substance misuse testing as done in some Commonwealth countries is being considered.
- (iv) A delegation led by the Commission and comprising the Responsible Officer of the Ministry of Defence and Rodrigues and the Commissioner of Police proceeded to India to explore and secure training slots to meet the listed requirements. Action is being taken accordingly by the Disciplined Forces Service Commission and emphasis would be placed on continuous physical training, and training needs would be well defined and catered for. Training is

also being offered by friendly countries, including France, USA, People's Republic of China and the Arab Republic of Egypt.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that, so far, there are 137 Police Officers who are under interdiction from exercise of their duties, out of which 35 officers for more than five years. These officers are still drawing their basic salaries without providing any service.

I view such a situation with serious concern. I have accordingly instructed the Commission of Police to speed up enquiries involving such officers, and I have also invited the Attorney General to look into the matter.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Bhagwan!

Mr Bhagwan: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. I will come to the last part of the reply of the Prime Minister, this question of Police Officers and their interdiction. This matter has been raised on many occasions here and even the Rt. hon. Minister Mentor gave a reply.

So, can the hon. Prime Minister at least inform the House, following the assurance, the reply he has given and the directives he has given to the Commissioner of Police, what type of mechanism is being set up at the level of the Prime Minister's Office and Home Affairs Division to have regular follow-ups with the Commissioner of Police so that after five, six months, we do not see that the situation is still the same? There must be a follow-up with regard to the Home Affairs Division of the Prime Minister's Office.

The Prime Minister: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I must say - again, I repeat - that I also I view that situation with great concern because it is unacceptable that we have Officers who have been interdicted and who are, in fact, drawing their salary for such a long period of time. I am not prejudging any issue. They should at least be taken before either a disciplinary committee or tried before the proper instances and their case be sorted out as quickly as possible. That is why I have discussed with the Attorney General. I must say that the matter is quite complex also because otherwise, it would have been resolved maybe much earlier.

There are regulations that we need to review at the Public Service Commission's level and there is also, I must say, the issue of counsels appearing for the parties, because I have had a look at some cases to know exactly why is it that these cases are dragging. And I must say - I am not blaming that all counsels are like that, but some, unfortunately - I have seen that the cases have been dragging because there have been postponements. Well, if they were

warranted, okay, but I think it was a bit too much. When I look at the record, I see postponements and postponements and postponements.

So, it is multi-fold, but we have to see to it and work together with the Attorney General, with the PSC to see to it how we can come up with a system that gives speedy justice, I mean both to those who are being alleged to have committed an offence and also the public and the people in the country. So, this is exactly what I was saying.

The Deputy Speaker: Okay, hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. The hon. Prime Minister referred to the general lack of fitness of Police Officers who require training. But would the hon. Prime Minister also agree that, in addition to physical training, the Police Officers need to have psychological training in order to assist victims when they come to the Police Station but also to cope with children? We have seen on the internet how they were unable to cope with students on the bus terminal.

The Prime Minister: Yes, I fully agree that they need to have not only fitness training but need also to have continuous training with regard to how they deal with the public, how they deal with, especially we are talking not only about adults, but as the hon. Member mentioned about children also, students. And also, we must sensitise people generally because they also should know how to deal with the authorities. I think there must be respect and courtesy for the authority. But I fully agree, and that is why I said that we need, therefore, to see to it that there is a continuous programme for fitness, for psychological training, for training on the way that you deal with the public and so on. So, that will be done.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you. Hon. Baloomoody!

Mr Baloomoody: The hon. Prime Minister is talking about efficiency. But will he agree that, to be efficient, we have also to look at the welfare of the Police Officers? Is he aware - he is talking about fitness - that for the last six years, Police Officers have not been provided with any training suits, be it tracksuits, jogging shoes, etc.? And is he aware that Officers who have been recruited recently, in January, have not been paid their salary up to today? It is only last week that they were paid following a complaint made - not to the Commission of Police because he does not talk to the Union - by the Secretary of the Union on the radio. Last week, they were paid their January salary, and up to today, they have not been paid their February salary and we are at the end of March. I am sure that the hon. Prime

Minister should speak to the Commissioner of Police to at least have consultation with the Union, proper meeting with the Union to see about the welfare of the Police Officers also.

The Prime Minister: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, obviously, the issue of salary and so on does not arise from this question, but I view it with great concern. The hon. Member has raised it. If that is the situation, it is unacceptable that people work and are not getting their salary in time. Unfortunately, I do not have any information right now to be able to explain to the House if that is the situation and why it is so or if not. But, definitely, I shall inquire into that and see what needs to be done. As far as uniforms and training kits are concerned, obviously, we ask people to train to keep fit, we need to provide them with at least the basic tools, basic kits for training.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Bhagwan, last question!

Mr Bhagwan: Last part of my question, Mr Deputy Speaker, I ask about efficiency and service delivery. Would the Prime Minister not agree that proper environmental work - we are all MPs, we attend to queries and go to Police Stations. Here again, I think, maybe, the hon. Prime Minister or the Rt. hon. Minister Mentor has been given a reply so that we are provided with information, but, implementation is zero at the level of the Police Force. So, can I ask the hon. Prime Minister whether he would discuss or give directives to the Commissioner of Police for the few months remaining for him in service to, at least, have things done properly? We need Police Officers in our Constituency; they need uniforms and shoes, helmets for Traffic Officers, *gilet jaune*, we call it jacket. These are for the safety of the Police Officers, they are human beings. They are paid from public funds. So, at least, there must be actions taken at the level of the Commissioner of Police, which is not the case. I think there should be clear directives to the Commissioner of Police or delegate powers to another Senior Officer at least, so that things can be redressed because these Police Officers are not only ensuring the safety of Government people, but also the general public at large.

The Prime Minister: I think, first and foremost, they have to ensure safety of everybody, not only Government people, but, yes, I have been talking about environment, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. I must say this Government has put a lot of emphasis, and we have done a lot in terms of improving - I am talking about the infrastructure - Police Stations. There have been new Police Stations and the upgrading of Stations. We have seen to it that the environment in which Police Officers are working is proper for them to deliver what is expected.

Now, I agree there is still more to be done. In fact, I was looking at some other projects that we intend to come forward with and, therefore, we need to keep on improving the environment, the infrastructure. As far as, the tools that they are required to be provided with, basic things like uniforms, shoes and so on, I shall see to it that they are being provided as often as prescribed. So, yes, we want them because it is an important institution, providing us with security. Also with regard to combating crimes generally, we see to it that we give them as much support as we can.

Mr Deputy Speaker: Thank you. Next question, hon. Bhagwan!

LAW AND ORDER

(No. B/21) Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Rt. hon. Minister Mentor, Minister of Defence, Minister for Rodrigues whether, following the recent cases of theft, larceny and aggressions, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to the additional actions initiated to ensure public safety as of late.

The Prime Minister: I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that a multi-disciplinary approach is being adopted in the fight against crime and anti-social behaviour. The Mauritius Police Force is working in close collaboration with various stakeholders, Governmental and Non-Governmental organisations, to ensure public safety and security.

Measures are initiated at Strategic, Tactical and Operational levels.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Police has increased its visibility on field by ensuring that a maximum number of Police Officers are deployed at strategic locations during specific hours in order to consolidate security and safety of the public.

Additional measures and recent actions taken by the Police include -

- (i) Setting up of Special Anti-Robbery Squads for the constant monitoring of the suspicious movement of habitual and prolific offenders;
- (ii) Launching of weekly, fortnightly and monthly coordinated and targeted crackdown operations (road blocks, vehicle checks amongst others) involving the various adjuncts of the Force;

- (iii) Deployment of specialised units, comprising amongst others ADSU, SMF, NCG, SSU, ERS and Police Helicopter Squadron throughout the island to support the Police Divisions;
- (iv) Increasing the Police presence and visibility at identified strategic locations island-wide based on the concepts of “Hot Spot Policing” and “Sector Based Policing”;
- (v) Conduct of Daily Monitoring Meeting where crime cases are analysed, subject and problem profile are developed and short, medium and long term measures are initiated with a view to addressing and resolving the problem;
- (vi) Setting up of a common platform for information sharing between Police and Private Security Companies for launching of targeted actions;
- (vii) Issue of new personal security equipment to frontline officers;
- (viii) Installation of Intelligent Cameras/Traffic Surveillance Cameras as part of the Safe City Project;
- (ix) Involvement of the various Units of the Force in the implementation of Community Outreach Programmes;
- (x) Implementation of Community Oriented Policing - The Mauritian Model is to mobilise and engage everyone to identify and evaluate problems within areas and work collectively or in specific groups to solve policing issues or formulate appropriate responses for ensuring community safety. This model takes into consideration not only Police perception of problems but also the desires, need and expectations of the different communities; and
- (xi) Reorganisation of the Emergency Response Service Transport Squad which now falls under the aegis of the Emergency Response Service Transport Squad with a view to addressing recurrent cases of larceny with violence/aggression, against bus drivers, conductors and passengers travelling or waiting at bus stop.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I am further informed by the Ministry of Tourism that actions have been taken for the safety and security of tourists.

In September 2017, the Tourism Authority in collaboration with the *Police du Tourisme* prepared an action plan on the ways to strengthen “Safety and Security at Hotels, Tourist Residences and Guesthouses”.

The Action Plan, which is a four-pillar approach, contains different measures as follows -

- Pillar 1: concerns the reinforcement of *Police du Tourisme* through a review of its operational strategy.
- Pillar 2: concerns Legislative and Administrative amendments which include, amongst others, display of licensing plates on all tourist accommodation facilities, wearing of identification badges by all canvassers, beach hawkers, tourist guides, and introduction of fixed penalties in cases requiring no in-depth enquiry.
- Pillar 3: involves intensive sensitisation campaigns by the Tourism Authority and the *Police du Tourisme*.
- Pillar 4: concerns Hotel Establishments and Tourist Residencies, that is, enhancement of physical security at hotel establishments.

Necessary action is being taken by the Ministry of Tourism for the implementation of the plan.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Bhagwan!

Mr Bhagwan: Only one supplementary, Sir. We have been given by the hon. Prime Minister a long list of initiative for actions which are being taken by the Police Force to ensure safety and deal with all these issues but, unfortunately, there is a problem of leadership again, I say, follow-up at the level of the hierarchy of the Police Force. Can the hon. Prime Minister inform the House whether he is satisfied with the leadership at the level of the Police Force - I think there are lots of problems - and whether he could inform us when a new Commissioner of Police will be appointed, and procedures followed for the appointment of a new Commissioner of Police in lieu of the one we have?

The Prime Minister: Well, when will the new Commissioner of Police be appointed, it is when time has come for a new Commissioner of Police to be appointed; it depends. Now, with regard to leadership, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, let me say, I think the best proof is when

we look at figures, when we look at statistics. In order to be able to compare, I was looking at the rate of crime in 2007/ 2008. Let's say 2007, it was 5.49; 2008: 5.26; in 2018 it's 4.3.

Now, it does not mean to say that I am happy, we can blow our trumpet and say 4.3; 4.3 is already not acceptable, we have to decrease the rate of crime, but, at least, there is progress. And when I look at the statistical details, particularly when we are talking about theft, larceny and aggressions, offences, crime against property, again I compare with the total number; 2007: 4,371; 2008: 4,336, and I look at the figures for 2018: 3,088, again there is a decrease in the total number. Crime against property, 2007: 16,351; 2008:15,850; now 2018: 10,406. Now, again not to say that we are happy with the situation, but there is always room for improvement, we all have to work together to see to it that we fight crime, in fact, more on the preventive side than on the enquiring and taking people before proper institutions. I would say that, when we talk about leadership, I do not want to go into lengthy details about drug seizures, the amount of drugs that have been seized, record number. So, we are moving in the right direction, but we certainly need to do more, and this is something which is always ongoing, we always have to be vigilant, we always have to be on the lookout because there will always be people who will want to offend against the law. But looking at the figures, as I say, we need to pursue this strategy in order to be able to be more effective and efficient in combatting crimes.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Dr. Boolell!

Dr. Boolell: Thank you very much, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. The Prime Minister, I am sure, he is aware that statistics can be very deceptive. Many of these cases are not recorded. Can I impress upon him to ask the relevant authorities to conduct a thorough enquiry to find out the reason as to why there is increased incidence of those cases of theft, larceny and aggression? Is it due to gang warfare, consumption of drugs. As of now, there has been no thorough study conducted to give us the reasons as to why there is such an increase in the incidence of theft, larceny and aggression.

The Prime Minister: Well, first of all, I think the hon. Member has not listened carefully to what I have stated. He said there is an increase; there is no increase.

(Interruptions)

But, hon. Member,...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Member put his question; the Prime Minister is replying now.

The Prime Minister: Let me say this! If you are saying now many cases are not reported, I can as well say even though there were more cases before, on top of that many cases were not reported. Now, where do we finish, where do we end?

(Interruptions)

No, the hon. Member cannot be subjective. I can understand, he is in the Opposition, he wants to make a blow, he wants to paint a bleaker picture, but I go...

(Interruptions)

No, but...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order, please!

The Prime Minister: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I go according to figures. They are reported figures, they are reliable figures and it is not only me; the previous Government has been relying on those figures. So, let us put an end to this futile - I will call it a futile discussion. But, again, what I find interesting in your question is we must look at the causes of those crimes. Why is it that we have still so many? This is something that we need to investigate and this is something that we need to do in order to be more on the preventive side so that these things do not happen and that is where we also have, maybe, to concentrate our effort in terms of analysis, but I must say again, and I repeat, that the work is being done, we are getting results, we need to get better results in the future.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Mohamed!

Mr Mohamed: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I take the point that the hon. Prime Minister has made, that is, referring to figures, I, myself, am referring to the figures I have before me right now which are from Statistics Mauritius, and the only figures available for Crime, Justice and Security Statistics are updated until year 2017, and when I read those Statistics, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I see that offences reported to the Police, excluding contraventions, increased by 4% between 2016 to 2017. It says - the statistics from the hon. Prime Minister's own Ministry as he holds the portfolio of Finance - that the offence reported to the Police in 2016 was 45,801, excluding contraventions and in 2017, it was 47,792, hence an increase. Now, I fail to understand how the figures here talk about an increase in the

offence rate as opposed to what the hon. Prime Minister is saying that there has been a decrease. Now, most probably, we are – I hope not – referring to the same source as far as statistics are concerned because this means that whatever is being fed to the Prime Minister is wrong. So, which is which?

The Prime Minister: Well, I shall get your figures that you have quoted, I shall check, but I have here, official figures, and I have at least to emphasise I mentioned figures with regard to offences, crime against property and crime reported against - here we are talking about theft, larceny and aggressions. Now, from what I could gather from the figures that you mentioned, you are talking about all crimes excluding contraventions. I am not admitting that it is the right figure, but I do not have this figure with me. Let me check and then, of course, we shall report, but, I maintain, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the figures that I have quoted, and on top of that we are talking about 2007-2008, comparing with 2018, you can imagine the population at that time and the activities going on in the country at that time have increased a lot. So, in fact, there should have been many more now than before, but still with regard to the specific crimes and to the rate of crime misdemeanour, drug and contraventions, the rate with regard to the Island of Mauritius has been on the decrease.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Ganoo!

Mr Ganoo: May I ask the hon. Prime Minister...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Put your question, hon. Ganoo!

Mr Ganoo: I was asking the Prime Minister more or less the same question as my friend has done concerning the official statistics. We must be referring to the same document – Crime, Justice and Security Statistics 2017 says at page 8 –

“Compared to 2016, convictions for property offences in 2017 rose by 9%, from 6,511 to 7,084 mainly due to increases in the convictions for theft (+12%), and offences for fraud and dishonesty by (+4%).”

These are official statistics at page 8 of the report of Statistics Mauritius.

May I ask the hon. Prime Minister whether he can use his good offices to talk to the Commissioner of Police so that our Police Stations in this country might look after potential victims of theft and larcenies, that is, I am referring to elderly couples, old people who live alone, so that each Police Station may have the names of couples living alone in their

jurisdiction which they control and regular patrol be made near their residence, in the streets where these old couples live because very often we hear....

(Interruptions)

It is done in the UK, it can be done in Mauritius also, I suppose. Very often, we hear of old couples being attacked and some old people holding a small *tabajie*, a small *la boutique* somewhere being victims.

The Deputy Speaker: You have made your point, hon. Ganoo?

Mr Ganoo: So, please, this is my appeal.

The Prime Minister: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this is a suggestion. It is a good suggestion, but it will depend on the *effectif de la police* in the Police Station concerned. Because you can imagine that covering one area, they will have different places to monitor regularly and, therefore, we need to see how many officers do we have, especially we are talking about night, and the vehicles and the tools at their disposal to be able to carry out such patrols. But I shall definitely convey this suggestion to the Commissioner of Police.

The Deputy Speaker: Next question, hon. Bhagwan!

BAGATELLE DAM - WATER TREATMENT PLANT

(No. B/22) Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to the Bagatelle Dam, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Central Water Authority, information as to the present status thereof, indicating –

- (a) if all the tests for the post-construction phase have been carried out;
- (b) the quantity of water collected/stored as at to date, indicating if same is being used and, if so, indicate the purpose therefor and quantity thereof and if same is tested prior thereto, and
- (c) the status of the construction of the Water Treatment Plant thereat, indicating the cost thereof, name of contractor and expected date of commissioning thereof.

The Deputy Prime Minister: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it is the Water Resources Unit of my Ministry which is responsible for the Bagatelle Dam Project while the Central Water Authority is responsible only for the Bagatelle Water Treatment Plant.

The construction of the Bagatelle Dam started in December 2011 and was scheduled to be completed in December 2014. In 2013, however, the completion date was extended to June 2017.

The impounding of the dam started in December 2016, works were completed in June 2017 and my Ministry took over the dam on 30 June 2017.

With regard to part (a), before the taking over, tests were carried out under the supervision of the Consultant Artelia on all the hydro-mechanical equipment and valves as follows -

- (i) before impounding, dry tests were carried out in November 2016;
- (ii) in June 2017, when the dam was full, wet tests were carried out and the contractor was requested to replace one faulty gearbox, and lastly
- (iii) in June 2018, at the end of the Defects Notification Period, after the gearbox was replaced, another test was carried out to test the equipment.

In addition, the consultant collected and analysed all data from the dam as from December 2016 and confirmed that the behaviour of the dam was satisfactory before issuing the taking over certificate.

On 27 March 2018, my Ministry has appointed a specialised firm, Manser Saxon for the maintenance of the hydro-mechanical equipment.

My information, therefore, is that all the tests for the post-construction phase have been carried out.

With regard to part (b), as at date, the level of water stored at the dam is around 85%.

The water is being used as follows –

- (i) during the dry season, a volume of 40,000 m³ is released daily into river Terre Rouge. River Terre Rouge converges into Grand River North West and the water goes down to the Municipal Dyke and is treated at Pailles Water Treatment Plant;
- (ii) about 5,000 m³ from the dam is being released daily through Trianon pumping station to Rose Hill service reservoir to supply the regions of Rose Hill and Beau Bassin. The water is chlorinated and filtered by using a mobile filtration plant.

As per established protocols with the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Environment, the water quality is tested by CWA laboratory on samples collected fortnightly to ensure compliance with World Health Organisation Standards.

With regard to part (c), I have explained previously in this House that the bidding process for the construction of the treatment plant started in 2013 and on 14 April 2014, the Central Procurement Board approved the award of the contract to Joint Venture Henan Water & Power Engineering Consulting/First Bureau/HUPD for the sum of Rs1,024,194,437 inclusive of VAT.

Unfortunately, the award of the contract was significantly delayed due to a challenge at the Independent Review Panel and an application for Judicial Review initiated by one aggrieved bidder before the Supreme Court. On 10 November 2016, after the Supreme Court had set aside the application, the Central Water Authority awarded the contract to the selected bidder.

Works are ongoing and the plant is expected to be commissioned in June 2019.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Bhagwan!

Mr Bhagwan: I have only one question. Can the Deputy Prime Minister inform the House whether there is any project concerning the uplifting of the environment of the dam itself with trees, lighting and leisure activities for the public residing around the area of Bagatelle Dam?

The Deputy Prime Minister: The idea was mooted some time ago and is a very interesting idea but it has got to be worked out after all the works have been completed, especially the water treatment plant works.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Osman Mahomed!

Mr Osman Mahomed: Can I ask the hon. Deputy Prime Minister whether the contract for the water treatment plant is currently running into delay for two reasons: firstly, access to the site was an issue, and secondly, importation of skilled labour and that the CWA might be facing a claim for extension of time with costs?

The Deputy Prime Minister: There were delays in the beginning, very unsatisfactory delays. Of course, everyone gives his reason as you know. I personally chaired two or three meetings, but there were other meetings between the client, CWA and others. But now, I think the figure is 87%. I may be wrong but it is 87% of the works, according to my

recollection, that has been completed. So, it is now being catching up. It is true that in the beginning there were unsatisfactory delays.

As for extension of time, yes, there are claims which are being contested. Some of them have been agreed, for example because of admittedly bad weather. Everyone knows when there has been bad weather. There are other claims which are being contested, we shall see according to the contractual clauses, what to do about them.

The Deputy Speaker: Last supplementary, hon. Ganoo!

Mr Ganoo: Can I ask the hon. Deputy Prime Minister whether he can confirm that there is a third component to this project? Besides the Bagatelle Dam, the water treatment plant, there is also the downstream work, that is the pipes have to be laid from the treatment plant to Beau Bassin, Trefles and Stanley where the water is going to be distributed? There is a delay in that third component also so that although the dam is already full three years ago, it is at the end of this year that the third component will be ready and water from Bagatelle Dam will be able to be distributed to the population?

The Deputy Prime Minister: Obviously, there is that third component because without that third component there is no use building the dam. About the other details of the questions, the hon. Member will realise that I need notice of these questions. What I know is that work has been progressing. I would not wish to give information which may turn out to be not correct later. I will check and probably come with a statement.

The Deputy Speaker: Next question, hon. Armance!

NATIONAL EMPOWERMENT FOUNDATION – UNEMPLOYED – START-UP TOOLKITS

(No. B/23) Mr P. Armance (First Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Social Integration and Economic Empowerment whether, in regard to the Start Up Tool Kits to be offered to the unemployed, as announced in the Budget Speech 2018-2019, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the National Empowerment Foundation, information as to –

- (a) the component thereof, and
- (b) if any bid exercise has been carried out therefor and, if so, indicate the names of the bidders, name of the successful bidder and date of award of contract.

Mr Wong Yen Cheong: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, at the very outset, let me point out that it is not only start-up kits that we provide to the unemployed. Rather, with a view to facilitate the integration of vulnerable beneficiaries registered under the Social Register of Mauritius in mainstream society and who are jobless, the National Empowerment Foundation is now offering a complete package which includes training, placement opportunities as well as a start-up kit.

The start-up kit will enable the beneficiaries to start their own practice right after completion of their training, giving them a better chance to stand on their own feet.

There are four different training courses that are being provided to beneficiaries for the time being, namely –

- (i) Housekeeping Operations;
- (ii) Plumbing and Pipe Fitting;
- (iii) Basic Electrical Installation Work, and
- (iv) Beekeeping.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the start-up kit which is offered would depend on the specific course the beneficiary is following.

For example, for the course on Housekeeping Operations, the start-up kit consists of items like gloves, sprays, hand sanitizers, aprons, headgears and dusters.

As regards the training on Plumbing and Pipe Fitting, the start-up kit consists of, *inter alia*, hardware tools such as measuring tapes, hammers, wrenches, pliers, spanners, screwdrivers, pipe cutters, goggles, files, toolkit boxes and other tools.

As for the course on Basic Electrical Installation Works, the start-up kit consists of, *inter alia*, tools such as pliers, automatic strippers, measuring tapes, cutting tools, hammers, files, screwdrivers, protective gears, measuring instruments and other tools.

The start-up kit to be provided for the training on Beekeeping which include the overall protective jackets with hats and veils, as well as standard beekeeping equipment such as beehive tools, beehive smoker, bee brush and beehives.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with regard to part (b) of the question, the National Empowerment Foundation is a Government-owned company and it stands guided by the Public Procurement Act, as well as the standards and best practices recommended by the Independent Commission Against Corruption.

In view of the relatively low costs which were involved for the supply of these start-up kits, I am informed that quotations were sought directly from potential suppliers, in line with the financial regulations and procurement procedures established by the NEF Board.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, for the start-up kits for both the basic electrical installation and the plumbing and pipe fitting training, I am informed that quotations were sought from three potential suppliers, namely –

- (i) Quincaillerie et Chantier Smart;
- (ii) Vaibhav & Co. Ltd, and
- (iii) Quincaillerie New Texas & Co. Ltd.

The contract for the supply of plumbing and pipe fitting start-up kits was awarded on 09 October 2018 to the lowest offer, which was from Quincaillerie New Texas & Co. Ltd., for an amount of Rs3,247.83, excluding VAT per start-up kit.

The contract for the supply of start-up kits for Basic Electrical Installation Work was awarded on 17 August 2018 to the lowest offer, from Quincaillerie New Texas and Co. Ltd., who had quoted an amount of Rs4,339.13, excluding VAT per start-up kit.

As regards the start-up kit for housekeeping and operations, I am informed that each kit costs a total amount of Rs523.49, excluding VAT per beneficiary, and same were purchased through the direct procurement method on 10 October 2018 from various suppliers, namely Medical Trading Ltd, H-Mart and Wong Min Co. Ltd.

As for the Beekeeping project, I am informed by the National Empowerment Foundation that the tender was launched as per a list of 11 suppliers provided by the Ministry of Agro-Industry and Food Security (Entomology Division) and the closing date is 01 April 2019.

I have also a complete list which is quite long and I can circulate it in case the hon. Member wants to have a read. Thank you.

Mr Armance: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. From the budget there was an amount of Rs15 m. that was earmarked for this project. I would like to know from the hon. Minister how much has been used up to date from June last year when the budget was voted, July to date what amount has been spent in regard to the start-up kit?

Mr Wong Yen Cheong: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I don't have this information right now with me, I can circulate it later. Thank you.

Mr Armance: I want to have this specific information regarding the start-up kit because the question is about the kit itself. So, at least the basic information is to have the cost of the kit. What amount has been disbursed? Has he been working on the kit?

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Member, the Minister said that he does not have the information with him, and that he is willing to give it at a later stage. Do you have any question?

Mr Armance: The hon. Minister maintained there are four categories where the kit were used, namely housekeeping, electrical information, beekeeping and so on. I want to know what is the cost per kit of each of these categories?

Mr Wong Yen Cheong: I believe on some I have already given the answers which were here. For example, the start-up kit for housekeeping operations there was an amount, each kit costs Rs523.49 and then it is the same. I have already given the answers on the three other ones, except for the beehive which are the different suppliers, which has been recommended by the entomology from the Agriculture, I do not have the sum with me.

The Deputy Speaker: Excuse me, hon. Armance! May I draw your attention that whenever you put a supplementary question, it should be relevant to the main question that you have asked, please.

Mr Armance: My question is related to the bid exercise. So, do I understand from the answer of the Minister that there has been no notice of procurement in the Press, that the procurement has gone direct to the NEF and this is not subject to the PPA, and I want to know from him how is he ensuring cost and quality control?

Mr Wong Yen Cheong: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have mentioned that since the National Empowerment Foundation is bound by the same way of all the Ministries because we are registered, we have the ICAC and also the Procurement Board, we have gone through all the procedures as it should be. Thank you.

Mr Armance: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister has not answered to my question, if he can please give me more...

The Deputy Speaker: I do not know whether he has the details hon. Member, if he has he will give you. Hon. Minister!

Mr Wong Yen Cheong: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I said with regard to part (b) of the question, the National Empowerment Foundation is a Government-owned company and it

stands guided by the Public Procurement Act as well as the standards and best practices recommended by the Independent Commission against Corruption Act. So, what can I do else, this is what has been recommended.

The Deputy Speaker: Next question, hon. Armance!

Mr Armance: I have not yet finished. I have got only two supplementary questions. I have one more question.

The Deputy Speaker: But I cannot give more. There are complaints from other Members that I am giving too many supplementary questions.

Mr Armance: Yes, but this is my question, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. I have one more question.

The Deputy Speaker: Next question!

POINTE AUX SABLES COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTRE - CONSTRUCTION

(No. B/24) **Mr P. Armance (First Member for GRNW & Port Louis West)** asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether, in regard to the Pointe aux Sables Community Health Centre, he will state –

- (a) where matters stand as to the proposed renovation thereof;
- (b) if he is aware of the chaotic situation prevailing thereat in relation to -
 - (i) the waiting area, and
 - (ii) patients attending for treatment in the morning and/or for blood tests, and
- (c) if consideration will be given for the advisability of providing dental services thereat.

Dr. Husnoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am well aware of the situation at Pointe aux Sables CHC as Mr Wong Yen Cheong has discussed the case with me on several occasions.

I wish to inform the House that in line with the policy of my Ministry to upgrade Public Health Services, a decision has been taken to go ahead with the construction of a new Community Health Centre at Pointe aux Sables as the existing building is old and too small to accommodate the increasing number of patients from the region which include Pointe aux Sables, Petit Verger, Débarcadère, Morcellement Rey, Morcellement Nazroo, La Pointe, Terrasson, and Camp Firinga.

The population covered is around 10,700. The project has been entrusted to the Ministry of Public Infrastructure; the latter has prepared the design, scope of work as well as the cost estimate of the project. The estimated cost of the project is Rs32.7 m., inclusive of contingency sum and VAT. Fund has been made available under this Ministry's budget. Tenders for construction work have already been launched by my Ministry on 07 March 2019, with closing date on 10 April 2019. The construction contract for the Pointe aux Sables CHC may be awarded by the end of June 2019.

The project should be completed within 285 days, that is, about nine and a half months as from the start of work.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, if everything goes according to the programme of work, the inhabitants of Pointe aux Sables would benefit from a new and modern CHC with all the required facilities by mid-2020. I am aware that the present building housing the actual Community Health Centre at Pointe aux sables is old and small. However, all the services are being provided more or less without any major difficulty.

Moreover, we have not received any complaints so far regarding any chaotic situation...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order, please!

Dr. Husnoo: We have not received any complaints so far regarding any chaotic situation, as mentioned...

(Interruptions)

The hon. Member will have his time to ask his question, please...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Barbier!

Dr. Husnoo: Come on, the hon. Member will have his time! He doesn't ask me...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order, please! Hon. Members, I am on my feet and I want order in the House, please. Hon. Baloomoody, please let the Minister reply.

Dr. Husnoo: I repeat, moreover we have not received any complaints so far regarding any...

(Interruptions)

Who said that? The hon. Member is a *menteur!* *Toi ki menteur!* I have not received it! The hon. Member better withdraws it! I would ask him to withdraw it, Sir.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Barbier, you have made use of an unparliamentary word. Please, can you withdraw?

Mr Mohamed: He also did it!

(Interruptions)

You did not hear him saying it from a standing position? Are you serious, Mr Deputy Speaker? You didn't hear him say it? Do you want to listen to the tape again and see the video? He stood up and said it or he himself has forgotten again!

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Mohamed, I have said that, from a sitting position, I have heard hon. Barbier using the word '*menteur*' and I have requested him to withdraw that word. Please, hon. Barbier!

(Interruptions)

Mr Barbier: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Minister uttered the same word '*menteur*' to me. I have the right to know whether he is going to withdraw or not.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Mohamed, please! Hon. Minister, if you have used the same word, would you also withdraw that word?

Dr. Husnoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I withdraw what I have said.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Please! Thank you, hon. Minister. Hon. Barbier, please!

Mr Barbier: Okay, I withdraw.

(Interruptions)

Dr. Husnoo: I have said, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we have not received any complaints so far regarding any chaotic situation, as mentioned by the Member, from the inhabitants of Pointe aux Sables. It is to be noted that this situation is temporary and the implementation of this project will surely help the population...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Please, order!

Dr. Husnoo: It is to be noted that this situation is temporary and the implementation of this project will surely help the population of Pointe aux Sables and its vicinity to benefit from improved health service in a modern infrastructural environment. Madam...

(Interruptions)

Shut up!

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order!

(Interruptions)

Dr. Husnoo: He is disturbing me! *To kapav disturb toi!*

Mr Mohamed: I have not uttered any insult to him. I am not insulting him, but he is telling me to shut up. I mean, that shows how courageous he is, to stand in Parliament and say it. That shows how full of courage he is. I mean, we all admire such courage...

(Interruptions)

Oh God, I am impressed! *To temporaire!*

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Mohamed, first of all, you should not make comments from a sitting position.

(Interruptions)

No, you should not make comments! Don't be provocative, hon. Mohamed! I will also ask the Minister that when he replies to questions, to please not repeat what he is saying.

(Interruptions)

Mr Mohamed: Could he withdraw the insult?

(Interruptions)

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, on a point of order, he said to shut up. Could he withdraw it? Or are you telling us that it is parliamentary to say that? Is it parliamentary to say it? Or are you going to try to pretend that nothing happened? Or are you going to try to be wilfully blind to the obvious? Or are you going to be wilfully deaf to the obvious? Is that *le parti pris* of you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir? Is that it? *La honte!*

The Deputy Speaker: *Ça peut être la honte*, hon. Mohamed, but you are a seasoned politician. You should not provoke this Assembly. You have made comments from a sitting position and the Minister was replying. Let the Minister reply to the question, please.

Dr. Husnoo: As regards the Dental Clinic thereat, the Ministry already provides such service at Petit Rivière Community Health Centre...

Dr. Boolell: On a point of order....

(Interruptions)

Dr. Husnoo: Who is the hon. Member to tell me to sit down?

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Member, you put the question. Do you want answers to your question? Yes! Then, let the Minister reply so that you know what he has to say. You haven't even put the question.

(Interruptions)

Please, take your seat!

Dr. Husnoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as I mentioned, as far as the dental services are concerned, the Ministry provides services such as at Petite Rivière Community Health Centre, Dr. Boloux Area Health Centre and Jeetoo Hospital, which are within the reach of the inhabitants of Pointe aux Sables...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Mohamed, I told you that you cannot make comments from a sitting position.

(Interruptions)

Mr Sinatambou: On a point of order, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir,...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order, please! I think there is a point of order by hon. Sinatambou.

(Interruptions)

You want to make a point of order, hon. Dr. Boolell? Yes, please! Wait! Let him make his point of order.

Dr. Boolell: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister has to withdraw and apologise unreservedly. The word ‘shut up’ is not parliamentary.

The Deputy Speaker: I request the hon. Minister to withdraw the word that he has said, but I don’t want any hon. Member to make comments from a sitting position, please.

Dr. Husnoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would withdraw the word if he withdraws the word, because he said the word from a sitting position.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Minister, you should withdraw your word without condition.

(Interruptions)

Dr. Husnoo: Okay, I will do it, Sir. Patients may attend the above Health Centres for dental services. As such, it is not envisaged for the time being to operate a Dental Clinic at Pointe aux Sables CHC.

Mr Armance: It’s been a long time, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. I am very surprised now that the Minister says that there has not been any complaint. I myself, on 07 April 2015, raised this issue in this House, and I have the answer from his friend, hon. Anil Gayan who, at that time, was the Minister of Health. How can he not be aware of it now? This is the first point.

The second point...

(Interruptions)

Come on! I was there and I was sitting next to hon. Rutnah.

The Deputy Speaker: Put your question, hon. Armance!

Mr Armance: The second point I have, hon. Minister, is that this question was raised in 2015 and the tender was launched on 07 March 2019. Can you explain to me why there has been a delay of four years? Why, in his answer, hon. Gayan mentioned that on 03 April 2014, the Ministry of Housing and Lands had already vested the land of 550 m² behind the Community Health Centre? The land was already obtained in 2015 and, four years later, the hon. Minister comes to the House now saying that he has launched the tender on 07 March. I have a copy of that. Why is it that he took four years to realise that the people of Pointe aux Sables need a new Area Health Centre?

Dr. Husnoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, since I came, I have been working on it; it takes time to materialise the project. I had to go...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order please! Let the Minister reply!

Dr. Husnoo: *15 ans to ti la, ki to ti fer?* You have been there 15 years, what have you done?

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Baloomoody, please!

Mr Baloomoody: Can I ask...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Member, you should understand when I have given the floor. Please, take your seat!

I have given the floor to hon. Baloomoody. Please, put your question!

Mr Baloomoody: Can I ask the hon. Minister - if he can inform the House - how many staff are attached to that Centre and when was the last time that he, as Minister, visited that Centre?

Dr. Husnoo: The service that we provide is like the service of any other Community Health Centres.

(Interruptions)

I don't remember the exact...

(Interruptions)

I won't know!

(Interruptions)

I don't have to visit, because I have got the information from my colleague, the Minister Wong Yen Cheong.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Members!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Baloomoody!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Baloomoody, I said no comment from a sitting position! Please reply to the question, hon. Minister!

Dr. Husnoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we provide all the services there, from treatment of common diseases and minor injuries, a baby clinic expanded programme for immunisation, family planning, reproductive health, dedicated NCDs, health promotion, community-based rehabilitation and all the basis services provided there.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Members, the Table has been advised that the following Parliamentary Questions have been withdrawn: PQ B/25, B/54 and B/58.

Hon. Osman Mahomed, next question!

(Interruptions)

I said, next question!

(Interruptions)

Hon. Osman Mahomed, next question, please! Put your question!

(Interruptions)

Order!

SUPER CASH BACK GOLD AND BRAMER ASSET MANAGEMENT -

BRITAM ASSETS

(No. B/25) Mr Osman Mahomed (Third Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central) asked the Minister of Financial Services and Good Governance whether, in regard to the Super Cash Back Gold and Bramer Asset Management, he will state the –

- (a) number of pending files thereof which have been resolved since his assumption of Office as Minister, indicating the amount of public funds utilised in relation thereto, and
- (b) value of the assets of Britam as at November 2014, indicating the value thereof sold as at to date.

(Withdrawn)

CENTRAL ELECTRICITY BOARD – EMPLOYEE’S PENSION FUND – LOAN AGREEMENT

(No. B/26) Mr Osman Mahomed (Third Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to the Central Electricity Board, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain therefrom, information as to if it has made any borrowing from its Employee's Pension Fund for period January 2015 to date and, if so, indicate the –

- (a) total amount borrowed and table copy of the loan agreement, if any;
- (b) terms and conditions of the said borrowing, indicating if same had received prior clearance from the Financial Services Commission, and
- (c) categories of the pensions fund from which the said funds have been utilised.

The Deputy Prime Minister: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I shall reply to all three parts together.

The Central Electricity Board assures me that, since January 2015, it has not made any borrowings from any of the two pension funds, that is, the CEB Staff Pension Fund and the CEB Manual Workers Pension Fund, subject to what I shall say thereafter.

In 2013, the Central Electricity Board borrowed a sum of Rs70 m. from the CEB Staff Pension Fund and another sum of Rs50 m. from the CEB Manual Workers Pension Fund for the purchase of the building at Ebène. The first loan was witnessed by a private agreement dated 23 January 2013.

It was signed by the Chairperson of the Board, Mr Narroo and its General Manager, Mr S.K. Thannoo, on the one hand, and by Messrs Veragoo and M. Keedhoo, representing the CEB Staff Pension Fund. The second loan was witnessed by a private agreement dated 04 February 2013 and was signed by the Chairperson of the Board, Mr Narroo and its General Manager, Mr S.K. Thannoo, on the one hand, and Messrs Veragoo and Peeharry representing the CEB Manual Workers Pension Fund. I shall be tabling copies of the agreements at the end of my answer.

In 2015, the new Board, the new Management decided that the CEB should refund these two loans which CEB did.

I now refer to another practice which had been in existence for a number of years. That practice which went on until 2014 was that pension contributions were not being transferred to the pension's funds, but were being kept at the CEB. These cumulative contributions appeared in the CEB accounts as loans. They were being kept, but in the books

were written as loan. In fact, they were being used to pay for day to day expenses of the Central Electricity Board. In 2009 and 2011, the National Audit Office drew the attention of the Board to the irregularity of these transactions. In 2016, nothing having been done in the meantime the CEB signed four loan agreements with the two pension funds to cover these amounts.

Furthermore, in 2003, the CEB approved a plan to fund past deficits of the pension funds over a period of 10 years. But payments were made only during 2 years, that is, as from 2005 it stopped and the outstanding amount accounted as accruals in CEB's financial statements.

These irregularities had to be formalised and this is what was done. The CEB signed one loan agreement with the Staff Pension Fund to cover the "past loans of Rs867,920,144" and a second one with the CEB Manual Workers Pension Fund for the amount of Rs447,316,906. These loans bear an interest rate equivalent to the Prime Lending Rate of the SBM and are repayable in 20 semi-annual instalments, starting from January 2016.

Two other loan agreements with the Staff Pension Fund and the CEB Manual Workers Pension Fund for Rs513,890,931 and Rs507,978,284, respectively. These loans bear no interest and are repayable in 20 semi-annual instalments from January 2016.

In addition, in 2018, the CEB paid Rs350 m. to the pension funds to finance past pension deficits.

I am informed by the CEB that the two Pension Funds have provided all the information relevant to the loans to the Financial Services Commission. I do not think that these facts are deserving of any further comments. I table copies of all the loan agreements which were concluded and to which I have referred to during my reply.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Osman Mahomed!

Mr Osman Mahomed: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. I hope I will be given enough time to ask additional questions to what the hon. Deputy Prime Minister has said. There was one thing that was missing, that was the date and that is on 15 December 2015, CEB borrowed from the fund Rs508 m., as tabled by the hon. Deputy Prime Minister himself in Parliament.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Osman Mahomed, are you providing information, or you are asking?

Mr Osman Mahomed: But there was something missing in the reply, the date!

The Deputy Speaker: Then put your question!

Mr Osman Mahomed: And then, on 15 December 2018, another loan of Rs514 m., making it an excess of Rs1 billion that this Government has borrowed from the CEB, unsecured loans that this Government has borrowed from the CEB Pension Fund.

Now, as per the audited Financial Statement...

(Interruptions)

No, no! My question is coming!

The Deputy Speaker: Put your question, hon. Osman Mahomed! This is Question Time.

Mr Osman Mahomed: Would the hon. Deputy Prime Minister agree that the funds have been wronged in not getting the clearance from the regulator prior to granting these two unsecured loans, given that as per the audited financial statements of these two funds as at 31 December 2016, these funds have exceeded the prescribed investment concentration limits as set out in Rule 11 of the two private pension funds, would the Deputy Prime Minister agree that CEB has been wrong in not going back to the regulator for clearance of these two unsecured loans?

The Deputy Prime Minister: I did not want to go into a blame game, but you know very well that what has happened was criminal. You know well that what has happened was embezzlement. What CEB did in 2015 was to regularise the situation. In 2003, the Government at the time had tried to put some order and paid....

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Let the hon. Deputy Prime Minister reply!

The Deputy Prime Minister: ...and in 2005 they stopped it. Then, what happened with the two figures you are referring to, Rs508 m. and Rs400 m. These were the *gabegies* of old, money which had not been given to the Pension Fund and the CEB owed this money to the Pension Fund. This was regularised, as you will see when you read the loan agreements. You should know, you were very close to them at that time. You were not a party to it, but you know what they did. They were taking money from the employees. I do not want to go into this because this becomes political. I have stuck only to the facts and the figures.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. The hon. Deputy Prime Minister rightly stated that there was embezzlement. In fact, I was just going through the Private Pension Scheme Act and the Regulation issued by the FSC. There are several criminal offences that have been committed both by the Central Electricity Board and by the people managing the pension scheme. So, may I know from the hon. Deputy Prime Minister, in light of what he has just said today, is he prepared to refer the whole matter to the FSC and to the Police to a full-fledged criminal investigation and anyone responsible should be sanctioned?

The Deputy Prime Minister: As I have said, the matter is within the hands of the FSC. Under the Private Pension Scheme Investment Rules of 2013, there are very specific criteria. Everyone did illegal things in this matter and we tried to set it right as far as can be. We are talking of billions of rupees; we are not talking of petty money. We tried to set it right, we will await what the FSC is going to tell us. Well, the Pension Fund must have waived this. We try to regularise as far as possible. But you are absolutely right! This is criminal, this is banditry!

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Rutnah!

Mr Rutnah: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. Now that we know that there were systematic abuse of pension fund and following the question of my very able hon. friend Uteem, can I ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether as at now any disciplinary action has been taken at the CEB level against those who were involved in this entire scam?

The Deputy Prime Minister: There has been no disciplinary action. In fact, these decisions were made at the level of the Board, of those who were managing and there is no use trying to see who gave directives to the Board at that time. But your guess is as good as mine, and your guess is very good. And everybody's guess is as good as who directed this.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Ameer Meea!

Mr Ameer Meea: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. All that we have just heard is very disturbing, and in these cases, normally in the pension fund there are actuarial reports. So, clearly I know that the CEB must have an actuarial valuation report. Can I, therefore, ask the hon. Deputy Prime Minister if he can table the actuarial report?

The Deputy Prime Minister: Well, of course not. I do not have it now. On a substantive question arising, I will do this. But let me just add, you give me the opportunity to

say one thing. I have gone through the rules of the Pension Fund some time ago, in 2015. The problem is the composition of the Boards of these funds. They are lay people. Now, we have taken steps to have at least one professional on this Board on CEB's side to be able to advise on the way the funds should be managed.

The Deputy Speaker: Last question, hon. Osman Mahomed!

Mr Osman Mahomed: Thank you. From what I understood, money has been borrowed from the Pension Fund in 2015 in excess of Rs1 billion to fund whatever was borrowed before.

(Interruptions)

Anyway, the Financial Services Commission has summoned the Chairperson of these two funds, Mr Luximon, to appear before it to shed light on this state of affairs. Has Mr Luximon deponed before the FSC to clear all this? I am referring to the letter dated this year. Has it been done to the satisfaction of the hon. Deputy Prime Minister? This is my last question, would the Deputy Prime Minister be agreeable to table...

The Deputy Speaker: One question at a time!

Mr Osman Mahomed: But you said this is my last question!

The Deputy Speaker: Yes. Then put the last question! You cannot put two last questions in one question!

Mr Osman Mahomed: This is an important matter!

(Interruptions)

Would the Deputy Prime Minister agree to table the last two financial statements for the last two years in Parliament?

The Deputy Prime Minister: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, may I give my last three answers? The first answer is that the hon. Member is completely misguided. CEB has not borrowed any money from Pension Fund since 2015. The last borrowing was in 2013 under the last Government. What has happened is a mere regularisation of an irregular situation.

Secondly, whether Mr Luximon or any other one has gone to the FSC, I have heard that the FSC is investigating but I know no more. I do not want to know. It is a matter in the hands of an independent body. I really do not want to appear to be interfering.

Your third question, the financial statements, well, I shall ask. I am sure that there is no problem but this must be done, now that there is an FSC investigation, we have got to be careful.

The Deputy Speaker: Next question, hon. Rughoobur!

**RIVIÈRE DU REMPART DISTRICT COUNCIL - PERMITS & BUSINESS
MONITORING COMMITTEE – COMPOSITION**

(No. B/27) Mr S. Rughoobur (Second Member for Grand’Baie & Poudre d’Or) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands, Minister of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare whether, in regard to the Rivière du Rempart District Council, she will, for the benefit of the House, obtain therefrom, information as to the –

- (a) composition of the Permits and Business Monitoring Committee thereof, indicating if any case has been filed against any member thereof at the Independent Commission against Corruption, and
- (b) number of officers thereof who have been interdicted following allegations of bribery over the past five years.

The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands, Minister of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare (Mrs F. Jeewa-Daureeawoo): I am informed by the Chief Executive of the District Council of Rivière du Rempart that as per section 115 of the Local Government Act 2011, the composition of the Permits and Business Monitoring Committee is as follows -

- (i) Chairperson of Council – Mr Elayah;
- (ii) 4 counsellors – Mr Appadoo, Mr Bugloo, Mr Fullee, Mr Ramsurn;
- (iii) Chief Executive – Mr Gopaul;
- (iv) Head, Land Use and Planning Department – Mr Hosenally;
- (v) Head, Public Infrastructure Department – Mr Jeetun, and
- (vi) Chief Health Inspector – Mr Langard

I am informed by the District Council of Rivière du Rempart that there are three cases against the Councillor N.B. before the ICAC. One case has already been dismissed and there are two cases still pending.

As regards part (b) of the question, I am informed that no officer has been interdicted following an allegation of bribery over the past five years.

Mr Rughoobur: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, may I know from the hon. Vice-Prime Minister, this councillor N.B. against whom a case has been filed at the ICAC, whether the Ministry has requested the council to ask him to step down until the case is cleared at the level of ICAC?

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: Well, the member is a District Councillor. As I have said, there are two cases which are still pending. We will have to wait for the outcome for the District Council to take a proper decision.

Mr Rughoobur: Yes, but there might be possibilities of tampering with evidence. So, may I request the hon. Vice-Prime Minister to, please, look into this issue and try to talk to the Council in order to promote transparency and to, please, request the council to ask the councillor to step down until the case is cleared at the level of ICAC?

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I must say that the Local Authorities are established as body corporate. So, they operate in an independent and autonomous manner. I must say that I have tried to gather more information from the District Council and I have been told that one case has been dismissed. There are two cases pending. I will urge the hon. Member to wait for the outcome of the two cases and then I am sure if there is any *maldonne* the District Council will take the necessary action.

I must also inform the House that to ensure better control and transparency, the application for building permit process is now being done through the National e-Licensing system. This is a new measure. It is an online platform managed by the Economic Development Board. I am sure this measure will help to see to it that there is less risk of corruption and at the same time, there will be more transparency. There are four District Councils where this measure is live: the Municipal Councils of Port Louis and Rose Hill, the District Council of Rivière Noire and Pamplemousses. I am sure that over time we will be able to implement this new measure in all the 12 Councils. As such there will be better control and transparency.

The Deputy Speaker: A last supplementary, hon. Rughoobur!

Mr Rughoobur: Yes, a last supplementary, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. One is the issue of application online. This is bringing more effectiveness in application. My question relates to the approval of permits where councillors are in the majority. So, based on the series of

complaints from civil society promoters, may I request the hon. Vice-Prime Minister, maybe, in the weeks to come, if she could contemplate reviewing this whole mechanism, - I know that those people are watching us live now - reviewing the whole issue of approving the permits?

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: If I may remind the hon. Member, the law was amended recently in 2016. We have reviewed the composition of the Permits and Business Monitoring Committee. Before the amendment, the procedure was very lengthy and complex. There were two separate bodies, the PBMC and the Executive Committee. So, for ease of doing business this Committee has been reviewed. I totally agree with the hon. Member, if there is *maldonne*, if the charges are being maintained against that particular councillor, of course, appropriate action will be taken.

The Deputy Speaker: Next question, hon. Rughoobur!

**RIVIÈRE DU REMPART DISTRICT COUNCIL - BUILDING & LAND USE
PERMITS - ISSUE**

(No. B/28) **Mr S. Rughoobur (Second Member for Grand’Baie & Poudre d’Or)** asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands, Minister of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare whether, in regard to the Rivière du Rempart District Council, she will, for the benefit of the House, obtain therefrom, information as to the number of Building and Land Use Permits issued over the past two years, indicating the number of cases where a majority vote of the councillors was necessary in the Permits and Business Monitoring Committee for the approval thereof and the reasons therefor.

The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands, Minister of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare (Mrs F. Jeewa-Daureeawoo): Concerning Building and Land Use Permits issued by the District Council of Rivière du Rempart over the past two years, I am informed of the following –

- (i) For the year 2017, 1,598 BLUP were issued. 17 of those permits were not unanimously agreed upon and, therefore, the motion to issue or not to issue a permit was put to vote. For all the 17 cases, the councillors commanding the majority have voted in favour of the issue of the permit.
- (ii) For year 2018, 1,736 BLUP were issued. One of those permits was not unanimously agreed upon and, therefore, the motion to issue or not to issue the

said permit was put again to vote. The councillors commanding the majority have voted in favour of the issue of the permit.

Mr Rughoobur: May I know from the hon. Vice-Prime Minister whether the permit that was approved during 2017 and 2018 - when she said put on hold, put on hold ultimately, there was a list of permits. As per the information that I have, they were also approved based on the fact that the councillors were in the majority in the PBMC. Will the hon. Vice-Prime Minister investigate on all those cases where permits were approved and given against the recommendations of the technicians of the council who are also members of the PBMC?

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: Well, first of all, let me say that as I have said in my first reply, the ICAC is investigating permits which have been issued in 2017 and 2018. The ICAC has asked the exact information. So, it will not be proper for me, at this stage, to give further information. Let us wait for the outcome of the ICAC and then I will be in a better position to enlighten the House because the ICAC has asked the same information with regard to permits which have been issued in the year 2017 and 2018.

The Deputy Speaker: Next question, hon. Rughoobur!

Mr Rughoobur: A last supplementary on this, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

The Deputy Speaker: Last supplementary!

Mr Rughoobur: A last supplementary. We know the determination of the Prime Minister to combat corruption. May I, therefore, request the hon. Vice-Prime Minister to, please, see to it, based on the series of allegations in this particular District Council, if there is a possibility later on to put a Fact-Finding Committee on this whole issue of permits, award of permits during the recent years at the Council?

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: Well, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the hon. Member will understand that I cannot cause prejudice to the inquiry. As I have said in the two replies, there is an inquiry which is ongoing, so, we will have to wait for the outcome.

The Deputy Speaker: Next question, hon. Rughoobur!

PETIT RAFFRAY - MULTI-PURPOSE COMPLEX - REVENUE

(No. B/29) **Mr S. Rughoobur (Second Member for Grand'Baie & Poudre d'Or)** asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands, Minister of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare whether, in regard to the Multi-

purpose complex at Petit Raffray, she will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Rivière du Rempart District Council, information as to the –

- (a) total expenditure incurred for the inauguration thereof, indicating the mode of procurement for services outsourced, and
- (b) expected revenue from the lease of the property over the next six months.

The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands, Minister of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare (Mrs F. Jeewa-Daureeawoo): I am informed by the District Council of Rivière du Rempart that the total expenditure incurred for the inauguration of the Multi-purpose complex of Petit Raffray amounted to a total of Rs318,592.06, the mode of procurement used was direct procurement method and annual tender, that is Request for Sealed Quotations.

The following goods and services were purchased by the District Council of Rivière du Rempart using the direct procurement method: sound system and animation, inaugural plate, transport for senior citizens, amongst others. The other two items were procured for the annual tender that the District Council of Rivière du Rempart has with suppliers. These items were invitation cards and a banner.

With regard to part (b) of the question, I wish to inform the House that based on bookings made so far for the next six months, that is from April to September 2019, the expected revenue is Rs312,000.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Uteem!

Mr Uteem: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, Rs318,000, that is the figure the hon. Vice-Prime Minister has just mentioned. May I know how many people were invited and what was served? Rs300,000 for an inauguration! Does the hon. Vice-Prime Minister find that normal?

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: Well, it was quite a big event. There were like, I think, 1,000 or 2,000 people were invited and this was a new Multi-purpose complex.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Rughoobur!

Mr Rughoobur: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. The Vice-Prime Minister is fully aware that the inauguration was effected in November 2018. Will she confirm that up to now there are no adequate parking facilities? For this investment of Rs15 m. there is hardly parking space for 10 to 12 vehicles, will the hon. Vice-Prime Minister confirm this?

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Member, this is not relevant to the question.

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: I totally agree with the hon. Member. There are only 15 parking slots, but I am informed that State land of one arpent has been vested in my Ministry for the creation of additional parking spaces. I totally agree with the hon. Member that we need more parking spaces. As I have said, presently we have 15 parking slots. In the meantime, alternative parking arrangement has been made and in the months to come, we will start the creation of additional parking slots on the State land.

Mr Rughoobur: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the information provided by the Council is wrong. I am sorry to say this, with due respect to the Vice-Prime Minister...

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Member, I have said when you put your question, if you have the answer you don't need to put the question.

Mr Rughoobur: Will the hon. Vice-Prime Minister confirm that the arrangement for the parking with the tender that everything will have to be launched and that it will not be ready before one and a half years?

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: It seems the hon. Member has more information than myself. This is what I have been told. As I have said, the District Council is autonomous and independent. So, they rule the District Council as they wish. Of course, there are guidelines, but this is what I have been told. So, I cannot say more on this particular question.

The Deputy Speaker: Next question, hon. Rughoobur!

ROCHES NOIRES – FOOTBALL GROUNDS – LIGHTING

(No. B/30) Mr S. Rughoobur (Second Member for Grand'Baie & Poudre d'Or) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands, Minister of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare whether, in regard to the contract for the lighting of the football grounds at Roches Noires, she will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Rivière du Rempart District Council –

- (a) copy of the commissioning report from the Electrical Services Division for tabling, and
- (b) information as to the name of the authorised electrical engineer of the Council in charge thereof.

The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands, Minister of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare (Mrs F. Jeewa-Daureeawoo): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the District Council of Rivière du Rempart that it is not common practice for the local authorities to benefit from the services of the Energy Services Division of the Ministry of Public Infrastructure and Land Transport, except for major capital projects which are designed and supervised by the latter Ministry.

With regard to part (a) of the question, I am tabling a copy of the test certificate of the commissioning exercise for the project lighting of Roches Noires football ground.

As regards part (b) of the question, the testing and commissioning was done by one Mr N.C, Electrical Engineer, having registered No. 925 with the Council of Registry Professional Engineers. The testing and commissioning were done in the presence of the Senior Inspector Works and Lighting Supervisor of the District Council of Rivière du Rempart.

Mr Rughoobur: May I have a look at the Commissioning Report, please? In the meantime, may I know from the hon. Vice-Prime Minister - she stated the Commissioning was done by N.C, the Engineer of the Council - whether the Engineer was appointed by the Council? Was there any tender exercise that was carried out? Is he the Engineer of the Council or is he an Engineer from a private firm that conducted the commissioning exercise?

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: I have been told that he is an independent Engineer, N. Chander.

Mr Rughoobur: May I have a look at the Commissioning Report? Was the Engineer paid from the funds of a Council? He is independent; he can be independent, but paid by whom?

Mrs Jeewa-Daureeawoo: Well, Sir, I will find out and then communicate the information to the hon. Member. I don't have it for the time being.

The Deputy Speaker: Next question hon. Jahangeer!

RIVIÈRE DES ANGUILLES DAM PROJECT - IMPLEMENTATION

(No. B/31) Mr B. Jahangeer (Third Member for Rivière des Anguilles & Souillac) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to the Rivière des Anguilles Dam Project, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Water Resources Unit, information as to where matters stand as to the implementation thereof.

The Deputy Prime Minister: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, on 13 October 2017, after approval of the Central Procurement Board, my Ministry awarded a contract to Studio Ing. G. Pietrangeli s.r.l in association with Sub-consultants Somah Associates Ltd, Enviro-Consult Ltd and Pem & Associates Ltd as consultant for –

- Phase 1 - Design review and construction supervision of the Riviere des Anguilles Dam.
- Phase 2 - Construction supervision.

In January 2018, the Consultancy services for Phase 1 started and in January 2019, the Consultant submitted to my Ministry a report, which includes basic meteorological, hydrological and geotechnical studies and its recommendations for the dam type and associated structures.

For the purpose of the detailed design and to avoid the problems encountered with the construction of the Bagatelle dam, comprehensive geological and geophysical studies have to be carried out.

In February 2019, my Ministry awarded the contract for geophysical investigations, which are expected to be completed by July 2019. For geological/geotechnical investigations, the contract will be awarded in April 2019 and the investigations should be completed by November 2019.

Based on the geophysical and geological investigations, the Consultant will prepare the detailed design, draft bidding documents and cost estimates for the dam by January 2020. The works contract is expected to be awarded by mid-2020 and the works are expected to start by end 2020.

The Deputy Speaker: You have any supplementary questions?

Mr Jahangeer: Indeed, it is a damned dam. Part of my campaign was based on this dam, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. So, may I ask the Deputy Prime Minister...

(Interruptions)

So, if I heard correctly, it would be in 2020 that the tendering for the actual work will be in force?

The Deputy Prime Minister: As I have said, yes.

The Deputy Speaker: Next question, hon. Jahangeer!

UTILITY REGULATORY BODY – BOARD COMPOSITION

(No. B/32) Mr B. Jahangeer (Third Member for Rivière des Anguilles & Souillac) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to the Utility Regulatory Body, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain therefrom, information as to the composition of the Board thereof, indicating the achievements thereof as at to date.

The Deputy Prime Minister: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the URA Act was enacted in 2004 and remained dormant until September 2016, when this Government revived the matter and appointed the Board of the URA.

The Board is currently chaired by Mr Philip Ah Chuen and the Commissioners are Mr Rampiar Luchmun Roy and Mr Sadatmanund Narain. Mrs Rosemary Elizabeth Winifred Anodin was appointed as a Commissioner in May 2018. Unfortunately she passed away in August.

I am in the process of proposing the appointment of another person to act as Commissioner.

As regards achievements, I wish to point out that regulation of the electricity sector is highly complex and requires competent professionals, specialised training and technical skills.

The URA has faced a number of setbacks since the appointment of the Board, namely, the resignation of the previous Chairperson, the untimely demise of one Commissioner and the difficulties of recruiting a Director.

The post of Director was advertised a first time but the selected candidate declined the post. After a second advertisement, Mr Alfred Byigero, a Rwandan citizen was appointed on 09 October 2017. He resigned on 22 December 2018 for family reasons.

The post has been re-advertised in January 2019 and the URA will shortly appoint a new Director.

The initial years of the URA has been spent on recruitment of a Director, technical staff, training, setting up the administrative and organisational systems, office accommodation, logo and website.

Despite the impediments, the URA has been working on the fulfillment of its mandate, namely –

- (i) a road map has been developed with the assistance of National Renewable Energy Laboratory of USA providing for the phased implementation of the Electricity Act 2005, with licensing of operators in the first phase, developing tariff methodologies in the second phase and establishing grievance handling procedures;
- (ii) the African Legal Support Facility of the African Development Bank (AfDB) has supported the URA to develop a strategic plan;
- (iii) URA organised two stakeholders' meetings in November and December 2018 at Business Mauritius to discuss the Strategic plan and the licensing framework;
- (iv) a one week in-house training was carried out in July 2018 for the staff and Board members;
- (v) a high-level seminar on electricity regulation was organised by URA from 16 to 18 August 2018 for the public and private sector including IPPs.

URA has established networking with regional organisations in order to benefit from training and exchange of information. It is now a member of the Regional Association of Energy Regulators of Eastern & Southern Africa (RAERESA)/COMESA's Energy Regulatory arm and the "*Réseau Francophone des Régulateurs de l'Énergie*"- *RegulaE.Fr*.

It has been given observer status in the Regional Electricity Regulators Association (RERA)/SADC Electricity Regulatory arm, pending approval of full membership.

The URA has also initiated a network of regulatory bodies of the Indian Ocean, which has had three formal meetings in Seychelles, Comoros and Mauritius.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Jahangeer!

Mr Jahangeer: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. One of the roles of the URA is to regulate, to discuss, to negotiate tariff with exiting licensees. So, is URA actually negotiating with Alteo or other IPP from the Sugar Sector?

The Deputy Prime Minister: No, URA does not negotiate with independent producers. It may have stakeholders' exchanges, but it certainly does not negotiate. The difficulty of URA has been the technical set-up. We have had discussions with the Government of India to obtain expert assistance. We need to recruit that new Director; there are difficulties. The Board is making tremendous effort. This is a fully independent Board

which is proactive and works very hard, but they face difficulties which everyone should be the first to admit.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Osman Mahomed!

Mr Osman Mahomed: I have come across a lot of newspaper articles where people are complaining that their electricity tariffs have suddenly increased. Has the hon. Deputy Prime Minister been able to discuss the matter with the URA with a view to having an independent assessment of whether, indeed, the tariffs have been increased? Because people are complaining.

The Deputy Prime Minister: Well, it does not arise out this question, but I will respond nevertheless. I have not discussed with the URA. I have discussed with CEB and the CEB has assured me that this is as a result of higher consumption. Until there is evidence of the contrary, I have to believe what CEB is telling me. But it is not correct to state, as has been stated, that CEB has increased its tariff secretly.

Mr Ganoo: Can I ask the hon. Deputy Prime Minister whether, for the Utility Regulatory Act to be properly operative and functional, there should not be a specific utility legislation, that is, the Electricity Act should not be promulgated? Because there is an Electricity Act which was adopted by this House in 2005 and which is not yet operational, and in the law, the Utility Regulatory Authority, in the two sections concerning function of the Authority and objects of the authority, it is mentioned 'subject to the utility legislation'. So, since we do not have a proper Electricity Act, because it has not yet been proclaimed, how can we expect the URA to be really functional and operative?

The Deputy Prime Minister: I can assure the hon. Member that the Technical Unit at the level of my Ministry is looking into all this. It is more complex than it appears as is evidenced by the fact that, for many years, they preferred to leave it dormant than to grapple with the issue. We are grappling with the issue and we hope to achieve fruition. As the hon. Member knows, it is a complex matter.

The Deputy Speaker: Next question, hon. Jahangeer!

HIGHWAYS – INFORMATION PANELS – CONTRACTORS

(No. B/33) **Mr B. Jahangeer (Third Member for Rivière des Anguilles & Souillac)** asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure and Land Transport, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade whether, in regard to the Information

Panels installed across the highways to impart useful information to road users, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to the name of the contractors thereof.

Mr Bodha: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Road Development Authority that under the project for the construction of a flyover in Port Louis at Decaen, two digital traffic information panels have been placed at the following locations –

- (i) the Motorway M1 at Footbridge at Montebello, and
- (ii) the Motorway M2 at Calebasses (near the interchange with M3, that is, the road going to the South).

The objective of these panels is to sensitise road users about road safety and to encourage appropriate behaviours with a view to reducing the number of road hazards.

Typical information of these panels includes speed limits, messages to drive safely and to pass on seat belts, among others.

These panels were placed by the main contractor of the flyover at Decaen project, namely the joint venture between General Construction and Transinvest at the Deschartres Street. Costs of the provision of these two panels were inclusive in the contract.

I am further informed, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, by the Traffic Management and Road Safety Unit that in the context of the new SSR International Airport Link Road, it has implemented a gantry-type structure with a Variable Message Sign along the Motorway Port Louis-Plaisance Dual Carriageway at Mare d'Albert. Following an open bidding exercise, Sobany & Sons was selected to carry out the works in 2018.

Mr Jahangeer: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. We call these digital billboards active billboards and, in the United States and Denmark, they are being removed now. Has there been any study from the hon. Minister, committee or technical board with regard to the impact of active billboards on the drivers' visual behaviour?

Mr Bodha: In fact, this is a pilot project. We are on a test mode. We are going to have a number of billboards between the different segments of the Motorway just like you have it abroad, so that when you go at that segment, you are given all the information you need about speed, about the weather conditions, about the congestion possibility. So, we are on a test mode. We are going to bring in a number of these billboards, for example, at Jumbo, at Soreze, outside Port Louis, so that when you travel through the Motorway, for each segment, you have the information that is valuable for the road users.

The Deputy Speaker: Next question, hon. Jhuboo!

OCEAN ECONOMY SECTOR – JOB CREATION

(No. B/34) Mr E. Jhuboo (Third Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Minister of Ocean Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping whether, in regard to the Ocean Economy sector, he will state the number of jobs created since 2015 to date.

Mr Koonjoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the required information is being compiled and will be placed in the Library as soon as possible.

Mr Jhuboo: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. I thank the Minister for his reply, but I do have the answer from him. He actually replied to hon. Mohamed and stated that 3,000 jobs were created by his Ministry. Now is my question to the hon. Minister. The target was 25,000 jobs for the term. So, according to my information, he needs to create 22,000 jobs for the remaining year. Can we know how he is going to turn things around?

Mr Koonjoo: I have already said the answer. I am waiting the whole thing to come in front. If the hon. Member's friend has got the answer, he better gets it from him.

The Deputy Speaker: You have more questions?

Mr Jhuboo: Yes. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, his ambition was to double the contribution of the ocean industry to the GDP, investing in the following sectors: aquaculture, marine services, marine commerce, marine bio-technology, offshore oil and gas, marine renewable energy. My question to the hon. Minister is: has he created these sectors and how many jobs have been created in these sectors?

Mr Koonjoo: I already replied. It is being compiled.

(Interruptions)

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I told the hon. Member that it is being compiled. After compilation, he will have it.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Jhuboo, please! Hon. Ganoo!

Mr Ganoo: The Government Vision of 2030 mentioned the setting up of a National Ocean Council as a driving force and which will be the body at the heart of all these projects and development. Can I ask the hon. Minister if this Council has been set up?

Mr Koonjoo: I will ask the hon. Member to come with a substantive question and I will reply.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Jhuboo, next question!

MARINE POLLUTION BILL - INTRODUCTION

(No. B/35) **Mr E. Jhuboo (Third Member for Savanne & Black River)** asked the Minister of Ocean Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping whether, in regard to the proposed introduction of a Marine Pollution Bill, he will state where matters stand.

Mr Koonjoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would like to inform the House that the Marine Pollution Bill has initially been drafted with the aim of incorporating the provisions of the International Convention for Prevention of Pollution from Ships 1973 as modified by the Protocol of 1978 (MARPOL 73/78) into the laws of Mauritius. Mauritius has ratified the following annexes of the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships 1973 as modified by the Protocol of 1978. The following annexes are –

- (i) Annex I - Prevention of Pollution by Oil, which is important;
- (ii) Annex II - Control of Pollution by Noxious Liquid Substances in the Bulk;
- (iii) Annex III - Prevention of Pollution by Harmful Substances Carried by Sea in Packaged Form;
- (iv) Annex IV - Prevention of Pollution by Sewage from Ships, and
- (v) Annex V Prevention of Pollution by Garbage from Ships.

As such, in order to accelerate the procedures of the ...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Reply, hon. Minister!

Mr Koonjoo: But he wants to speak, I am giving him time to speak.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Mohamed! Please!

Mr Koonjoo: In order to accelerate the procedures of the domesticating the aforesaid convention instead of proceeding with the enactment of the Marine Pollution Bill, my Ministry came forward with several separate regulations in line with the section 228 (1) (c) of the Merchant Shipping Act 2007, which stipulates that the Minister to whom the responsibility for the subject of shipping is assigned, may make regulations for giving effect

any international convention to which Mauritius is a party. Consequently, the key provisions of the Annexes 1 and 2 of MARPOL have been incorporated into the Merchant Shipping Regulations, the regulations came into force in 01 March 2019 as per Government Notice No. 47 of 2019.

The following annexes of MARPOL are presently being redrafted into regulations and once these are finalised, same will be submitted for vetting to the Attorney-General's Office

–

- (i) Annex III - Prevention of Pollution by Harmful Substances Carried by Sea in Packaged Form;
- (ii) Annex IV - Prevention of Pollution by Sewage from Ships, and
- (iii) Annex V - Prevention of Pollution by Garbage from Ships.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Jhuboo! Please!

Mr Jhuboo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, an important feature of MARPLE in the Convention is the complete ban on the disposal at sea of plastic. My question was clear. We cannot ratify, we cannot go through with the Bill unless we ratify the Convention on Annex V. I would like to know from the hon. Minister when will he ratify the Annex V of the Convention?

Mr Koonjoo: It is coming, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. It is not yet ratified. Please, tell your friends!

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Adrien Duval!

Mr A. Duval: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. I would like to ask the hon. Minister on the same question of hon. Jhuboo with regard to dumping of, not just plastic, but metal canisters. We see it every day, these foreign vessels coming to the Port and all the dumping that is being done in our seas. We would like to know whether he will come with severe criminal provisions in the Bill and how he plans on enforcing the legislation that we are still waiting for, whether he can tell us?

Mr Koonjoo: I have just said, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that it is coming. We have started and it is on the way. So, we will have to wait.

The Deputy Speaker: Last question, hon. Jhuboo!

Mr Jhuboo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, since it is a very technical issue, can we know from the hon. Minister whether he will hold consultations with all stakeholders, namely, ReefWatch, the Mauritius Wildlife Foundation and even Mr Copemootoo?

Mr Koonjoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we know that it is very important because it is a question of life and death, especially for countries like Mauritius where we have got so many ships coming in with so many bad things in the water. We are taking all precautions. It is very, very important. It is not a joke. I hope that my friend understands that we are working very hard and we are on the way to finalise everything. As you know, first of all, it should be gratified and then the measure will take place.

The Deputy Speaker: Time is over!

Hon. Members, the Table has been advised that the following Parliamentary Questions have been withdrawn: B/46, B/48, B/49, B/51, B/52, B/53, B/62, B/63, B/67, B/72, B/73 and B/74.

MOTION

SUSPENSION OF S.O. 10(2)

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

The Deputy Prime Minister rose and seconded.

Question put and agreed to.

STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS

INTERNATIONAL COURT OF JUSTICE - CHAGOS ARCHIPELAGO - ADVISORY OPINION

The Prime Minister: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I will ask for the indulgence of the House as my statement is lengthy. In view of the subject matter, I have deemed it appropriate to put the main facts in the statement for record purposes.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the House will be aware that pursuant to the adoption by the United Nations General Assembly on 22 June 2017 of Resolution 71/292 in which it requested the International Court of Justice to give an Advisory Opinion on the legal consequences of the separation of the Chagos Archipelago from Mauritius in 1965, the ICJ delivered its Advisory Opinion on 25 February 2019.

In its resolution 71/292, the General Assembly put the following two legal questions to the ICJ –

- (a) “Was the process of decolonization of Mauritius lawfully completed when Mauritius was granted independence in 1968, following the separation of the Chagos Archipelago from Mauritius and having regard to international law, including obligations reflected in General Assembly resolutions 1514 (XV) of 14 December 1960, 2066 (XX) of 16 December 1965, 2232 (XXI) of 20 December 1966 and 2357 (XXII) of 19 December 1967?”, and
- (b) “What are the consequences under international law, including obligations reflected in the above-mentioned resolutions, arising from the continued administration by the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland of the Chagos Archipelago, including with respect to the inability of Mauritius to implement a programme for the resettlement on the Chagos Archipelago of its nationals, in particular those of Chagossian origin?”

The ICJ decided unanimously that it had jurisdiction to answer the two questions posed to it by the United Nations General Assembly. It went on to hold by a majority of 12-2 that it ought to exercise its discretion to answer those questions.

On the substance, the ICJ reached the following conclusions by an overwhelming majority of 13-1.

As far as the first question is concerned, the ICJ held that the right to self-determination and territorial integrity formed a fundamental part of customary international law in 1965 when the territory of Mauritius was dismembered.

The ICJ noted that at that time, the Chagos Archipelago was, and has always been, an integral part of Mauritius, and that Mauritius was still a colony under the authority of the United Kingdom.

Following a careful review of the facts, the ICJ found that the detachment of the Chagos Archipelago from the territory of Mauritius, I quote –

“was not based on the free and genuine expression of the will of the people concerned.”

The detachment of the Chagos Archipelago was therefore illegal under international law, and without effect. Accordingly, the ICJ concluded that, I quote –

“as a result of the Chagos Archipelago’s unlawful detachment and its incorporation into a new colony, known as the BIOT, the process of decolonization of Mauritius was not lawfully completed when Mauritius acceded to independence in 1968.”

With respect to the second question, the ICJ concluded that, I quote –

“the United Kingdom’s continued administration of the Chagos Archipelago constitutes a wrongful act entailing the international responsibility of that State.”

The ICJ went on to rule that, I quote –

“the United Kingdom is under an obligation to bring an end to its administration of the Chagos Archipelago as rapidly as possible, thereby enabling Mauritius to complete the decolonization of its territory in a manner consistent with the right of peoples to self-determination.”

The ICJ stated that the modalities for ensuring the completion of the decolonization of Mauritius fall within the remit of the UN General Assembly, in the exercise of its functions relating to decolonization.

As regards the resettlement on the Chagos Archipelago of Mauritian nationals, including those of Chagossian origin, the ICJ stated that this is an issue relating to the protection of the human rights of those concerned, which should be addressed by the General Assembly during the completion of the decolonization of Mauritius.

The ICJ also concluded that all Member States are under an obligation to co-operate with the United Nations in order to complete the decolonization of Mauritius.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the ICJ being the principal judicial organ of the United Nations, its Advisory Opinion is an authoritative statement of the law. It is clear from the Opinion of the Court that the Chagos Archipelago is and has always formed an integral part of the territory of Mauritius and that the United Kingdom’s continued administration of the Chagos Archipelago is an unlawful act of continuing character.

The Opinion of the ICJ is an important milestone not only in the long-standing struggle for the completion of the decolonization process of Mauritius, but also in the fight to eliminate all remnants of colonialism in Africa, in line with Agenda 2063. It equally constitutes a significant contribution to the promotion of human rights, self-determination and the international rule of law.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, at the request of the British authorities, I had a meeting with the British Prime Minister on 18 March 2019 in London. The British Prime Minister emphasised the good relations between Mauritius and the United Kingdom and expressed her desire to further deepen those relations by exploring new avenues of cooperation and joint initiatives in various areas of interest to Mauritius.

As regards the Advisory Opinion of the ICJ, the British Prime Minister recalled the initial and consistent position of the UK that the Chagos Archipelago issue was a bilateral one and wished that Mauritius and the United Kingdom continue to discuss solutions bilaterally.

While welcoming the United Kingdom's offer to deepen and further consolidate its relations with Mauritius, I pointed out that the Advisory Opinion of the ICJ is about the decolonization of Mauritius and was requested by the UN General Assembly which would now consider appropriate action. In that regard, I stated that Mauritius and other countries would be tabling a draft resolution before the General Assembly towards the end of April 2019. I also indicated the willingness of Mauritius to work with the United Kingdom in order to produce a joint draft to give effect to the Advisory Opinion, which could offer a win-win situation.

The British Prime Minister stated that the British authorities were still studying the Advisory Opinion and its implications for the British Government. She suggested that the Permanent Representatives of the United Kingdom and Mauritius in New York should pursue discussions and that she would in the near future send a Foreign Office Minister to Mauritius to hold further discussions. I made it clear to the British Prime Minister that whilst awaiting concrete proposals from the UK side on the implementation of the Advisory Opinion, Mauritius would together with other countries expeditiously table before the General Assembly a draft resolution calling for the implementation of the Advisory Opinion.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we expect that all Member States, including the United Kingdom, will fully cooperate with the UN General Assembly in ensuring the prompt decolonization of Mauritius. Completion of the decolonization of Mauritius would allow all Mauritians to move freely within the entire territory of Mauritius and in particular those of Chagossian origin to return to the Chagos Archipelago.

For our part, I assure the House that we shall leave no stone unturned so that we can see effectively the end of the decolonization process of our country.

Mr Deputy Speaker Sir, I would like to take this opportunity to reaffirm our deep gratitude to the African Union and all States that have supported, and continue to support, Mauritius in its struggle towards complete decolonization. We are in particular thankful to the African Union and third States which actively participated in the advisory proceedings before the ICJ by making written and/or oral submissions.

I also wish to thank our external legal team led by Professor Philippe Sands QC as well as our local team which includes the Secretary to Cabinet and Head of the Civil Service, the Solicitor General, our Permanent Representative to the United Nations in New York and the Special Adviser to the Minister Mentor, Minister of Defence, Minister for Rodrigues for their excellent work.

And above all, I have a special word of gratitude and appreciation for the Minister Mentor, Minister of Defence, Minister for Rodrigues for his firm initiatives and conviction in what he undertook, and for standing out relentlessly against all odds to take those initiatives to unprecedented achievements.

I thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

SUGAR INSURANCE FUND BOARD – FACT-FINDING COMMITTEE

The Minister of Agro-Industry and Food Security (Mr M. Seeruttun): Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. With your permission, I have two statements to make to the House.

First, I would like to make a statement on the Sugar Insurance Fund Board in reference to the Fact-Finding Committee that was set up following the PNQ of the Leader of the Opposition on 21 November 2018.

As the House is aware, on 23 November, 2018, Government set up a Fact-Finding Committee on the SIFB with Mr L. Aujayeb, Assistant Solicitor General, as Chairperson and, Dr. G. Rajpati, GOSK, Agricultural Economist as Assessor. Mr A. Aumeerally, an Actuary, was subsequently appointed on 07 December 2018 to assist the Fact-Finding Committee in its assignment.

The Terms of Reference of the Fact-Finding Committee include the examination of the report dated 08 August 2018 of the Operations Manager of the SIFB regarding the non-declaration of Event Year for crop 2017 and ascertain if there was a need for crop 2017 to be declared as an Event Year for certain Enlarged Factory Areas (EFAs) and, if so, determine the amount of compensation to be paid to the planters concerned.

The Terms of Reference of the Fact-Finding Committee have subsequently been widened to include the purchase of 6 *arpents* of land by the SIFB at Trianon.

On 13 March, 2019, the Fact-Finding Committee submitted its Report (Part One) on Crop Year 2017 which concerns the issue of non-declaration of an Event Year for crop year 2017.

The Fact-Finding Committee will submit a Part Two Report on the purchase/acquisition of land by the end of April 2019.

The Fact-Finding Committee has concluded that the three Enlarged Factory Areas of Médine, Omnicane and Alteo should be declared as an Event Year for crop 2017.

The Fact-Finding Committee has therefore recommended that a Technical Committee be set up by the board to determine the amount of compensation to be paid to the insured planters of the three enlarged factory areas.

The Technical Committee has already been constituted and will submit its recommendations to the board for its urgent approval.

Moreover, I am informed by the SIFB that payment of the compensation for crop year 2017 will be effected as from the second week of April.

I also wish to inform the House that the board of the SIFB has also decided that crop year 2018 will be declared an Event Year.

I thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

RODRIGUES - FALL ARMY WORM

Now, with regard to my second statement, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I wish to inform the House that my Ministry was made aware of the presence of Fall Army Worm in Rodrigues on Friday 22 March, 2019, which is considered as having devastating consequences in agriculture.

The pest was reported to affect maize plantation in the region of Pistache and Eau Claire.

Cabinet was informed on the same day and arrangements were immediately made for a team comprising of officers from the National Plant and Protection Office, Entomology Division of my Ministry and FAREI to proceed to Rodrigues on the same day. The team

brought along 20 traps and 20 litres of pesticides which were adequate to contain that pest in these two regions.

Arrangements were also made for a specimen of that pest to be made available for molecular identification by the MSIRI. The specimen was received on the night of Friday 22 March, 2019. A DNA testing has confirmed that the pest is actually the Fall Army Worm. The results will be sent to South Africa for validation.

A Crisis Committee chaired by the Senior Chief Executive of my Ministry and comprising, *inter alia*, the Director Agricultural Services, CEO of the FAREI, officers responsible of the Entomology and NPPO Divisions of my Ministry was also set up to monitor the situation and advise on the measures to be taken. The Committee has met twice – on Friday 22 and Saturday 23 March, 2019.

At the meeting of Saturday, a first report from the team in Rodrigues was considered and it was noted that over and above the two sites initially reported, five additional sites were found to be infested, namely Mt Goyave, Camp Paul, Roche Bon Dieu, Anse aux Anglais and Plateau Bois Noir.

Accordingly, the Committee decided that –

- (i) the whole of Rodrigues be quarantined as the containment of the pest would not be appropriate in view of the extent it had spread in various regions in Rodrigues;
- (ii) additional traps and some 50 more litres of chemicals be sent to Rodrigues on the first available flight;
- (iii) as a precautionary measure, an urgent meeting with all stakeholders concerned be called on Monday 25 March, 2019 with a view to enlisting their support in ensuring rigorous surveillance at entry points in Mauritius;
- (iv) a survey of the crops in Mauritius be carried out. Same was effected during the week-end in the North, East, Centre West and South of the island by the officers of FAREI. No presence of the pest has been reported;
- (v) additional lure traps need to be placed at the airport, port and other regions across the country. The needful has already been done, and
- (vi) fumigation of all vessels/cargos from Rodrigues need to be carried out.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, on Monday 25 March 2019, a latest report was received from the team informing of the spread of the pest all around Rodrigues. I must highlight that no spraying/treatment could be effected in Rodrigues during the weekend in view of the prevailing cyclonic conditions.

At the stakeholders' meeting held on Monday to review the situation and to take action, as appropriate, the following have been decided –

- (i) a motorised sprayer of 400 litres capacity together with additional chemicals be shipped to Rodrigues urgently;
- (ii) the Civil Aviation and port authorities to extend their collaboration in exercising surveillance;
- (iii) the National Coast Guard to inform the Ministry whenever a yacht is leaving Rodrigues for Mauritius;
- (iv) taking into account that the movement of plants and plant products are potential pathways for the spread of the pest, a temporary restriction is being imposed on all movements of such items between Rodrigues and Mauritius for the time being. The Island Chief Executive has already been notified accordingly;
- (v) all passengers and their luggage would be subject to 100% screening for the presence of plants, plant parts and plant products prior to departure from Rodrigues, and
- (vi) arrangements have also been made for the dissemination of these measures to all departments/sections (Customs, port, airport and other authorities concerned) and passengers travelling to Mauritius from Rodrigues with a view to improving vigilance at all quarters.

In addition, my Ministry is seeking the assistance of the FAO for the elaboration of a Surveillance Plan for Mauritius and the eradication of the pest in Rodrigues.

I thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

PUBLIC BILLS

First Reading

On motion made and seconded, the Mental Health Care (Amendment) Bill (No. 1 of 2019) was read a first time.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Members, I suspend the sitting for half an hour.

At 5.01 p.m., the sitting was suspended.

On resuming at 5.43 p.m. with the Deputy Speaker in the Chair.

Second Reading

THE MAURITIUS DEPOSIT INSURANCE SCHEME BILL

(No. XXIV of 2018)

Order for Second Reading read.

(5.43 p.m.)

The Prime Minister: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I move that the Mauritius Deposit Insurance Scheme Bill (No. XXIV of 2018) be read a second time.

The object of the Bill is to establish the Mauritius Deposit Insurance Scheme in order to protect the savings of individuals in banks and non-bank deposit taking institutions by providing insurance against the loss of their insured deposits. The Scheme will also strengthen the element of trust in the banking system and contribute to financial stability in Mauritius.

We have seen that globally no banking system is immune to bank failures. The Great Recession of 2008 and 2009 is a stark reminder of the kind of risk that bank failures can cause to the economy. In Mauritius also, we have had unfortunate experiences of bank failures where intervention of Government was needed.

It is, therefore, imperative that savers, in particular, small depositors feel that their lifetime savings are protected and safe.

There have been wide consultations with the industry on this Bill. Working sessions have been held by the Bank of Mauritius (BoM) with banks and the Mauritius Bankers Association to discuss on the salient features of a deposit insurance scheme for Mauritius. A working draft of the Bill was also released by the Bank of Mauritius for public consultation in February 2016. The views of all stakeholders have been incorporated where applicable and the assistance of the International Monetary Fund and the International Association of Deposit Insurers were also sought for the drafting of the Bill. The proposed legislation has

been drawn in line with the Core Principles for Effective Deposit Insurance Systems, which constitute the backbone of any deposit insurance scheme.

Let me outline the salient features of the Deposit Insurance Scheme –

- (i) First, the Scheme will be administered and managed by an Agency, namely the Mauritius Deposit Insurance Corporation Ltd, to be incorporated and registered under the Companies Act.

The Agency will be incorporated by the Bank of Mauritius which will contribute towards its capital. The Agency will, subsequently, be taken over by an independent institution.

The first Board of Directors will be appointed by the Bank of Mauritius with the concurrence of the Minister.

- (ii) Second, the Scheme will cover deposits of up to Rs300,000 per insured depositor and per deposit taking institution as provided for in Clause 23. I would like, here, to point out that 90 per cent of all individual depositors of banks have deposits lower than Rs300,000. This means that the large majority of depositors will be fully covered;
- (iii) Third, for the purpose of the Scheme, there will be a Deposit Insurance Fund which will be established and managed by the Agency. This is provided for in Clause 13;
- (iv) Fourth, to start the Scheme, all deposit taking institutions will be required to make an initial contribution that will add up to one tenth of the targeted fund as stipulated in Clause 18(10) and the Third Schedule of the Bill;
- (v) Fifth, all deposit taking institutions will subsequently contribute an annual insurance premium of 20 cents per hundred rupees of their insurable deposits. It is expected that the total amount of the Fund will reach around Rs4 billion over a period of seven years.

Where a failed institution is acquired by another institution, provision has been made for the Agency to transfer all insured deposits to an acquiring institution, in lieu of payment, as outlined in Clause 24.

The Bill comprises 35 Clauses arranged into 7 Parts –

- a. The general interpretation and definitions are outlined in Part I;
- b. Part II establishes the Mauritius Deposit Insurance Scheme;

- c. Part III describes the functions and powers of the Mauritius Deposit Insurance Corporation Ltd.;
- d. The operation of the Deposit Insurance Fund is set out in Part IV;
- e. Membership to the Deposit Insurance Scheme and the Premium Payable are set out in Part V;
- f. The obligation to pay compensation to depositors of a failed institution is set out in Part VI;
- g. Finally, Part VII contains the miscellaneous provisions relating to offences and penalties, regulations and consequential amendments.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I shall now highlight the main clauses of the Bill.

Clause 2 provides for clear definition of terms and types of deposits that will be insured by the Scheme.

For the purpose of this legislation, a depositor would have to be a resident of Mauritius and deposits to be covered would principally be deposits in a savings account, a current account and time deposits.

To mitigate conflicts and inconsistencies with any other enactments, clause 3 deals with the application of the Act.

Under clause 14, the Agency may, for the purpose of meeting its obligations, borrow or establish prearranged funding arrangements with the Bank of Mauritius and/or private lenders. The Minister may, by regulations, also impose, in an emergency situation, on a temporary basis, a special premium increase during a year, whenever the Minister considers it necessary to replenish the Fund.

Clause 15 provides for the investment policy of the Fund to be approved by the Board of the Agency. It authorises investment in safe and liquid assets, whereas it prohibits investment in member institutions and high-risk instruments. Any income from investments shall be credited to the Fund.

Clause 19 provides for every member to maintain records of its insured deposits and such other information as the Agency may determine.

Clause 20 empowers the Agency to carry out off-site and on-site examination of banks and non-bank deposit taking institutions and to instruct its members to address any deficiencies identified.

Clause 21 sets out the circumstances giving rise to the obligation of the Agency to pay compensation to depositors of a failed member institution.

Clause 22 sets out the guidelines to be issued by the Agency, establishing the process for compensation of insured depositors.

Clause 25 empowers the Agency to recover any amount paid in excess or wrongly paid to any person.

Under clause 26, the Board of the Agency shall submit to the Minister a copy of the audited financial statements and an annual report of the Agency which shall be tabled in the National Assembly.

Under clause 27, the Agency is exempted from the payment of any taxes, duties and levies.

Clause 28 provides for the powers of the Agency to issue guidelines, directives and instructions and it shall not be placed under liquidation except by an Act of Parliament as set out under clause 29.

And to ensure that the Agency operates in the best interest of its member institutions, clauses 30 to 32 provide for offences and penalties to be dealt with effectively.

Clause 33 provides that the Minister may make such regulations for the purposes of this Act while clause 34 outlines the consequential amendments which are being brought to the Bank of Mauritius Act and the Banking Act.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Bill is highly recommended as the setting up of a deposit insurance scheme in Mauritius will no doubt enhance depositors' confidence in our financial system.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I now commend the Bill to the House.

Mr Sinatambou rose and seconded.

(5.53 p.m.)

Mr R. Uteem (First Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, Friday 03 April 2015, a day which will ever live in infamy, to borrow

the word of former President Franklin Roosevelt. It was Good Friday, *Vendredi Saint*. Everybody was looking forward to celebrate Easter weekend. Depositors of Bramer Banking Corporation Limited got the shock of their lives. When they headed to the bank to withdraw cash to do some shopping, they found that the Head Office and all the branches of Bramer Bank all over the country were closed. They rushed to the ATMs, but all the ATMs were out of order. They could not withdraw money. Depositors could not withdraw money. What they thought at first to be a bad joke, a belated April Fool's day, turned out to be true. The Bank of Mauritius had revoked the banking licence of Bramer Bank, and the Bank of Mauritius did so way past midnight, in the early hours of 03 April. In a moment of panic, all the depositors or some of them, at least, rushed to the Government House; they cried, they wept, they asked for their money, their hard earned cash which was deposited in Bramer Bank. And that is when the Government propaganda machinery was activated.

The Government delegated three Ministers to hold a Press conference to reassure depositors –

- Vishnu Lutchmeenaraidoo, Minister of Finance;
- Roshi Bhadain, Minister of Financial Services and Good Governance, and
- Ravi Yerrigadoo, Attorney General.

Where are these Ministers? Where are these hon. Members? Some will call it fate; others will call it curse. At that Press conference, Vishnu Lutchmeenaraidoo is reported to have said, and I quote –

« Le gouvernement tient à rassurer les 30,000 personnes qui possèdent des comptes à la Bramer Bank qu'elles ne perdront pas un seul sou. »

Undertaking by the Government to compensate every single depositor.

Of course, in those days, we did not have the Mauritius Deposit Insurance Scheme Bill that is before this House today. So, how would Government live up to this commitment? The then Minister of Finance, hon. Vishnu Lutchmeenaraidoo, stated, and I quote –

« Les procédures ont été enclenchées pour que la State Bank of Mauritius reprenne en main la Bramer Bank. »

The State Bank of Mauritius was going to take over Bramer Bank. He soon found out that it was easier to obtain Euro loan to speculate on gold from the State Bank of Mauritius than to get a listed company such as the State Bank of Mauritius to take over the Bramer Bank.

Answering a PNQ on 07 April 2015 from the hon. Paul Bérenger, the then Leader of the Opposition, the Minister of Finance informed the House that, in fact, there were not 30,000 depositors but actually 50,524 depositors, holding 64,403 accounts in the bank. The then Minister of Finance announced that Government had set up the National Commercial Bank to take over the assets and liabilities of Bramer Bank to safeguard the interests of all depositors; all depositors to be compensated. But, unfortunately, the hon. Minister was economical with the truth because, in fact, the National Commercial Bank did not take on board all depositors' money.

In an agreement dated 11 April 2015 between Bramer Banking Corporation Limited and the National Commercial Bank, there is a whole schedule, Schedule 13, which refers to bank accounts which were not taken over by the National Commercial Bank. And there is no bank secrecy here, this is a public document, this is registered with the Conservator of Mortgages. You can see five pages long of names of depositors that were not going to be taken by the National Commercial Bank. You have companies related to BAI, you have a page long with names of Rawat, including minors, but you also have other people such as Nandane Soornack and the hon. Navinchandra Ramgoolam. So, the point I am trying to make here, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, is that when you have a Deposit Insurance Scheme and the Government makes an undertaking to compensate depositors, the Government picks and chooses who it wants to compensate. I don't know what happened to all those depositors who were excluded from the deal by the National Commercial Bank. Under the Banking Act, depositors are privileged creditors. What happened to all those depositors? Did they get their money or was the money belonging to Bramer Bank used to pay holders of Super Cash Back Gold in BAI? But, of course, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, not all depositors are equal, some depositors were not *kouyon!* Prior to the revocation of the Banking License there was a run down on the deposit held at Bramer Bank. Parastatal bodies withdrew their money, Civil Servants, Ministers, and even the then Prime Minister, Sir Anerood Jugnauth, who stated live on radio, and I quote –

“Abé ki mo rann moi kouyon, mo laisse mo kass laba mem? Premier zafer mo tire mo kass. Enn bato p coulé mo sove mo la peau.”

It is very unfortunate, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that when hon. Shakeel Mohamed, in a PQ on 12 December 2017, requested the Government to name and shame all the public officers who had withdrawn their money from Bramer Bank days before the closure, who had used insider, what is perceived to be insider information. The Government, the Ag. Prime

Minister hid behind Bank Secrecy and refused to divulge the name of the public officers who withdrew their money before the Bramer Bank license was revoked.

And as for *les couyons des mortels* who had bank deposits with Bramer Bank, who foot the bill? We did, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir! Taxpayers' money was used to safeguard the interest of depositors of Bramer Bank. We all remember how in this House, and outside this House, several Ministers repeated *ad nauseam* that not a single rupee of public fund would be used to compensate the victims of BAI, not a single rupee. But is the public aware how much money this Government has had to fork out to safeguard the interest of depositors of Bramer Bank, so far? In answer to a PQ on 30 April 2018, the hon. Prime Minister gave us the amount that the government has injected.

The Prime Minister: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this Bill is not about Bramer Bank, it is about a Deposit Insurance Scheme. True it is that the hon. Member has the leeway to make a case for why is it that we are coming up with this kind of measure. But, it seems that now that debate is about Bramer Bank. So, I would wish that you rule whether the hon. Member is ongoing on Bramer Bank or whether he has set the tone for why is it that we are coming with this Bill, fair enough. But I do not think he can go on and on at length. Now, he is talking about any money that was advanced to Bramer Bank. What has this got to do with this Bill?

The Deputy Speaker: I think in the Explanatory Memorandum of the Bill in front of us, the objects of the Bill are very clear. The hon. Member has elaborated on an issue which is in a way related to this piece of legislation and I will now request him to debate on the main objects of the Bill.

Mr Uteem: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I bow to your ruling, but the point I am making here is that if we don't have a Deposit Insurance Bill, it is the taxpayers who foot the Bill when a bank goes into receivership, liquidation. This is most relevant. So, I want to end by telling the population how much money, us, taxpayers - they are watching us on TV - have had to fork out to save MauBank because we didn't have this Deposit Insurance Scheme. So, I think this is very relevant and I want to finish on this.

(Interruptions)

I am going to finish on this! So, answering to the PQ, the hon. Prime Minister told us that Rs3,219,000,000 were taken out of the Consolidated Fund, but that is not all. Questions were asked and I personally put another PQ to find out that, in fact, MauBank Holding injected money into MauBank also. And where did MauBank Holding get the money? They

borrowed from State Bank and that was guaranteed by the Government! So, that's another Rs3 billion...

(Interruptions)

The Prime Minister: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, you have ruled, you have said that it is not in order for the hon. Member to continue. Now, whether he continues, and challenging your ruling...

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Uteem, you yourself said that you are concluding on what you are making as a point. As I said, please finish it and get back to the piece of legislation.

Mr Uteem: I was concluding, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. I know it hurts! Because they said not a single cent will be used and they ended up using Rs6.9 billion! This is my point: Rs6.9 billion! Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, Bramer Bank is not the only bank in Mauritius which has gone into receivership. We have had the Mauritius Cooperative Central Bank, we have had the Union Bank, we have had the Delphis Bank, but each time Government has had to fork out because we did not have the Mauritius Deposit Insurance Scheme. So, that is why, on this side of the House, we welcome this Bill, but we need to show the importance of this Bill by reference to what has happened and how much we have had. Because this Bill is about insurance, it is a cover for depositors. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. According to the International Association of Deposit Insurers, today, as many as 143 countries have some sort of deposit insurance system. The United States has had deposit the insurance system for over a century. India introduced the deposit insurance system as far back as 1962. This goes to show how late we are in Mauritius. Yet, when the Banking Act was presented in 2004...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Please, can you switch off the phone.

(Interruptions)

Please, resume!

Mr Uteem: I was saying that when the Banking Act was enacted in 2004, 15 years ago, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, section 93 of that Act already provided that, and I quote –

“There shall be established and maintained, in such manner as may be prescribed, a deposit insurance scheme to provide insurance against the loss of part or all of deposits in a bank.”

So, this provision was already there since 2004 in our Banking Act, but there was a strong lobby from the Banking Sector against the setting up of a Deposit Insurance Scheme as banks were reluctant to contribute a share of their profit to the fund. In particular, larger banks were believed that they were financially sound and did not want to subsidise the depositors of competitors which they thought was less strong than them. But, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the subprime mortgage crisis in the United States has shown that no bank is too big, no bank is too mighty to fall.

We welcome this Bill, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, and we also welcome the fact that this scheme will not cover just bank deposit, but also non-bank deposit taking institution such as leasing companies. However, we do have a number of concerns which we hope will be addressed by the hon. Prime Minister in his summing-up. First of all, there is a lack of transparency and accountability surrounding the agency which will administer and manage the scheme. We are told that the agency would be the Mauritius Deposit Insurance Co. Ltd and, in fact, the definition section, section 2, talks about a company which is incorporated and registered. Now, I checked this morning again. This company is not yet incorporated in Mauritius.

The Bill is silent as to who the shareholders of this company will be. In section 34 of the Bill, the Bank of Mauritius Act is being amended to provide that the Bank of Mauritius may subscribe to all or part of the share capital of the Mauritius Deposit Insurance Corporation. So, if the Bank of Mauritius will not subscribe to all of the shares of that company, who else will? Will there be another public agency as shareholder? Will the private sector be invited to subscribe to that share capital? Next, what will be the initial capital of the Mauritius Deposit Insurance Corporation Ltd?

The hon. Prime Minister referred to the draft Bill which was circulated by the Bank of Mauritius for comments as far back as February 2016. Well, in that draft Bill, there was a provision to the effect that the authorised share capital of the scheme would be Rs500 m. to be subscribed entirely by the Bank of Mauritius but the Bill before the House, today, does not provide for any capitalisation of the agency. So, does the Government today has in mind how much seed capital the Government would put into that agency to start its operation? What would be the composition of the Board of that agency? What would be the qualification of the Board members?

Again, the draft Bill which was circulated by the Bank of Mauritius in 2016 contained very detailed clauses as to the composition of the Board, who would be Board members but also what qualification Board members would have. By contrast, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, section 7 of the Bill only provides that the members of the Board shall be appointed in accordance with the constitution of the agency. Now, the company has not been incorporated; it does not have a Constitution and today we are asked to vote a Bill and we don't even know who would be the Directors, how would the Directors be appointed, what would be their qualification. It would all be in a Constitution, a Constitution that does not exist today. So, at least, you know. The hon. Prime Minister should come and tell us how many Board members there would be, what would be the profile of the Board members, what would be their qualification. Are we going to appoint the same people on the Board as those who are responsible for the crash of Air Mauritius today? Are we going to appoint on the Board the same people who are responsible for turning a blue chip company like the State Bank of Mauritius into a loss-making company?

So, at the very least, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we require the Bill to provide that Board members should have certain expertise in banking, finance, legal and insurance matters.

The next question is: to whom will the agency and the Board members be accountable? The agency will be a company. Will we, Members of this House, be allowed to ask questions on the agency in this House? Will we be allowed to scrutinise the operation of the agency, the appointment of the Board members, the recruitment of the Chief Executive Officers and other Officers? Will we be allowed to ask questions about the fund, the adequacy of the premium amount? Will we be allowed to ask questions about any bank or non-bank deposit taking institution which defaults on its contribution?

I would like the hon. Prime Minister, at least, to give assurance to this House and the population that the agency will be accountable and the Minister of Finance will answer PQs relating to the agency and the operation of the scheme.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, so much for the agency. Now the crucial question, because we are talking about depositors, who would be the depositors who would be compensated under this scheme? Depositor is defined in section 2 as, and I quote –

“An individual who is a resident of Mauritius and who is eligible to compensation for an insured deposit in the event of failure of a member institution, whether or not the deposit is made by him.”

So, first criteria, only individuals will be compensated. What about cooperative societies? Will members of cooperative societies have to go on strike to get their refund? And we know, that has happened in the case of BAI, they went to a hunger strike. What about micro enterprise? Unfortunately, the Minister for Small and Medium Enterprises is not here, but he would have told you that SME Mauritius is encouraging entrepreneurs to carry out business through companies in order to secure finance and now this little entrepreneur because he has chosen to put his savings in a deposit in the name of a company, he will not get compensated, but if it was in his own personal name, he would get compensated. Where is the logic? And why only residents can be compensated? Everybody knows that we need foreign direct investment. We have all these measures, all these schemes to encourage foreigners to invest in Mauritius. The Economic Development Board does roadshows and tries to attract high net worth individuals. We try to encourage private banking business for non-residents and banks in Mauritius are making a lot of profits using the deposit from foreigners who invest in Mauritius and put their money in the bank accounts in Mauritius. So, why are we excluding those foreigners? Why such discrimination? Where is the logic?

The next question, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, is how much compensation should be paid to depositors. Section 23, subsection (3) of the Bill provides that the coverage limit per insured depositor shall be Rs300,000 or such other amounts as may be prescribed. Why just Rs300,000? I heard the hon. Prime Minister say because 90% of individuals who have deposits, have less than Rs300,000 in a bank. But what about all these pensioners, who when they retire, get their lump sum and put their money in a bank account, in a deposit account, in a fixed account? What about all these pensioners? Because they have chosen to put more than Rs300,000 in a bank, they won't get compensated? Where is the logic in that?

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, at the moment, Mauritius enjoys one of the lowest rate of savings in decades. According to Statistics Mauritius, gross domestic savings as a percentage of GDP at market rate for 2018 would be 9.6%, below 10%, and any economist knows that a gross domestic saving of less than 10% is way too low and definitely insufficient to support the level of investment necessary to sustain a high level of economic growth. Now, assuming that this Government wants a high level of economic growth, because, as Vishnu Lutchmeenaraidoo rightly pointed out, there is every reason to be ashamed if we have only 3% growth, so, we need to encourage savings. How are we going to encourage savings if we tell individuals that your savings will be guaranteed only up to Rs300,000. So, what incentive do they have to put more than Rs300,000 in a bank deposit, knowing that only

300,000 would be guaranteed? I would urge the hon. Prime Minister, at least by regulation, to increase this amount if he is not willing to amend the whole section at Committee Stage.

What would be the amount to be contributed by the bank and non-banking financial institutions to this fund. Once again, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we can see the banking sector lobby at work. When the draft Bill was circulated in 2016 by the Bank of Mauritius for consultation, it provided that every scheme member was required to pay into the fund a premium of 30 cents per Rs100 on the insurable deposit and today in section 18, subsection (2) of the Bill, it is not a premium of 30 cents per Rs100, the premium to be paid has now been reduced to 20 cents per Rs100. So, a reduction of one-third, that is 33%. Why? Do banks have a problem with cash flow or forking out the initial contribution to the fund? Section 18(4) of the Bill provides –

“The annual premium shall be set based on reasonable assumptions and projections.”

But section 18(4) does not say who will determine what are the reasonable assumptions and projections. Who will it be? Will it be the Board? Will the Board of the agency decide what is the annual premium and whether such annual premium is reasonable or not? Do the Board members have the expertise to determine whether this premium is reasonable? Should not the annual premium, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, be set by a qualified Actuary who has knowledge of risk and calculate the amount of premium? This is what is expected in any insurance scheme. But if this is the case, then why not put it in the Act? Why not say that the Board acting on the advice of a qualified Actuary will determine the annual premium payable? Why leave it to the discretion of the Board who may be subject to pressure and lobbies?

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I will end on a drafting note. It is unfortunate that the Bill was only circulated to us, Members, this morning, and the hon. Prime Minister is not proposing any amendment at Committee Stage. When the Bill was circulated, it was in 2018. So, the Act makes a series of references to 2018, which is wrong. For example, if you look at section 60 of the Banking Act which is being amended, it would talk about Mauritius Deposit Insurance Scheme established under the Mauritius Deposit Insurance Scheme Act 2018 instead of 2019. Similarly, if you go in the Second and Third Schedule, you would find reference is made to the Mauritius Deposit Insurance Scheme Act of 2018. So, I would request the hon. Prime Minister to come up with an amendment at Committee Stage to provide that whenever the word 2018 appears in this Bill after the Deposit Scheme, it should be read as 2019.

A final point, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I forget about that, it is section 18(9) of the Bill which provides that –

“The premiums payable under this section shall not be chargeable to depositors in any form.”

Now, this is a very important, crucial section of this Bill. Depositors should not be penalised. It is the bank and non-bank deposit-taking institution who has to fork out the money. But then, how do we monitor this? How do we ensure that the banks are not indirectly charging depositors for the premium that is paid to this fund? And we have so many hidden costs, so many hidden bank charges. So, I really hope that the Bank of Mauritius would monitor closely the situation and ensure that, for example, banks do not indirectly charge this premium to customers by offering lower interest rate than would otherwise be applicable.

To end, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the aim of a Deposit Insurance Scheme should be to adequately compensate depositors in case of a bank or a non-bank financial institution being unable to repay the deposit of its depositors. Although this Bill is a step in the right direction, in our opinion, it does not go far enough. And even if this Bill was in force at the time the Bank of Mauritius revoke the Banking Licence of Bramer Bank back in April 2015, the Government will still have had to spend billions of rupees of taxpayers’ money to safeguard the interest of depositors of Bramer Bank.

Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Rutnah!

(6.24 p.m.)

Mr S. Rutnah (Third Member for Piton & Rivière du Rempart): Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this is not only the first Bill in the House that has been presented with a view to consolidate our economy, to strengthen our economy and to strengthen our financial services in Mauritius. We had, for example, amongst others, the Ombudsperson for Financial Services Bill, the National Payment System Bill, the Business Facilitation (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill, the Build Operate Transfer Projects Bill, the Captive Insurance Bill and the Good Governance and Integrity Reporting Bill. All these laws have come to this House in order to strengthen our financial services, to strengthen our economy.

The Bill today presented by the hon. Prime Minister is designed to actually make depositors feel safe that their money, their savings in the bank is safe. This is what the Bill is all about. When I was hearing hon. Uteem, I thought that I am in a Court of Law hearing Counsel for Bramer Bank, hearing Counsel for Dawood Rawat, making a case for the Bramer Bank and for Dawood Rawat. Unfortunately, Mr Rawat decided to leave Mauritius and hide in France rather than to come and explain how Bramer Bank was not a concern or a corporation which was not completely dilapidated by his own acts and doings. We know, all of us in this House and the public at large, that hon. Bérenger came to this House when I was not in this House then, asked a PNQ in this House, technically saying, making assertion that Bramer Bank, the whole BAI Scheme was a Ponzi Scheme, and now, a representative of the MMM to come and pretend that BAI was a profitable and going concern.

(Interruptions)

Mr Uteem: The whole point was about how much money we are paying. I never said anything about financial soundness of any company.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you for saying what you have stated, hon. Member. I believe that by now, most of the Members of this House or maybe all, master the essence of debates in this House, that is, whenever there are arguments raised on one side, the other side can oppose those arguments. But what I request Members that this be done within the spirit of this House, and as we are among hon. Members, in the way we usually have debates in this House.

Mr Rutnah: I am so grateful for your guidance, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, and I will continue to stay within the parameters of the debate by saying that Bramer Bank, at the time when decision was made to revoke its licence, there was overwhelming evidence to suggest that it was a company, a corporation that was economically dilapidated and people's money was at risk. Now, at that point in time when the banking licence was revoke, what was the option for the Government? To let the people lose their money in its entirety? In fact, the Government was never responsible for individuals who chose to go and bank with a bank that eventually collapsed. Therefore, it was not Government's business at all to intervene into it. But this Government followed the debates, this Government followed the outcry that was going on outside there. But remember that when we took power in 2014, we took power, amongst others, on the basis that we are going to bring *la paix sociale et l'harmonie sociale*, because without *la paix sociale et l'harmonie sociale*, we cannot construct an economy, we

cannot bring growth. So, it was important for Government to intervene. If Government would not have intervened, there would have been protests, there would have been marches, there would have been *la grève de la faim*. That is why, as a caring Government, we had to intervene. I see the Leader of the Opposition is smiling because he was at that time in the Government, and he knew that we had to intervene as a caring Government. So, we intervened.

It is normal that Government cannot compensate 100% to those who have lost their money. True it is, at that time there was no such scheme on which the Government or the people who have lost their money would have relied to be so compensated. So, today, to criticise that Rs6 billion of taxpayers' money were taken and compensated to losers of Bramer Bank, I suppose that it is a criticism that is aimed below the belt, because any caring Government would not have allowed such a situation to perpetuate, to continue and to allow people to suffer. So, Government has no option than to find a solution and the solution was found. People were compensated in accordance with certain percentage and certain ratio, depending on how much money they invested in their investment scheme or in their deposit.

So, this is exactly what today this Bill is coming to do. It is coming to actually help savers, depositors to ensure that, at least, some of their deposit, if beyond Rs300,000, is secured, is there. Now, people in Mauritius would recall that in Government Programme 2015-2019 at paragraph 187, we said this –

“Inflation will be kept under control and new policies will be implemented to raise national savings.”

Now, my friend, hon. Uteem, is absolutely right when he said that we have to encourage people to save so that we can keep inflation under control. So, how do we do that? How do we encourage people to save? Either we increase interest rates on savings or we provide other means and ways which will ensure people will keep their money in banks, in deposits so that that money can have, what we call in economic terms ‘the multiplier effect’. But, of course, some people like to keep their money in their coffers and safe at home to the tune of Rs240 billion. But, here, we are talking about people in Mauritius, workers, working class, majority working class people. How much money do they save? Do they have 300,000 pound liquid cash in bank account? No! Most of them are indebted, most of them have loans, but this scheme is going to encourage people to go and save. When they will save, it will stop the rapid circulation of money that causes inflationary process.

So, the Bill has got two facets: the social facet and the economic facet. The social facet is to bring *la paix et l'harmonie sociale* and the economic facet is to bring the economy to a stage where we will experience growth. Now, my friend, hon. Uteem, also criticised the Bill in relation to a lack of transparency. I have not seen any section or any clause in this Bill where really information or things concerning the whole scheme of a nature that could be concealed. There are a number of clauses that, in fact, deal with information sharing. For example, we have Clause 11 - Cooperation, coordination and information-sharing agreements. I do not propose to read what is outlined in the subparagraph of the Bill. We also have, for example, Clause 13. At Clause 13, there are a number of subparagraphs dealing with the Fund and how the Fund is going to manage, who is going to manage the Fund. Concerning the Board members, for example, my hon. friend stated that we do not know who will become the Board members, what will be their qualifications. Now, it is true to say that it is not spelt out who are going to be the Board members. However, if we look at Clause 9 of the Bill which deals with disqualification and Clause 9 (1) states as follows –

- “(1) Without prejudice to section 133 of the Companies Act, a person shall be disqualified as a Board member or officer if he –
- (a) commits any default or breach of trust or is guilty of serious misconduct in the performance of his duties under this Act or has otherwise engaged in conduct which, in the opinion of the Board, renders him unfit to be appointed or to continue in office;
 - (b) is suffering from such mental or physical infirmity as to render him unfit to perform his duties under this Act;
 - (c) is a director or an employee of a financial institution or owns or controls a significant interest in shares of a financial institution;
or
 - (d) has been convicted of an offence involving fraud or dishonesty or of an offence of such nature which, in the opinion of the Board, renders him unfit to continue in office.”

So, we know that there are clauses relating to disqualification. So, the disqualification clause, in fact, tells you who will be qualified to become a member of the Board. So, those who are not falling within the disqualification criteria will automatically be members who

will be qualified to become the Board members. Now, are we going to be able to scrutinise from this House? Are we going to be able to ask questions? But it is an established principle that we cannot ask questions about private companies. Not only this Government, but previous Governments as well have refused to answer questions in relation to private companies. By the way, I have had an opportunity to look at the model of this kind of scheme in other countries like India, Africa; you even have this scheme in Ethiopia. When look at the model, in all these countries, it is the same. There is an Agency, there is a company, there is a Board based on the same model. It is working in other countries and it should work here. So, I do not see why we should depart from established principles that have been adopted in other countries and which have worked properly there. In India, it is working since 1962. Why not here?

So, it is at least a starting point in our country. It is a starting point for our small depositors who will be guaranteed that their deposit is there in case there is a collapse of the banks. We know that in many countries, when banks have collapsed, people have lost their savings, their hard work money, but, we, in Mauritius here, up until now, we were facing the same situation, and we can't continue to allow this to happen. So, that's why we have to have this Bill. My friend also asked who will be depositors who will be compensated - individuals.

Now, let us look at the definition of depositors. It says as follows –

“depositor” means an individual who is a resident of Mauritius and who is eligible to compensation for an insured deposit in the event of failure of a member institution, whether or not the deposit is made by him.”

Failure of a member institution. An institution is not an individual per se, but we know, in company law, there is individual and there is corporate personality. So, when we say individual, we include for the purpose of the Companies Act, real people and corporation. I think this is going to actually dispel any qualms that my friend, hon. Uteem, has. And then, with regard to how much compensation to be paid - Rs300,000 -, I think I have dealt with it that most savers in Mauritius, most working class people, most *travayers* don't have up to Rs300,000. So, those who have more than Rs300,000, now with the coming into effect of this law, can spread their savings in different banking institutions. If, for example, I have Rs900,000, I can put in bank X Rs300, Y Rs300 and Z Rs300.

I see my friend is saying maximum Rs300,000, but maximum Rs300,000 in one bank. And then, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, all in all, I will persuade everybody in this

House to actually vote for this Bill because it is an unprecedented measure to help our people. It is an unprecedented measure that complements other laws that have been passed in order to consolidate and strengthen our economy.

On this note, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I thank you very much.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Rampertab!

(6.43 p.m.)

Mr R. Rampertab (Second Member for Flacq & Bon Accueil): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am immensely grateful for being given the opportunity to address this august Assembly on this landmark piece of legislation. Indeed, the Mauritius Deposit Insurance Scheme Bill is another historic step in the construction of a sound and viable financial system and one which will consolidate confidence both in financial institutions as well as the local financial system.

In fact, at the very core of this legislation is the earnest wish of the hon. Prime Minister and Minister of Finance to continue his relentless mission in protecting the population from potential failures in financial institutions. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, after this Government's accomplishment of pushing through the Ombudsman for Financial Services Bill last year, we are starting this Parliamentary year with another achievement for which the hon. Prime Minister and Minister of Finance must be congratulated.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the reason behind why a Deposit Insurance Scheme is important for our country must be clear for the hon. Members of the House and for the population at large. In fact, Mauritius has progressed tremendously economically since its independence and such fast-paced progress is inevitably accompanied by increased macro-economic financial risk. For instance, in 2005, the total deposits in Mauritius amounted to 9.7 billion dollars. In 2014, however, the same statistics rose to 23 billion dollars and reached nearly 28 billion dollars in March 2018.

For many years now, the IMF, in their Article IV Missions, has been highlighting the existing major systemic risk of not having a proper deposit insurance scheme for our country, and the resulting financial risk the country could face is the situation of a bank or deposit taking institution would go bust. The main lesson of the financial crisis of 2008 was that no banking institution could escape from going burst, and our Government cannot stay indifferent anymore. Hence, a Deposit Insurance Scheme is a vital tool for protecting the public from the dire consequences of failure or default.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, two of the most effective tools to tackle situations of failures and defaults are deposit insurance schemes and orderly resolutions. The combination of the two frameworks guarantee access by depositors of their funds, prevent any cases of rushes to the banks, long queues, and ultimately maintain the stability of the entire financial and monetary system. This piece of legislation, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, comes at the most opportune moment of our country. However, the operation and purpose of the new Mauritius Deposit Insurance Scheme must be clear for everyone, and it is our duty to ensure that we explain clearly the ultimate objective of the proposed institution to our population.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, what our Prime Minister and Minister of Finance wants to achieve through this piece of legislation is simply to set up a scheme which will promote public confidence and provide robust consumer protection to the citizens of Mauritius. Hence, the Mauritius Deposit Insurance Scheme can pay a compensation if a contributing bank or non-bank deposit taking institution is or is unable or unlikely to honour the claims by any customer. In common practice, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it is referred to as a situational failure or of defaulting. Therefore, the hon. Prime Minister and Minister of Finance is marking history again by setting up another free, impartial and independent institution to financially protect the citizens of Mauritius and change the financial landscape of the country.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it must be clear for the population that the Mauritius Deposit Insurance Scheme is a framework which is only funded through contributions from participating banks and non-bank deposit taking institutions, but more importantly, that individual customers will never have to contribute to the scheme nor will they ever be charged to seek any compensation they are due.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it is worth noting that through this Bill, Mauritius will also fulfil part of its commitment toward the IMF in strengthening its resolution and crisis management framework.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, what the Mauritius Deposit Insurance Scheme also does is put Mauritius on par internationally. Currently, the International Association of Deposit Insurers, known as IADI, regroups 87 members, 10 associates and 14 partners. Mauritius has for many years only been an associate of the IADI as we were not fulfilling the criteria to obtain a member status. Through this piece of legislation, our country will graduate to member status and will be able to enjoy the technical expertise of the IADI to continuously adapt and improve the Mauritius Deposit Insurance Scheme.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, if we look in details into the operation of the proposed scheme, we note with confidence that the international best practices have been carefully followed to craft this piece of legislation. As per the IADI, there are 16 core principles which should be adhered to while designing and assessing a deposit insurance scheme. Hence, for instance, the membership of the Mauritius Deposit Insurance Scheme must be compulsory for all banking and non-banking deposit-taking institutions. Indeed, the Bill states that all existing and future banks and non-bank deposit-taking institutions will automatically be enrolled as members of the scheme.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it is worthwhile noting that in case any institution falsely state that they are members of the scheme, it will see CEOs facing upon conviction, a hefty imprisonment term of not exceeding 10 years or a fine not exceeding Rs1 m. Such a deterrent, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, is most welcome and appropriate, given the severity of the offence and demonstrates that our hon. Prime Minister and Minister of Finance resolve in being ruthless towards institutions which put the financial security of our citizens at stake.

Additionally, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, principle term of the IADI states that public awareness is a key for any scheme and I am pleased to note that the Mauritius Deposit Insurance Scheme is very much ahead in terms of ensuring that as much information is provided to the public. For instance, the Bill states that the MDIS should maintain a website with a listed information for the benefit of the public. This platform will be a tool in continuously promoting the scheme through the latest information to the public.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in the UK, for example, the Financial Services Compensation Scheme, which is known as FSCS, has impressively leverage since its creation in the year 2000, digital technology and modern media to promote its services. It also holds an annual awareness survey through its members' institution. For instance, after the most recent awareness or protection survey within the public, 81% of the adult had some knowledge of the FSCS or the protection scheme.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I also note with satisfaction the mechanism outlined to determine and collect the contribution towards the fund. It is, indeed, a robust and stable framework which equally caters for any exceptional circumstances by giving the Ministry of Finance the necessary powers. More importantly, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the process around the compensation payment has been clearly stated and meets the very high standard prescribed by the IADI. Indeed, in the UK, the FSCS, for instance, offers a convenient claim

service through its website whereas the European Deposit Insurance Scheme recommends a maximum of 20 days with a full claim process to be completed.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Bill being presented today highlight that the compensation process should take the least amount of time possible to be completed. I salute the hon. Prime Minister and Minister of Finance for his consideration of the stress, anxiety and frustration that the depositors might be facing in case the banks or non-banking deposit takers have failed or defaulted.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in 2017, the World Bank noted that only 24% of countries in the Sub-Saharan Africa have implemented deposit insurance schemes. After the setting up of this Mauritius Deposit Insurance Scheme, I see a genuine opportunity for Mauritius to be a regional leader in promoting the expansion of similar schemes in the Sub-Saharan African region. Potentially, Mauritius could spearhead a regional centre of excellence to generate and share the latest research consultation papers and data analysis. Through our experience and growing expertise, we can aim to be a leading player in the regional design, assessment and enhancement of the Deposit Insurance Scheme. Such a role will fit perfectly in the hon. Prime Minister and Minister of Finance's endeavour to establish Mauritius as a leading international financial centre.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I salute the hon. Prime Minister and Minister of Finance's vision, hard work and decorum for presenting this piece of legislation. The hon. Prime Minister has been unyielding in setting up the right institution to cater for the protection of the banking and financial services customer. He has a solid track record and will not stop here in terms of new ideas on how to better protect, educate and inform the customers.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we have a Prime Minister who works relentlessly and makes us work even harder. I will again congratulate him and thank him for coming up with such an important piece of legislation.

Thank you very much.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Adrien Duval!

Mr A. Duval (First Member for Curepipe & Midlands): Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. Mr Deputy Speaker, we welcome the Bill; we have some provisos with regard to the various institutions that we are setting up. But like the most recent case of the Bramer Bank serves us well, it should never be for the taxpayer to foot the bill whenever banks fail and, therefore, bringing to this House the Mauritius Deposit Insurance Scheme is the right step in

the right direction. However, when one reads the Explanatory Memorandum of the Bill itself with regard to the purpose, what it aims to achieve, that is, to protect insured depositors of bank or non-banking deposit taking institution, you ask yourself: why does it not apply to insurances?

History has shown that insurance tends to fail more often than banks. You have had Seagull, you have had the BAI, you had the Rainbow Insurance, and yet, we have not extended the application of this Bill to insurances. And I think it should, but this is the first remark. Secondly, Mr Deputy Speaker, when you look at the manner in which the Bill will seek to achieve its objective by setting up, first of all, the Mauritius Deposit Insurance Corporation Ltd, a whole new institution which will require a whole new Board, a number of staffs, a new office, administrative cost, running cost, all sorts of costs that will be funded through the fund that it will manage and administer, then you ask yourself why, especially since we haven't included insurances, therefore we do not have to deal with the FSC, why couldn't we just put it under the aegis of the Bank of Mauritius? Why did we have to create a new Corporation to take over responsibilities that could be carried out by the Bank of Mauritius? Why do we need to spend an enormous amount of resources on the running and funding of the Corporation, which will be funded by the monies collected by the fund where it could have been done very easily at the Bank of Mauritius itself? I hope that we will get the reason.

We strongly believe that there is no need for this new institution. We strongly believe that it could have being done again by the Bank of Mauritius and, therefore, it is a waste of resources that should have gone entirely to reimbursing depositors whenever and if ever a bank fails, especially since these institutions do not fail every day, they very rarely do so and, therefore, it could have been done again by the Bank of Mauritius.

Secondly, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, when you look, for example, at section 10, the possibility to appoint consultants, when you look at section 8 with regard to the possibility of sharing of employees between the Bank of Mauritius and the Mauritius Depository Insurance Corporation Ltd., when you look at the possibility of placing employees of the Corporation at the Bank of Mauritius, then, again, you ask yourself, if there will be the sharing of employees, if there will be the need to appoint consultants, if there will be the need to seek external technical know-how and expertise, why couldn't it all be done and that is the central point by the Bank of Mauritius, why did we need to come up with that new institution.

Then, when you look, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, at the investment policy committee that will have to be created, it will have to have members, it will have to have resources of its own in order to be able to advise on investment, to authorise, to prohibit investments of the funds, monies and all this is all going to make the cost fly, shoot up the roof and these costs will be footed again from the very fund that seeks to reimburse, to cover depositors if ever a bank fails. So, therefore, this is for us something that we do not understand and I hope that it would be enlightened. Why insurances had not been included, why did we need to go for a new institution and then there are some missing information with regard to the funds, how it would work, with regard to what is the targeted fund, how it would be determined, how it would be calculated, on what basis, when will the targeted fund be determined and the Third Schedule is silent on this. And, therefore, we need to know who will determine the targeted fund, because the deposits, the levy that is taken from the bank would be calculated on this and there is also the point which hon. Uteem raised with regard to guaranteeing the 0.2% that would be levied on the profits of the bank per depositor, how do we guarantee that it would not again be charged indirectly by hidden cost to the depositor. So, these, I think, are *des éclaircissements qui sont nécessaires*.

On one thing we agree however, is with regard to the quantum. We do agree that Rs300,000 is enough. We agree with this firstly, because we cannot just guarantee up to any excessive amount any depositor. There needs to be the shared responsibility. We should not be creating the moral hazard of giving a blanket cheque to depositors to go and invest in any type of scheme, in any type of investment, especially when you have quasi-Ponzi Scheme that offer attractive rewards with high risk and, therefore, there needs to be a limit. We have capped the Rs300,000. We agree with this, because it covers most of the depositors, but it also gives the sense of responsibility to investors. So, we do agree with this.

On the whole, the Bill is welcome. We agree with the philosophy. However, we do not agree with the fact that we are going to waste so many resources on this institution when it could have been done by the Bank of Mauritius. We think that we should have taken a less burdensome approach, that by not creating this corporation in the first place, we would be avoiding the recruitment of staff, the appointment of Board members, the need to go and look for an office, and fund that office, the administrative costs, all the expenses that go with it, we would avoid also, therefore, diluting the fund and its assets. I think it is counterproductive. The aim of it is to amass enough assets, enough monies to cover all the depositors who are

eligible in Mauritius and, therefore, we should have taken that less burdensome approach in the first place.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we support the Bill and we hope that again our questions will be answered.

Thank you.

(7.05 p.m.)

The Prime Minister: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, let me first of all thank all the Members who have participated in the debate on this Bill, and I also wish to thank all those who have directly or indirectly contributed in the preparation of the Bill.

As I have stated earlier, working sessions have been held by the Bank of Mauritius (BoM) with banks and the Mauritius Bankers Association to discuss on the salient features of a Deposit Insurance Scheme for Mauritius. In fact, the Bank of Mauritius also released a copy of the Bill for views and comments from the public at large. The views of the IMF and the International Association of Deposit Insurers were also taken into consideration before finalising this Bill.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the need for a Deposit Insurance Scheme was emphasised in the IMF/World Bank Financial Sector Assessment Programme (FSAP) Report as far back as 2007, and since, then nothing has been done. And as the House would recall, the 2007/2008 financial crisis had in fact further undermined the confidence in the banking systems around the world and, in fact, had heightened the need to better protect depositors.

My Government is determined to bring forth necessary legislative changes to reinforce the regulatory framework of the financial system and to make it also in line with international norms. The recent enactment of the National Payment Systems Act, the Ombudsperson for Financial Services Act, the amendments brought in the Finance (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2018 bear out this determination.

I am pleased that today this Bill is being presented to the House and will soon be enacted.

Now, according to the database of the World Bank and the International Association of Deposit Insurers (IADI), the number of deposit insurance schemes worldwide has increased from 84 in 2003 to 143 as at 03 March 2019. As per the World Bank - as has been mentioned by hon. Rampertab - only 24 per cent of African countries have deposit insurance

schemes, and Mauritius will thus form part of the few countries in Africa to have in place a Deposit Insurance Scheme legislation.

The IADI, domiciled at the Bank for International Settlements in Basel, Switzerland, is a non-profit organisation formed in May 2002 to act as a standard setter for Deposit Insurance Scheme by promoting guidance and international cooperation. In fact, it has published Core Principles for Effective Deposit Insurance Systems which constitute best practices for deposit insurers and benchmarks. I wish to inform the House that the Bank of Mauritius is an Associate Member of the IADI since November 2010.

Now, the provisions of the Mauritius Deposit Insurance Scheme Bill (No. XXIV) of 2018 have been aligned with the Core Principles issued by IADI.

Our aim when preparing this Bill was to have the widest coverage while protecting maximum number of small depositors. And I state earlier, to this end, we have set the limit to Rs300,000 per depositor per member institution which will cover around 90% of resident individual depositors of member institutions.

Now, both Mauritian rupees and foreign currency deposits are covered under this insurance scheme. It includes deposits in a savings account, current account and fixed deposits, placed with a member institution in Mauritius. The Bill also empowers the Board to determine whether other types of deposits need to be covered under the scheme. I listened to a few of the criticisms that have been made. Let me say for the sake of comparison, the coverage limits provided by a few jurisdictions -

- In India, the deposit coverage limit is 100,000 Indian Rupees, that is, approximately 50,000 Mauritian Rupees;
- In Kenya, the deposit coverage limit is 100,000 Kenyan Shillings, approximately 33,000 Mauritian Rupees;
- In Nigeria, it is around 500,000 Naira, approximately 66,000 Mauritian Rupees, and
- In Singapore, there is a limit higher than the Rs300,000 that we have.

Now, I must say I am surprised by one point that has been made by hon. Uteem. He said: why is it that all the depositors' money is not fully covered? Can I ask him one question? I am not allowed to ask questions, but I put the question to the House. Can he tell me in which country there exists such a scheme when somebody is fully covered? If that was

the case, you know what would happen, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir? We would need to have the financial institution and we would need to have a parallel similar, same quantity of money deposited in another agency so that when this institution goes bust, all the depositors' money can be fully recovered. This does not exist. This is only utopia. It is up there. But in all the countries, everywhere there is a limit. Now, we can argue on whether, as you are saying Rs300,000 according to you is maybe too small an amount. But I have said when we compare to those countries like India, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, which has been having this scheme for so many years and the equivalent is 50,000 Mauritian Rupees.

Now, the hon. Member also dwelt on the fact that apart from why is it that we are not fully covering the depositors' money, institutions, companies and so on. Now, either we want something to work, either we want protection of some depositors or we have something that is not going to work. Because if we have to cover, as I say financial institutions, companies and so on who also deposit their money, this means that the premium will have to shoot up to such a level that the financial institutions will never agree to foot the bill. It is as simple as that. So, that is why, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we are starting something which I must say is not only better than other bigger economies but, of course, in time to come Rs300,000 can be changed. It can be increased in time to come but, at least, the starting point is very good enough. And as I say, 90% of the depositors will be covered.

We have also made sure that the insurance premium is not charged to depositors because hon. Duval also made the point. The rate of 20 cents per hundred rupees on insurable deposits at the inception of the Deposit Insurance Scheme, first of all, let me say is reasonable.

(Interruptions)

In the draft, yes, we could have circulated a draft, you mentioned 30 cents. But that is the purpose of consultation. That is the purpose of discussions with the stakeholders, especially those who are going to foot the bill. And we have agreed on 20 cents which we believe is reasonable and is going to be charged to member institutions.

Now, the hon. Member is worried about whether there can be a way where those institutions will make the depositors pay for that. Well, of course, we have the Bank of Mauritius which normally supervises the banking institutions and it will investigate and it will see to it that this is not being transferred to the clients.

The initial flat rate of 20 cents per hundred rupees on insurable deposits will be applied to all member institutions. This flat rate has been proposed in line with the recommendations of the International Association of Deposit Insurers to newly established Deposit Insurance Schemes to facilitate their start-up. However, a risk-based premium may be envisaged in the future to take into account the risk profile of each financial institution.

This premium rate will permit the Agency to cumulate a fund of Rs4.3 billion at the end of 7 years.

The Target Fund aimed at Rs4.3 billion over 7 years will cover 6 small banks or any of 3 medium sized banks. And this, of course, will constitute a good safety net in the event of a bank failure.

The question was raised as to who will be the shareholder. Now, the Bank of Mauritius will be the only shareholder of the agency. And the hon. Member said that there is a lack of transparency and accountability to manage the scheme. The share capital profile of Board members, including operational matters will be included in the Constitution of the agency. And, I must say, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I also am surprised. The hon. Member said: well, we do not know who are going to be the members of the Board, the Directors. Well, we do not normally present a Bill and say in advance. Maybe exceptionally we can do that, but we normally do not say who are going to be the members of the Board. Yes, true it is that we need to have some qualifications, but the hon. Member can rest assured that for such kind of agency, we are not going to name any Tom, Dick and Harry.

There will be people, at least, who have knowledge in the financial sector, in the banking sector, in the legal field also, you know, such kind people will be eventually nominated.

Now, the Minister of Finance and Economic Development will be accountable. In accordance with the Bill, Members of Parliament would be entitled to ask questions on the audited accounts that would be tabled in the National Assembly. I have stated earlier in my opening speech that, that will be tabled before the National Assembly.

Now, let me also say that: why is it that we are only compensating individuals? What about cooperative societies, micro enterprise and so on? Again, the provision, as it is today for this Bill, is to compensate individuals but, eventually, the Board, in addition to savings, current and fixed accounts, can also determine what type of deposits can be covered under the scheme.

It will be for the Agency then to work out and see in the future, but we need to start somewhere. This is the point I want to make! Sometimes, I wonder Members want us to have full coverage, to have as wider coverage as possible. This is not possible! If we want to start, let us start somewhere. This is the beginning. And I am sure, in time to come, it will grow and it will have a wider coverage. And eventually, why not even in the future cover micro-enterprises, cooperative societies and other corporate bodies! We will see.

Now, there is another point with regard to why only Rs300,000. As I said, the initial objective is to protect the small depositors, not high worth individuals, although they also need protection because they are also putting their money. Regarding the point that was made about pensioners, they can do one thing also. Obviously, if it is more than Rs300,000, they will be covered up to Rs300,000, but they can spread their deposits in different banks and different non-bank deposit-taking institutions so that the pay-out will be a multiple of Rs300,000. Alright! If we have a depositor who deposits his money, let us say in five institutions of Rs300,000, that already makes it Rs1.5 m. So, I think we also need, at least, to be intelligent enough to see that if we want more protection, we can spread the deposits.

Now, with regard to the amendment for '2018' to '2019', I am told that this can be corrected. In fact, the year '2018' used in several parts of the Bill, it is considered that same can be addressed by way of editorial corrections before the Bill is submitted to the Government Printer for gazetting. So, the change from '2018' to '2019', you know, will be done in an administrative manner.

There was a question asked about the share capital. I am told the initial share capital to be contributed by Bank of Mauritius shall be Rs500 m.

Then, with regard to projections regarding the quantum of the premium in future, well, information regarding such analysis would be done by technicians at the Agency level and be provided to the Board for proper decision-making.

Then, there was an issue about why should it not apply to insurance companies. Well, insurance businesses have schemes which are very different from the banks. It is not possible, hon. Duval, to cater for that kind of business.

Now, concerning the operating costs, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in fact, we are starting with the Bank of Mauritius, but the Bank of Mauritius cannot be a regulator as well as an operator. So, in time to come, as I say, but at the initial stage it will be Bank of Mauritius which will provide logistics and other facilities, in fact, free of charge, but eventually, the

Agency will have to sever its link from the Bank of Mauritius because otherwise there will be a conflict.

Regarding the investment policy, of course, the Bank of Mauritius will initially assist the agency in the formulation of the investment policies, as mentioned in section 11. But, again, in time to come, the Agency will recruit technicians, if not on a full-time basis but, at least, they will have to retain the services of people, of expertise who will advise them.

Then, there was an issue about the target Fund, it has been defined in section 18(10). Another issue that was raised - no, this has been addressed.

Now, there was another thing I noted which I think is worth mentioning again, the issue of non-residents. Again, the same reasoning applies. We are not here to say: 'Look, non-residents, we are going to try to attract them'. And, you know, they are mostly the non-residents, mostly corporates, they use the Mauritian jurisdiction, quite a number of them, to transit their money because a lot of them do business elsewhere instead of Mauritius.

Their deposits are not, therefore, like fixed and stable deposits in Mauritius. There was a survey also that was carried out by the Bank of Mauritius in 2015 and we found out, obviously, that non-resident-depositors held the bulk of their deposits which are way above Rs600,000. So, on boarding non-resident depositors will, in fact, go against the spirit of the Deposit Insurance Scheme which is aiming at small depositors.

Let me say this to conclude, and I do not want to go into the issue of Bramer Bank, but obviously, I do not think any Government would wish any financial institution to fail. What we want is we want to have, first of all, regulator that will act in time, on time also. Because when we are talking about Bramer, we must also talk about how the regulators have not also been acting in time. I do not want to *polémiquer*, again, *sur cette affaire*. But you have also stated earlier: 'Look there was a Ponzi scheme that was being operated'. Now, why is it that the Ponzi scheme was operating publicly? We can say and we do not blame the public for that. Because when something is operating with the consent of the regulator, normally, it is assumed to be conducting a proper business in accordance with the regulations.

That is why we should not blame people who have put their money in such institutions. But we know that they were operating a Ponzi scheme and we know also that any time - I do not know whether it was going to take months or years to come - that will explode. It happened elsewhere. It was bound to happen here because that is the way a Ponzi scheme works.

Now, they can argue and say - well, this has been the hon. Member's main argument - whether we should have gone, if I can call it *simer zeguille simer zepingle* or whatever *simer*, whatever he would have chosen. But the end result, we know - I think he agrees with that - would have been bursting of the economy and it would have taken a really hard time for us *pour se remettre debout*, like what happened elsewhere. I do not want to dwell on that. Because the hon. Member mentioned about this, that is why I say we need to have the regulators who will do their work properly because they are the watchdog. They must see to it that the institutions are working properly according to the guidelines, and if they are not, they should be called to order. And that is why we say, apart from this, should there be - because there can be situations as we have seen elsewhere also - situations where you see a bank, you see a financial institution collapsing, that is the very purpose of this Bill in order at least to protect small depositors. And in this case, eventually, we shall be able to protect 90% of the depositors.

Thank you.

Question put and agreed to.

Bill read a second time and committed.

COMMITTEE STAGE

(The Deputy Speaker in the Chair)

The Mauritius Deposit Insurance Scheme Bill (No. XXIV of 2018) was considered and agreed to.

On the Assembly resuming with the Deputy Speaker in the Chair, the Deputy Speaker reported accordingly.

Third Reading

The Mauritius Deposit Insurance Scheme Bill (No. XXIV of 2018) was read a third time and passed.

ADJOURNMENT

The Prime Minister: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that this Assembly do now adjourn to Tuesday 02 April 2019 at 11.30 a.m.

The Deputy Prime Minister rose and seconded.

The Deputy Speaker: The House stands adjourned.

Hon. Members, I have a very long list of Members who have submitted their names to intervene at Adjournment Time. I would draw the attention of Members of the time allocated to this specific item, and I would request Members to be brief when they intervene. I also have among Members those who have submitted two items to be raised. I will allow the second one, if time permits. Hon. Osman Mahomed!

MATTERS RAISED

DR. EUGENE LAURENT & DAUPHINE STREETS JUNCTION - ACCIDENTS

Mr Osman Mahomed (Third Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central): The first one is addressed to the Minister of Public Infrastructure. It is regarding the junction between Dr. Eugene Laurent and Dauphine Streets, where Loreto Convent and Muslim Girls College are. There was a change of road direction in 2015 and Eugene Laurent was made the main road, but because Dauphine Street before the junction is wider, road users are perpetually under the impression that it is a main road, and this leads to frequent road accidents. My request tonight to the hon. Minister of Public Infrastructure is to have the Traffic Management and Road Safety Unit to look at this junction again with a view to preventing more accidents to occur.

The Minister of Technology, Communication and Innovation (Mr Y. Sawmynaden): Hon. Member, I will pass on the message to my colleague, the Minister of Public Infrastructure.

(I) VANDERMEERSCH STREET, BARKLY & CHEBEL - METRO EXPRESS WORKS

(II) ALBION - BRIDGE

Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière): Mr Deputy Speaker, my query is addressed to the Minister of Public Infrastructure - if my arguments can be channelled to him - concerning Metro Express at Vandermeersch Street. I am tabling photographs which have been taken by inhabitants concerning the quality of work and the permanent danger which is there. So, if that can be channelled to the Minister.

At Barkly also, Nelson Mandela Street, there are lots of problems with regard to access. If the Minister can make a statement in the House with regard to the issue of caves

within the *trajet* of Metro Express at Chebel and reassure the inhabitants and people of the surroundings about this issue of caves within the *trajet* of Metro Express.

The project of bridge at the entrance of Albion is causing lots of inconvenience to the inhabitants of Albion with regard to access; those going to the village have to go through the Belle Vue Branch Road. I will ask the Minister replacing the Minister of Public Infrastructure if these queries can be channelled to him and if immediate action can be taken, and if he can effect a site visit on these sites. Thank you.

The Minister of Technology, Communication and Innovation (Mr Y. Sawmynaden): Thank you, hon. Member. I will definitely pass on the message to my colleague Minister.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Uteem!

(7.39 p.m.)

NOTRE DAME DE LA PAIX R.C.A. SCHOOL – EXIT DOOR

Mr R. Uteem (First Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would like to raise an issue which concerns the hon. Minister of Education and Human Resources, Tertiary Education and Scientific Research, it relates to Notre Dame de la Paix R.C.A. School.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, Notre Dame de la Paix R.C.A. School has only one exit in La Paix Street and the Head Master has drawn attention to it, but, unfortunately, not to your Ministry. He wrote a letter on 07 September 2018 to hon. Dr. Husnoo, Minister of Health and Quality of Life to say that the school was not compliant as far as fire safety regulations are concerned, because in an event of a riot or the blocking of the street in La Paix, there is no alternative second road to exit, and they have even suggested that a second exit door be opened onto the Dr. Hyderkhan Mediclinic, Plaine Verte. This is why the letter was initially addressed to the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life.

May I ask the hon. Minister to look into the matter and ensure that there is, at least, a second emergency exit door, so that in case of fire or rioting the children are not trapped inside of their school.

Thank you.

The Minister of Education and Human Resources, Tertiary Education and Scientific Research (Mrs L. D. Dookun-Luchoomun): Mr Deputy Speaker, I will definitely look into the matter.

(7.40 p.m.)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Baloomoody!

STEVENSON ROAD, BAIN DES DAMES & CASSIS - DRAINS

Mr V. Baloomoody (Third Member for GRNW & Port Louis West): Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

I will raise an issue regarding the state of the drains in Cassis and more specifically at Stevenson Road, Bain des Dames. My question is addressed to the hon. Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands, Minister of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare, but I am sure it concerns also the hon. Minister of Health and Quality of Life.

There is along Stevenson Road a canal on the right - it depends on which direction. Anyway, on one side of the road there is a canal which is supposed to serve as a drain and it is not covered. Now, this drain is blocked on both sides, so the water is stagnant. There have been many requests to the Municipality. I have personally spoken to people from the Municipality. Their reply is that '*sa ena enn grand travay sa*'. Whether the NDU should do it or the Municipality, but now, apart from the foul smell there is *la fièvre dengue* around. There are many mosquitoes around and it is a big concern for the inhabitants with regard to *la fièvre dengue*.

So, I am making an urgent appeal, a request to Government, be it the Municipality, the Ministry or the NDU to look into the matter urgently and also for the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life as well to intervene.

Thank you.

(7.42 p.m.)

The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands, Minister of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare (Mrs F. Jeewa-Daureeawoo): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I find it strange that the Municipal Council of Port Louis has not addressed this particular issue if the hon. Member has raised it there. I normally preside meetings on a regular basis with all Local Authorities and all issues concerning drains

are being looked at as quickly as possible. So, I don't know if it is at the level of the NDU, but, rest assured, the needful will be done. I will convey a meeting.

Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Ameer Meea!

(7.42 p.m.)

MILITARY ROAD, PORT LOUIS – ‘CANAL ANGLAIS’

Mr A. Ameer Meea (Second Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East): Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. The issue I am raising tonight is addressed to the hon. Prime Minister who is also responsible for the NDU.

In fact, it relates to the very bad state of ‘Canal Anglais’, which is situated in what we call Crown Land in Constituency No. 3, at Route Militaire, Port Louis. I have raised this issue several times in the House in 2015 and 2016 through PQs and at Adjournment Time.

Several flash floods have damaged the bedding of ‘Canal Anglais’, which dates back to very long and which has resulted in the flooding of houses in the surroundings of ‘Canal Anglais’ at Crown Land. The most recent case is the flash flood that we had on 10 February 2019. And to place it on record, I have written a letter to the hon. Prime Minister dated 25 February 2019, which I shall table to the House.

Therefore, I would request the hon. Prime Minister to urgently look into the matter. I don't think that the canal can be repaired. I myself have been there. The concrete wall itself has had several major cracks. Maybe, it won't be able to be rehabilitated fully and, maybe, it should be demolished so as to do it anew.

Therefore, I am making a request to the hon. Prime Minister to look into this matter urgently.

Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

The Prime Minister: I will look into the matter.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Quirin!

(7.44 p.m.)

(I) TROTTER ROAD, BEAU BASSIN – DRAINS

**(II) MORCELLEMENT CHAPMAN, COROMANDEL – ABANDONED
LANDS**

Mr F. Quirin (Fourth Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière): M. le président, ce soir ma requête s'adresse à l'honorable ministre des Administrations régionales et concerne dans un premier temps les canaux qui longent dans les deux sens de la rue Trotter à Beau Bassin. En effet, les résidents du quartier m'ont contacté et ils m'ont fait parvenir des photos que je vais, bien sûr, déposer.

M. le président, ces canaux qui servent aussi de drains en période de pluie ne sont jamais nettoyés. Donc, outre l'aspect inesthétique, avec les mauvaises herbes obstruant le passage des eaux en cas de pluie, cela représente aussi un repère de moustiques et, bien sûr, par endroit, source de mauvaise odeur. Donc ça, en ce qui concerne la rue Trotter.

Et rapidement, il y a aussi le cas du morcellement Chapman à Coromandel, et là, je vais aussi déposer les photos. Au morcellement Chapman, on se croirait dans une jungle, M. le président. Donc, un repère de rats et de moustiques, sans oublier les cambrioleurs, les malfrats qui circulent librement sans être vu. Donc, les dix zones du morcellement sont tous dans le même état, terrains non-entretenus et laissés à l'abandon. Donc, comme je vous l'ai dit, je vais déposer les photos que j'ai prises récemment.

Dois-je rappeler à la Chambre qu'il y a des cas de la fièvre dengue qui ont été recensés récemment à Coromandel ? Bien sûr, je compte sur l'honorable ministre pour voir avec le département de la Santé publique et la municipalité de Beau Bassin/ Rose Hill de façon à ce qu'on accélère les choses et qu'on fasse nettoyer ces terrains qui sont laissés à l'abandon.

Quand vous allez voir les photos, Madame la ministre, vous constaterez dans quel état effectivement se trouve ce morcellement.

Je vous remercie.

(7.46 p.m.)

The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands, Minister of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare (Mrs F. Jeewa-Daureawoo): Well, I do know that the Municipal Council of Beau Bassin/Rose Hill is presently proceeding with the mowing of grass in certain areas. I must also say that with the

bad weather and persistent rain, the grass grows more quickly, but the hon. Member can rest assured, I will look into the matter. Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Armance!

(7.47 p.m.)

POINTE-AUX-SABLES/GRANDE RIVIERE/PAILLES/CASSIS – BUS SHELTER

Mr P. Armance (First Member for GRNW & Port Louis West): Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. My request tonight goes to the Minister of Public Infrastructure again regarding the issue of bus shelter in my Constituency, that is, No. 1.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I have several times, in this House, been asking for a proper bus shelter in the Constituency and, so far, nothing has been done. Again, I reiterate this request to the hon. Minister today. From Pointe aux Sables to Grande Rivière, including La Tour Koenig, Grande Rivière to Pailles and even in Cassis, there is no proper bus shelter. People are starting to get desperate and they are building their own bus shelter.

I will table these two pictures with regard to same. I would request the hon. Minister to please look into this as a matter of urgency. Thank you.

The Minister of Technology, Communication and Innovation (Mr Y. Sawmynaden): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I will channel the message to my colleague Minister.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Adrien Duval!

(7.48 p.m.)

Ms HINGAH BIBI NUSAYNAH – SCHOLARSHIP

Mr A. Duval (First Member for Curepipe & Midlands): Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

My request is to the hon. Minister of Education and Human Resources, Tertiary Education and Scientific Research. It is with regard to Ms Hingah Bibi Nusaynah residing in Eau Coulée, Curepipe. I know that the hon. Minister met her and tried to help, but I gather that there is not much that can be done.

Let me just re-appeal to the hon. Minister because it has already been two months now and she still feels that she deserves the scholarship, and the intake, as you know, will be between August and September. Is there anything that her Ministry can do, whether with the

scholarship, speaking perhaps to the SBM or, may be, Embassies to see whoever can give Ms Hingah that scholarship. She also wants to meet the hon. Prime Minister. They have made a request. I do not know if the hon. Prime Minister can help on his side, at least trying to get her a scholarship because we are talking about a brilliant little girl. So, please, I appeal to you.

Thank you.

(7.49 p.m.)

The Minister of Education and Human Resources, Tertiary Education and Scientific Research (Mrs L. D. Dookun-Luchoomun): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it is just that scholarships are given to students according to set criteria for the scholarship. I have met Ms Hingah and I have explained to her that Cambridge has already given its explanations to the MES and that the MES is satisfied with the explanation provided by Cambridge. However, she has been advised to apply for the scholarship for students from vulnerable families. In case she is found to be eligible by the Ministry of Social Security, she will indeed be taken on board. However, she can also apply for other scholarships provided by other friendly countries and there is a Board for that, a High-Powered Committee that selects candidates that obtain scholarships. So, it is not something that can be done according to my will, but everything has been explained clearly to her.

The Prime Minister: May I?

The Deputy Speaker: Yes, please, hon. Prime Minister.

The Prime Minister: Yes, I have received a letter also and I need to say something. Scholarships are given on the basis of merit and how do we determine who will get a scholarship? It is according to ranking. It is first, second, third and fourth and fifth and sixth. Now, if we start giving scholarships on the basis of, let say, somebody who has done very well; 3 A's, excellent result, but you know how many students get 3 A's? How many scholarships are we going to give? And I say that people should not doubt, Members of the House should not doubt that we are doing a lot in terms of promoting access and giving opportunity to our youngsters to have, let us say, the highest and the best education that we can afford. So, yes, she has got a very good result. Indeed, we all sympathise with her. Maybe if she would have done better, she would have had the scholarship, the other one would not have, but there is a question of merit. And if we want not to be acting in an arbitrary manner, we cannot then say: 'Look we are going to favour this one instead of the other one'. So, rest

assured and it is good that I tell the population that there has been no discrimination. It has gone on the basis of merit, we have seen together with the Minister of Education, we have more than doubly checked because I have been very sensitive to this case just like you, hon. Member, the Minister also, as well as the Government has been very sensitive to it. This has been discussed in Cabinet because we wanted to make sure that there is no injustice to a deserving candidate and we can assure about this, and you will see Cambridge has confirmed. We have got the details but I sincerely hope that because she has done very well, I hope that she will be eligible to some other scholarship. The Minister will try to help and do the needful.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you. Hon. Abbas Mamode!

PLAINE VERTE - EXCAVATION WORK

Mr S. Abbas Mamode (Fourth Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East): Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. My issue is addressed to the Deputy Prime Minister concerning excavation work being done by the contractors of the CWA.

As everybody is aware, we are mostly at the eve of Ramadan and there will be much more movement not only within the region but surrounding regions also. So, I will urge the Deputy Prime Minister to see to it that the areas are being secured, and secondly, if remedial action can be taken immediately after works being done so that we can facilitate people of the region to be...

(Interruptions)

Plaine Verte! I have said at Plaine Verte, Constituency No. 03.

Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

The Deputy Prime Minister: I thank the hon. Member for contradicting the Leader of the Opposition. We are doing tremendous work, including in his constituency. This is part of the effort to improve water supply everywhere and, of course, and that has got to be said. We have to do it piecemeal because if we start doing all Plaine Verte at the same time, imagine the chaos!

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: No crosstalking, please!

The Deputy Prime Minister: Reinstatement of works is a contractual obligation of contractors but there are technical matters of which I am not the master, but I am going to address the issue with the CWA, of course.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Lepoigneur!

VANDERMEERSCH - METRO EXPRESS - WORKS

Mr G. Lepoigneur (Fifth Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière): Merci, M. le président. Ma requête s'adresse à l'honorable Bodha mais, malheureusement, il n'est pas là. C'est toujours concernant Vandermeersch, à côté des travaux du Metro Express où les habitants ne sont pas contre le projet mais ils sont contre le manque de respect du contracteur, qui passe là-bas et ils ont même eu des drains beaucoup trop hauts pour pouvoir entrer dans leur cour mais le plus grand problème ce sont les travaux qui se font jusqu'à très tard, c'est-à-dire, trois heures du matin. Donc, moi-même j'ai une vidéo qui montre qu'il y a un marteau piqueur qui travaille jusqu'à trois heures du matin, ce qui fait que cela dérange vraiment alors que le sentier est pratiquement vide dans la journée. Je suppose que c'est fait exprès par rapport à l'*overtime* qui est payé. J'espère que l'honorable ministre va essayer de voir pour que ces personnes qui sont peut-être même déjà âgées de 90 ans et même malades aussi puissent passer leur nuit dans un moment paisible.

VERGER BISSEMBAR - DRAINS

Ma deuxième requête est adressée au Premier ministre sur la *NDU* concernant le verger Bissembar. C'est la troisième fois que je fais la requête concernant les drains qui n'ont toujours pas été faits là-bas. Il y a eu de graves inondations tout récemment encore et on demande à ce qu'on accélère la procédure pour pouvoir faire cela dans le plus bref délai. Merci.

The Minister of Technology, Communication and Innovation (Mr Y. Sawmynaden): The matter has already been raised by hon. Bhagwan. I think he does not agree with you; he gave me pictures of the works that have been carried out by Metro Express, but I think....

(Interruptions)

You are not listening. I am just saying that you have given me pictures but hon. Lepoigneur has got videos but he needs to give me his mobile phone now.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Henry!

**TERRAIN L'ÉLÉPHANT, MAHEBOURG – FOOTBALL GROUND -
INAUGURATION**

Mr T. Henry (Fourth Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien): Merci, M. le président. Ma requête va vers la vice-Première ministre, ministre des Collectivités locales, en ce qui concerne un terrain de foot synthétique à terrain l'Eléphant à Mahebourg. Le terrain de foot a été prêt il y a plus de 6 mois de cela mais pas encore inauguré. Je ne sais pas s'il y a un problème sur le *timing* pour l'ouverture mais le problème c'est qu'il y a certaines personnes qui ont coupé le *fencing*, ils utilisent le terrain sans permission et certaines personnes se servent de ce terrain comme parking alors que les jeunes du quartier veulent se servir de ce terrain-là et sont prêts à payer des frais pour l'utiliser mais, malheureusement, ce n'est pas possible. Donc, je demanderai à la vice-Première ministre de voir cela avec le *District Council* et d'inaugurer ce terrain au plus vite, que ce soit Mahen Jhugroo ou l'honorable Bobby Hurreeram qui inaugure, il n'y a pas de problème. Mais il faut que ce terrain soit ouvert. Merci.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order, please!

The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands, Minister of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare (Mrs F. Jeewa-Daureeawoo): Nous avons tellement de projets réalisés à travers le pays, mais malheureusement pas de dates pour l'inauguration. On va essayer de trouver une date.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Mrs Perraud!

FLOODING - 17 FEBRUARY 2019 - ASSISTANCE

Mrs A. Perraud (First Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue): Merci, M. le président. Ce soir ma question est adressée au Premier ministre. Le 17 février dernier, des pluies torrentielles se sont abattues sur le pays et beaucoup de régions ont été durement touchées par l'inondation et ses effets dévastateurs. La circonscription No. 4 n'a pas été épargnée. Nous avons pu voir sur les réseaux sociaux la fureur des eaux dans les régions telles que : Terre Rouge, Riche Terre, Vallée des Prêtres, Batterie Cassée, Cité Briquetterie, Cité la Cure, etc. Les victimes de cette inondation ont encouru de grandes pertes matérielles. Certains ont tout perdu. Le passage de l'inondation a laissé des scènes de

désolation ; les gens ont perdu leurs réfrigérateurs, leurs meubles, leurs matelas, leurs effets personnels, les matériels scolaires, les denrées alimentaires, et la liste est longue. Les sinistrés aujourd'hui se posent la question, ils ont posé la question aux députés de l'opposition, l'honorable Oree et l'honorable Madame Monty.

(Interruptions)

Excusez-moi ! Toutes mes excuses ! Aux élus du gouvernement, l'honorable Oree et l'honorable Madame Monty ! Est-ce que le gouvernement va leur venir en aide maintenant qu'ils ont tout perdu ? Est-ce qu'ils vont recevoir une aide financière comme c'est le cas pour d'autres régions de la république qui ont été durement touchées par d'autres calamités naturelles ? Les élus de la majorité représentant la circonscription ont répondu qu'ils ont transmis le message, leur requête, jusqu'au bureau du Premier ministre. Donc, ce soir, au nom des habitants, des sinistrés de la circonscription No. 4, je voudrais savoir si le gouvernement va venir en aide financièrement ou d'une façon quelconque aux habitants par rapport aux effets matériels qu'ils ont perdus. Donc, voilà on attend une réponse de la part du Premier ministre.

The Prime Minister : Tout d'abord, nous exprimons nos sympathies et notre solidarité à tous ceux qui ont été affectés par les inondations non seulement dans la circonscription No. 4 mais ailleurs. Il y a une procédure qui est en place déjà où il y a des enquêtes qui se font au niveau de la Police, avec le ministère de la Sécurité Sociale. Et comme nous avons fait dans le passé, dans les cas qui sont méritants, les cas qui satisferont les critères que nous avons établis, évidemment les mêmes critères qui sont utilisés vont être utilisés et le gouvernement va faire le nécessaire. Maintenant, ce n'est évidemment qu'après l'enquête qu'on pourra déterminer qui sont ceux qui seront éligibles à une compensation quelconque.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Ms Sewocksingh!

(8.01 p.m.)

CAMP LE JUGE - DRAINS - MAINTENANCE

Ms M. Sewocksingh (Third Member for Curepipe & Midlands): Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. The matter tonight is addressed to the hon. Vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Local Government. The inhabitants of Curepipe have brought to our attention that drains in several regions are not being maintained by the Local Authority, especially where the work is subcontracted. There is a case more precisely at Camp Le Juge, the road that goes

to Atlee Government School where the drain is not being cleaned and maintained and which causes flooding during heavy rainfall.

So, I humbly urge the hon. Vice-Prime Minister to look into the matter and kindly do the needful.

Thank you.

The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands, Minister of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare (Mrs F. Jeewa-Daureeawoo): Well, cleaning and maintenance of drains is, of course, an ongoing process at the level of all the Local Authorities. I do know that last week, certain cleaning and maintenance works have already started in certain regions of Curepipe, that is, Remono Street and Théodore Sauzier Street. But regarding the issue which the hon. Member has just raised, I have been informed of it by hon. Toussaint. I do know that the Municipality of Curepipe will look at it in the weeks to come.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Ramano!

(8.02 p.m.)

METRO EXPRESS – COMPULSORY ACQUISITION

Mr K. Ramano (Third Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes): Merci, M. le président. M. le président, je souhaite ici aborder une question précise découlant du projet de Métro Express relatif à la question de *Compulsory Acquisition*.

M. le président, selon le tracé actuel du Métro Express, tout le long de la Promenade Gérard Bruno, le long de l'Avenue Victoria en passant par l'Avenue Olivier et aussi Boundary, il existe bon nombre de maisons qui longent le tracé du Métro Express. Ces maisons, tenez-vous bien, sont à seulement 1 mètre, 2 mètres ou même 3 mètres et il y a aussi des maisons qui sont à seulement 1 mètre du tracé du Métro Express. Et c'est un fait en termes de normes internationales que ces tracés doivent faire provision d'un *buffer zone* en respectant *the Environmental and Social Impact Assessment*.

À ce jour, seulement les sites qui feront l'objet de la construction d'un *sub station* a fait l'objet d'un *Compulsory Acquisition* alors que, par exemple, de l'Avenue Ollier à l'Avenue Boundary, des deux côtés du tracé, comme je l'ai dit, il existe des maisons à seulement 1 mètre du tracé du Métro Express. À mon avis, il est important que le gouvernement intervienne pour que ces personnes ne soient pas à la merci des dangers

sécuritaires, de la pollution sonore, leurs qualités de vie seront tout simplement exécrable pendant la construction et après la construction du Métro Express.

Ces personnes, M. le président, veulent quitter ces endroits mais n'arrivent pas à trouver preneur pour leur maison pour la bonne et simple raison que la valeur de ces maisons a chuté drastiquement du fait que ces maisons se trouvent à seulement 1 mètre ou 2 mètres du tracé. Mon appel, ici, à l'honorable ministre, c'est de faire un *survey*, de relever le nombre de maisons qui sont à 1 ou 2 mètres et de donner cette possibilité au gouvernement d'acquérir ces quelques maisons qui, à mon avis, sont au nombre de 8 à 10 au grand maximum.

Je vous remercie, M. le président.

The Minister of Technology, Communication and Innovation (Mr Y. Sawmynaden): I will pass on the message to my colleague Minister.

At 8.05 p.m., the Assembly was, on its rising, adjourned to Tuesday 02 April 2019 at 11.30 a.m.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

FINANCING OF POLITICAL PARTIES BILL – INTRODUCTION

(No. B/5) **Mr K. Ramano (Third Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes)** asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Home Affairs, External Communications and National Development Unit, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to the Financing of Political Parties, he will state the proposed date of introduction of a Bill in relation thereto.

Reply: As the House is aware, the Government's proposals on the Financing of Political Parties were made public on 30 November 2018. The proposals were also sent to all political parties and independent Members represented in the National Assembly, and were equally posted on the website of the Prime Minister's Office. Moreover, the general public was invited to make suggestions and comments by 14 January 2019.

The suggestions and counter proposals which have been received are currently being examined.

Government stands by its commitment and will introduce the Bill into the National Assembly as soon as it is ready.

MAURITIUS-SEYCHELLES - SEABED AREA & EXPLOITATION OF HYDROCARBONS

(No. B/6) Mr J. C. Barbier (Fourth Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Home Affairs, External Communications and National Development Unit, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to the Joint Management of the Seabed Area and Exploitation of Hydrocarbons between Mauritius and Seychelles, he will state –

- (a) the name of the representative of Mauritius thereon;
- (b) the outcome thereof as at to date;
- (c) if an agreement has been reached in relation thereto, and
- (d) the number of meetings held since 2011 to date.

Reply: In regard to part (a) of the question, the Mauritius-Seychelles Joint Commission, which comprises an equal number of members, is co-chaired on the Mauritius side by Mr N. K. Ballah, G.O.S.K. Secretary to Cabinet and Head of the Civil Service and the members are –

- (i) Mr D. K. Dabee, G.O.S.K., SC, Solicitor General;
- (ii) Ambassador J. D. Koonjul, G.O.S.K., Permanent Representative of Mauritius to the UN;
- (iii) Mr S. Seebaluck, G.O.S.K., Senior Adviser, Ministry of Defence and Rodrigues, and
- (iv) Dr. R. Badal, Director General, Department of Continental Shelf, Maritime Zones Administration and Exploration.

The meetings of the Joint Commission are preceded by the meetings of the Mauritius-Seychelles Joint Technical Committee which is co-chaired on the Mauritius side by Ambassador J. D. Koonjul. The members on the Mauritius side are –

- (i) Mr A. Pursunon, Permanent Secretary, Prime Minister's Office;
- (ii) Dr. M. R. Badal, Director General, Department of Continental Shelf, Maritime Zones Administration and Exploration, and
- (iii) Mrs G. Topsy-Sonoo, Assistant Solicitor General.

In regard to part (b) of the question, the main outcomes of the meetings of the Joint Commission include –

- (i) the elaboration of a regulatory and administrative framework for the management of the activities in the JMA;
- (ii) the publication of the Strategic Plan for the Development of the JMA 2018-2020;

- (iii) the signature on 11 January 2018 of an Agreement with Spectrum GEO, UK, for the conduct of Multi-Client Geotechnical Surveys in the JMA. The seismic data acquired pursuant to the geotechnical surveys undertaken under this Agreement will offer valuable information for oil and gas companies interested in exploring the JMA as such data will provide unique insight into the oil and gas prospectivity of the region;
- (iv) the signature of an agreement with the UNDP/GEF for the development of the JMA based on the concept of sustainable blue/ocean economy for which the Joint Commission has obtained financial support to the tune of USD2.0 m. from the UNDP/GEF;
- (v) the adoption of a logo for the JMA as well as the creation of the website for the area;
- (vi) the participation of scientists of both countries in a 30-day mission in the JMA on board the Norwegian oceanographic research vessel, in May 2018, to better understand and evaluate the marine living resources in the JMA;
- (vii) the elaboration of a Marine Scientific Research Code to regulate research activities in the JMA, and
- (viii) the demarcation of blocks within the JMA in anticipation of the eventual granting of concessions to prospective oil companies for exploration purposes.

Discussions are ongoing at the level of the Joint Commission on a number of issues, among which, the modalities for the joint patrol and monitoring of the JMA, including fish-related activities that could potentially affect the underlying seabed and the official launching the JMA through the organisation of an International Symposium.

In regard to part (c) of the question, the modalities for the joint management of the JMA are embodied in the two Treaties signed between the two countries in March 2012.

In regard to part (d) of the question, the Joint Commission meets alternatively in Mauritius and in the Seychelles. The joint management of the area is an ongoing exercise. Since 2011, the Joint Commission has met on 16 occasions.

PUBLIC SECTOR DEBT

(No. B/7) Mr R. Uteem (First Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Home Affairs, External Communications and National Development Unit, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in

regard to the public sector debt, he will state the current level thereof, indicating the amount thereof –

- (a) denominated in Mauritian rupees and foreign currencies, respectively
- (b) representing both the short term and long term borrowings, and
- (c) expressed as a percentage of the Gross Domestic Product at the current market price.

Reply: Data on public sector debt are compiled and posted on the website of the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development on a quarterly basis. In regard to part (a) of the question, the latest data available are in respect of the quarter ended December 2018. At the end of this period, public sector debt stood at Rs313 billion. Of this amount, Rs255 billion were raised in domestic currency and Rs58 billion were in foreign currencies.

Regarding part (b) of the question, public sector debt as at December 2018 was composed of short-term debt of Rs32 billion and long-term debt of Rs281 billion.

In regard to part (c) of the question, as at end December 2018, public sector debt represented 64.5% of GDP at current market price.

It must be brought out that the share of Government external debt, which stood at 23.7% at end of 2014, has been reduced to 15% by end of December 2018. This has greatly lowered our exposure to foreign exchange risks.

With regard to Government domestic debt, the share of short-term debt, which was 12.5% at end of 2014, has been brought down to 8.7% in December 2018, thereby reducing our refinancing risks.

UNITED NATIONS ELIMINATION OF RACIAL DISCRIMINATION COMMITTEE - RECOMMENDATION

(No. B/8) Mrs D. Selvon (Second Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Home Affairs, External Communications and National Development Unit, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to the recommendation of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination of the United Nations dated 15 August 2018 for Mauritius to provide equitable treatment in all spheres to the Kreol community with respect to all other communities, he will state if and how this objective is being realised regarding –

- (a) recruitment –
 - (i) in the civil service;
 - (ii) of ambassadors, and

- (iii) of embassy staff, and
- (b) appointments to top positions in Government and parastatal bodies.

Reply (Attorney General): On 30 August 2018, the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination of the United Nations issued its Concluding Observations regarding the 20th to 23rd combined periodic reports of Mauritius, whereby it expressed, *inter alia*, its concern that the Creoles, including those living in Rodrigues and Agalega Islands, face *de facto* discrimination in all walks of life and remain disadvantaged in the enjoyment of human rights.

The Committee additionally was of the view that the Creoles are disproportionately vulnerable to poverty and have limited access to employment, housing, healthcare, and education. Moreover, the measures taken by the State, including by the Equal Opportunities Commission, according to them, generated limited impact on uplifting the socioeconomic situation of the Creoles, and also there was lack of measures specifically targeted to improve their situation.

In its recommendations, the Committee urged Mauritius to adopt and implement, with the participation of representatives of the Creoles, a well-resourced strategy to address the deep-rooted discrimination faced by the Creoles, including those living in the Islands of Agalega and Rodrigues. It further recommended that Mauritius should assess the effectiveness of measures taken, and design and implement other measures, including special measures, in close collaboration with concerned communities and relevant civil society organisations, to ensure that the Creoles have effective access to employment, adequate housing, healthcare services, and quality inclusive education.

Government was apprised of the Concluding Observations and recommendations adopted by the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination and decided to set up an Inter-Ministerial Committee under the Chairpersonship of the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands to look into same as certain of the recommendations if implemented would have far reaching implications on the social fabric of the Mauritian population.

The work of Inter-Ministerial Committee is still in progress and it would be premature, at this stage, to state how the objectives of the recommendations of the United Nations are going to be met.

TROIS BOUTIQUES, CARREAU ESNOUF & VILLE NOIRE - DRAINS

(No. B/9) Mr T. Henry (Fourth Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Home Affairs, External Communications and National

Development Unit, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to Trois Boutiques, Carreau Esnouf and Ville Noire, he will give a list of works carried out by the National Development Unit to prevent flooding thereat, since 2016 to date.

Reply: In the reply made to PQ B/722 at the sitting of 14 November 2017, mention was made that, firstly, the region of Trois Boutiques, including Carreau Esnouf is a very low-lying area and there is a major problem regarding outlet to channel storm water and secondly, that the National Development Unit is taking various measures to provide drains to prevent flooding during heavy rainfall in the region of Trois Boutiques.

A Consultant was appointed to study the catchment area of Trois Boutiques and Carreau Esnouf and proposed long-term flood mitigation measures. The Consultant has already submitted its Detailed Design Report and the estimated cost of the project is Rs138 m. Because of the complexity of the project, including wayleave and land acquisition issues, the project will be implemented in three phases.

As short-term measures, drain projects at Nehru Road (Near Banda House) and Bombay Lane in Trois Boutiques have already been completed.

Additionally, two works orders have been issued for drain projects at Bijah Road (near Seeboo house) and at Cité Trois Boutiques for a total sum of approximately Rs6 m. Works are expected to be completed by July 2019.

RESIDENCE LA CURE - MARJOLAIN - ROAD

(No. B/10) Mrs A. Perraud (First Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Home Affairs, External Communications and National Development Unit, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to Marjolain at Résidence La Cure, he will state if consideration will be given for the construction of the road thereat in the wake of the implementation of the construction project of a bridge by the National Development Unit thereat.

(Withdrawn)

PASSPORT & IMMIGRATION OFFICE & EDB – MR P.R.M.G. – INQUIRIES

(No. B/11) Mr J. C. Barbier (Fourth Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Home Affairs, External Communications and National Development Unit, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to Mr P.R.M.G., he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to where matters stand as to the inquiries initiated by the Passport and Immigration Office and the Economic Development Board in relation to a case of fraud committed by the latter in France.

Reply: Regarding the case of Mr P.R.M.G., a reply was made to Parliamentary Question B/419 on 22 May 2018.

In a recent statement recorded by the Passport and Immigration Office in Rodrigues, Mr P.R.M.G. has indicated that the appeal lodged by him in the “*Tribunal de Rennes*” in France has not yet been determined.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade has been requested to liaise with the French Authorities with a view to verifying the statement made by Mr P.R.M. G. and to confirm the status of the case.

**MEDPOINT CASE - MBC - INTERVIEWS - BIENHEUREUX PERE LAVAL
TOMB**

(No. B/12) Mrs D. Selvon (Second Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Home Affairs, External Communications and National Development Unit, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation, information as to the –

- (a) name of the journalist who carried out the interviews of the persons found within the precincts of the tomb of the Bienheureux Père Laval at Sainte Croix with regard to the Privy Council Judgement in the Medpoint Case, indicating the name of the person who gave directions therefor, if any, and of the one who gave directions for the broadcast thereof, and
- (b) actions taken in relation thereto as at to date.

Reply: In regard to part (a) of the question, the Officer-in-Charge of the Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation informs that Mr K. R., Programmes Producer (News and TV Production) had carried out the interviews of persons found within the precincts of the tomb of the Bienheureux Père Laval at Ste Croix.

In regard to part (b) of the question, the Officer-in-Charge of the Corporation informs that the written explanations of Mr K. R. were sought and he has tendered his apologies. He has been warned to be more cautious and to ensure that such an incident does not recur in future.

The management of the Corporation has tendered its apologies to the Diocese, which were accepted and was broadcast as a news item on 05 March 2019.

MAURITIAN ECONOMY – GROWTH RATE

(No. B/13) Mr A. Ganoo (First Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Home Affairs, External Communications and National Development Unit, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to the growth rate of the Mauritian economy which has remained around 3 percent over the past ten years, he will state the reasons therefor and the measures that will be taken to boost same in the coming years.

Reply: The Mauritian economy has, in fact, grown by an average of 3.7% annually during the past 10 years –

	2008	2018
GDP at current market prices	Rs284 billion	Rs485 billion
Per capita GDP in US\$	US\$ 8,000	US\$ 11,200
Foreign Currency Reserves	Rs57 billion	Rs218 billion
Social Benefits	Rs11 billion	Rs31 billion

A number of factors, both international and domestic, affected the economic growth.

On the external front, the global financial crisis in 2007-2008 dampened external demand. The global economy grew by 3.4% on average annually during the past 10 years. Regarding our main trading partners, in particular,

- the US grew by 1.8% on average annually;
- France by 0.9%;
- UK by 1.3%;
- Germany by 1.3%, and
- South Africa by 1.5%.

On the domestic front, the lower external demand affected our textile and tourism sectors. The textile sector contracted by 0.7% on average annually. The tourism sector grew by an annual average rate of 4.3%. In addition, the construction sector contracted by 2.5% on average annually up to 2015, and, after this prolonged recession, it grew by 9.5% in 2018.

By 2015, when this Government was at the helm, it was clear that if appropriate policies were not taken to redynamise the economy, the growth rate would continue to decline and hover around 3%. Due to the economic policies of the past four years, we have indeed been able to reverse the declining trend.

In fact, our policies have successfully transformed our economy from one of jobless and even job-loss growth that the country has been experiencing since 1992 into one of job-creating growth. As a result, the unemployment rate at 6.9% is today the lowest since 2001.

First, it is thus totally incorrect to say that growth has been around 3%, especially for the past four years when the actual annual average rate was 3.7%. Second, it is undeniable that the growth for the past four years is much more inclusive as it has created more jobs and put more people in employment than in previous years.

New measures will be announced in the forthcoming Budget that will further boost economic growth. The economy will be further diversified with new growth poles in Fintech, financial services, AI, blockchain, and new technologies. The economic space in Africa will be further expanded for investment in SEZ projects in Madagascar, Mozambique and other African countries.

Our increased investment in digital platform and human capital, and the modernisation of the physical infrastructure of our country, including transport and communication, will contribute significantly to further strengthen our economic growth and take our country to a growth rate of above 4% in the coming years with even more positive impact on employment creation, inclusiveness and the quality of life of our citizens.

MALAGASY NATIONALS – VISA ENTRY

(No. B/14) Mr A. Ganoo (First Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Home Affairs, External Communications and National Development Unit, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to the Malagasy Republic, he will state if Government proposes to abolish the visa entry requirement for the nationals thereof when entering our territory and request that the Malagasy authorities reciprocate the same facilities for the Mauritian nationals when entering the Malagasy territory and, if so, when.

Reply: According to the Ninth Schedule of the Passport Regulations, Malagasy nationals travelling to Mauritius are granted 14 days' visa on arrival. Provisions have also been made under regulation 25(5) of the Passport Regulations 1969, for a Malagasy national to whom a visa has been issued to apply to the Passport and Immigration Officer for an

extension of his stay provided he holds a confirmed return ticket, a valid passport or internationally recognised travel documents and has adequate funds to meet the cost of stay in Mauritius.

The following visa facilities are also extended to Malagasy nationals in Mauritius –

- (a) Malagasy tourists/visitors are eligible on application for a maximum of 180 days' visa in one calendar year, and
- (b) Malagasy nationals visiting Mauritius for business purposes are, on application, granted business visa up to 120 days in a calendar year and the stay during each trip should not exceed 90 days.

As regards Mauritian nationals travelling to Madagascar, they are issued entry visa up to 90 days on arrival.

The request for reciprocity of visa to Malagasy nationals was discussed at the meeting of the First Joint Commission Mauritius-Madagascar held on 17 May 2018 in Mauritius. The Malagasy side was invited to make concrete written proposals for consideration by the Mauritian side.

This request was reiterated during the State Visit of the President of Madagascar, in the context of the 51st Anniversary of Independence. It was agreed that both countries should pursue consultations for a Bilateral Visa Agreement, to be worked out and finalised at the earliest.

CANNABIS – DE-PENALISATION

(No. B/15) Mr A. Ganoo (First Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Home Affairs, External Communications and National Development Unit, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to synthetic drugs, he will state the measures he proposes to take to put an end thereto, following the statement he made regarding the alarming situation in respect thereof in the country at the 62nd Session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, held in Vienna in March 2019, indicating if consideration will be given for the de-penalisation of Cannabis as one of these measures.

Reply (The Rt. hon. Minister Mentor, Minister of Defence, Minister for Rodrigues): I attended the 62nd session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs held in Vienna

earlier this month. In my address during that event, I highlighted that the synthetic drug problem is a worldwide issue and Mauritius is not spared from this phenomenon.

Government is committed to clean our country and spare our people from the drug scourge. To that effect, various initiatives have been taken to prevent and control entry of illicit drugs in Mauritius and to curb abuse thereof. These measures were elaborated in my reply to PNQ of 16 October 2018 on this issue. I do not wish to take the time of the House to repeat them.

Additionally, a National Drug Control Master Plan 2019-2023 has been formulated with the assistance of the UNODC.

Furthermore, a High Level Drugs and HIV Council has been set up under my Chair. The Council has as key role to, *inter alia*, oversee the implementation of the National Drug Control Master Plan 2019-2023 and the National Action Plan for HIV AIDS 2017-2021 of the Ministry of Health & Quality of Life. The main objects of this Council would be namely, to –

- (a) foster a multi-sectoral approach with a view to providing a stronger response to Drugs and HIV, and
- (b) organise concrete measures to minimise the personal, social and economic impact of Drugs and HIV.

With regard to the last part of the question, I unreservedly maintain the stand of my Government not to de-penalise Cannabis.

MAURITIUS SOVEREIGN FUND

(No. B/16) Mr R. Ramful (Third Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Home Affairs, External Communications and National Development Unit, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to the Mauritius Sovereign Fund, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain therefrom, information as to the quantum of funds contributed thereto, indicating the quantum thereof disbursed therefrom as at to date, if any, giving details thereof.

Reply: The Mauritius Sovereign Fund has not been set up and, therefore, the question of quantum of funds contributed to and disbursed from the Fund does not arise.

HIGH LEVEL DRUG & HIV COUNCIL - OPPOSITION MEMBERS

(No. B/17) Dr. A. Boolell (Second Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Home Affairs, External Communications and National Development Unit, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to the

High Level Drug and HIV Council, he will state the reasons why no Member of the Opposition has been nominated to serve thereon.

Reply: Members of the Opposition may be invited to form part of the High Level Drugs and HIV Council, as and when the need arises in the future.

NATIONAL INSURANCE COMPANY LTD. – ACTUARIAL REVIEW

(No. B/18) **Dr. A. Boolell (Second Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes)** asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Home Affairs, External Communications and National Development Unit, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to the National Insurance Company Ltd., he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to if an actuarial review thereof has been conducted.

Reply (The Minister of Financial Services and Good Governance): I am informed by the National Insurance Co. Ltd that prior to its incorporation, an actuarial review was carried out by PricewaterhouseCoopers for the purpose of recommending the value of the assets required to be transferred from the BAI Group to the National Insurance Co. Ltd to meet the obligations of the actuarial liabilities for its life and health insurance portfolios.

I am further informed that after since the National Insurance Co. Ltd started its operations in August 2015 until to-date, the Company has conducted actuarial reviews for its licensing requirements as well as for its business plans through QED Actuaries & Consultants (Pty) Ltd, the appointed statutory actuary.

I am also advised that as part of the year end audits and statutory returns for the Financial Services Commission, QED Actuaries & Consultants (Pty) Ltd, is in the process of preparing the Statutory Actuarial Valuation Reports for the financial years ended 30 June 2016, 30 June 2017 and 30 June 2018 respectively. These will include the certified actuarial liabilities and solvency requirements of the Company.

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY – OPPOSITION MEMBERS – OVERSEAS MISSIONS

(No. B/19) **Mr B. Jahangeer (Third Member for Rivière des Anguilles & Souillac)** asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Home Affairs, External Communications and National Development Unit, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to the overseas missions, he will state the number thereof effected by each Honourable Member of the Opposition since November 2017 to date, indicating in each case the –

- (a) countries visited and purpose thereof, and
- (b) total expenditure incurred in terms of airfares, *per diem* and other allowances.

Reply: The requested information is being placed in the Library of the National Assembly.

BAIN DES DAMES - FISHING PORT

(No. B/36) Mr E. Jhuboo (Third Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Minister of Ocean Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping whether, in regard to the proposed installation of a fishing Port at Bain des Dames, he will state where matters stand.

Reply: I wish to refer the hon. Member to the reply made in respect of PQ B/878 on 28 November 2017.

ILLEGAL FISHING - OFFENCES

(No. B/37) Mr E. Jhuboo (Third Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Minister of Ocean Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping whether, in regard to illegal fishing, he will state the number of offences committed, convictions secured and fines imposed therefor, since 2015 to date.

Reply: I wish to inform the House that with regard to illegal fishing, the number of offences committed since 2015 to date is 1,318 as per our record. The total fines inflicted amounts to Rs279,400.00 for the period 2015 to date. The number of cases brought before Court were 127 whereby 120 persons were convicted.

MUSÉE DE L'ESCLAVAGE – SETTING UP

(No. B/38) Mr F. Quirin (Fourth Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Arts and Culture whether, in regard to the setting up of a *Musée de l'Esclavage*, as announced in the Budget Speech 2016-2017, he will state where matters stand.

Reply: The tender for the Preliminary Study and Survey for the Setting up of an Intercontinental Slavery Museum was launched by my Ministry through Open Advertised Bidding, at international level, on 19 January 2018.

The contract was awarded on 27 July 2018, to STEGET S.r.l., an Italian firm in joint venture with Francis Wong Associates Ltd for, *inter alia*, the submission of an economic feasibility and the identification of the best scenarios for the setting up of the Museum at the Ex-Military Hospital in Port Louis.

On 27 January 2019, a first draft report was submitted by the Consultant for views and observations of my Ministry.

The final Preliminary Study and Survey is expected to be submitted by the end of March 2019.

In line with the recommendations of a UNESCO/ICOMOS Advisory Mission Report, a team has been set up to conduct archaeological works on site. Research works are ongoing and are expected to be completed by the end of April 2019.

On 27 February 2019, the Prime Minister chaired an Inter-Ministerial Committee, which was attended by different stakeholders and academics, regarding the implementation of the Museum, which is high on the Government's agenda.

Regarding the site, the lease agreement for the plot of land of an extent of around 6,200 m² housing the Ex-Military Hospital, is presently being finalised with the Mauritius Ports Authority. The existing buildings and structures will be restored to accommodate the Museum.

Once the final Preliminary Study and Survey is received and the lease agreement is signed, Government will look into the best option available for the implementation of the project.

In parallel, a Committee is being set up to work out the historical content and concept of the Museum.

HAJJ PILGRIMAGE 2018 – MAURITIAN PILGRIMS – ASSISTANCE

(No. B/41) Mr A. Ameer Meea (Second Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade whether, in regard to the Hajj Pilgrimage 2018, he will state if our Ambassador based in Saudi Arabia was delegated to welcome the Mauritian pilgrims at the Jeddah Airport and, if not, why not.

Reply: Pending the opening of a full-fledged Consulate General in Jeddah, an officer from the Embassy in Riyadh accompanied by a local recruit who acted as an interpreter, were delegated to Jeddah to provide on the ground practical assistance to the pilgrims during the Hajj period from 06 to 26 August 2018.

NATIONAL INSURANCE COMPANY LTD – BOARD MEMBERS – AUDITED REPORT

(No. B/43) Mr A. Ameer Meea (Second Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Minister of Financial Services and Good Governance whether, in

regard to the National Insurance Company Ltd., he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain therefrom, information as to –

- (a) the names of the Board members thereof, indicating in each case the –
 - (i) qualifications held, and
 - (ii) remuneration and allowances drawn.
- (b) when the external auditor thereof was appointed, and
- (c) when the last audited report thereof was approved.

Reply: With regard to part (a) of the question, I wish to highlight at the very outset that the Directors of the National Insurance Co. Ltd Board have been appointed according to their skills, experience and qualifications. I am tabling the information regarding the names of the Board Members of the National Insurance Co. Ltd (NIC), together with the qualifications of each member and the allowances drawn by them.

As regards part (b) of the question, I am informed by the NIC that following a tender exercise carried out by the Company and subsequent to a Shareholder's Resolution on 17 December 2015, Ernst and Young was appointed as external auditor. This appointment was approved by the Financial Services Commission under section 40 of the Insurance Act on 22 April 2016 and a Letter of Engagement was issued on 27 May 2016.

I am further informed that on 14 January 2019, the NIC and Ernst & Young signed a Mutual Agreement to terminate the Engagement for the auditing of the financial statements of the NIC. The Agreement clearly states that both parties have been jointly collaborating in good faith with a view to finalising the audit of the Company. However, in view of certain matters beyond their control, they could not finalise the exercise.

I am advised that another external auditor, namely Moore Stephens, was appointed on 14 January 2019 following a tender exercise carried out by the Company and a subsequent Shareholder's Resolution. The appointment was approved by the Financial Services Commission on 12 February 2019.

With regard to part (c) of the question, I am informed that Moore Stephens has started its audit exercise in February 2019 and is expected to submit the audited reports of the company for the period ended 30 June 2016, 30 June 2017 and 30 June 2018 respectively, by 30 June 2019.

PORT LOUIS - HAWKERS

(No. B/44) Mr A. Ameer Meea (Second Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands, Minister of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare whether, in regard to the hawkers operating in Port Louis, she will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Municipal Council of Port Louis, information as to the number of hawkers whose articles have been seized by the Inspectors of the Municipal Council of Port Louis and Police Officers over the past two years, indicating in each case –

- (a) the value of the articles seized, and
- (b) how the articles seized have been disposed of.

Reply: The Municipal City Council of Port Louis has, in compliance with the Supreme Court judgment of 16 August 2012, taken necessary measures to ensure that hawkers do not operate their trades within a 500-metre radius of the Central Market of Port Louis and within several main streets of the City. I am informed that over the past two years, the Municipal City Council of Port Louis and the Police department seized the goods of 38 and 286 hawkers respectively.

With regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed that neither the Council nor the Police Department can assess the value of the articles seized because the origin and quality of the articles cannot be ascertained.

As regards part (b) of the question, I am informed that seizures of articles are effected in two ways. Known sellers are booked into contravention and the seized articles are kept as exhibit pending ruling of the District Magistrate. The articles of the unknown sellers who bolt away on arrival of Municipal Inspectors are recorded and safely stored at the Municipal Council Building. These articles are put on sale during auctions.

I am further informed that there are two types of perishable items that are seized: fruits and vegetables which are donated to charitable institutions, such as Gayasing Ashram, Meenatchee Home, Mere Theresa Orphanage and La Colombe Shelter for children and women in distress found at Pointe aux Sables, and cooked food which is disposed of at transfer stations.

I am also informed that the goods seized by Police are either disposed of by Court or donated to charitable institutions.

HARBOUR BRIDGE PROJECT – FUNDS DISBURSED

(No. B/45) Mr A. Ameer Meea (Second Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure and Land Transport whether, in regard to the Harbour Bridge Project, he will state –

- (a) the quantum of funds spent in relation thereto as at to date, and
- (b) if the implementation thereof is being envisaged anew and, if so, give details thereof.

Reply: In regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed by the Ministry of Housing and Lands that in the context of the Harbour Bridge Project, funds disbursed for acquisition of lands, as at date, is MUR 307,922,296.03.

As regards part (b) of the question, I am informed by the Road Development Authority that the Harbour Bridge Project is not currently in the pipeline. In fact, it was part of the Road Decongestion Programme (RDP) under the previous Government.

The components of the new RDP are as follows –

- (i) construction of a grade separated junction of Jumbo/Phoenix/Dowlut Roundabout;
- (ii) construction of A1-M1 Link Road connecting Coromandel to Soreze via Motorway;
- (iii) construction of Flyover at Decaen Project, and
- (iv) construction of Ring Road Phases 2 & 3.

At present, Government is investing massively in the first three components of the new RDP together with the Metro Express Project.

Upon completion of these projects, an assessment of the traffic situation in Port Louis and its surroundings will be made and in the light of the findings thereof, a decision will be taken as to whether the Harbour Bridge Project should be revived.

DR A. G. JEETOO HOSPITAL – CARDIAC UNIT – AIR CONDITIONERS

(No. B/46) Mr S. Abbas Mamode (Fourth Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether, in regard to the Dr. A. G. Jeetoo Hospital, he will state if consideration will be given for the installation of air conditioners in the Cardiac Unit Ward 3.3 and other specialised units thereat.

(Withdrawn)

INTERCONTINENTAL SLAVERY MUSEUM - CONSTRUCTION

(No. B/47) Mr P. Armance (First Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Arts and Culture whether, in regard to the proposed construction of the Intercontinental Slavery Museum, he will state where matters stand.

(Vide reply to PQ B/38)

COMMISSION OF INQUIRY ON DRUG TRAFFICKING - NATIONAL ASSEMBLY - MPs

(No. B/48) Mr R. Uteem (First Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central) asked the Rt. hon. Minister Mentor, Minister of Defence, Minister for Rodrigues whether, in regard to the Honourable Members of the National Assembly and lawyers against whom the Commission of Inquiry on drug trafficking recommended that in-depth inquiries be carried out, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to if such inquiries have been initiated, indicating if any arrest has been effected and any case lodged in relation thereto.

(Withdrawn)

NATIONAL PROPERTY FUND LTD - ASSETS & LIABILITIES

(No. B/49) Mr R. Uteem (First Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central) asked the Rt. hon. Minister Mentor, Minister of Defence, Minister for Rodrigues whether, in regard to the National Property Fund Ltd., he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain therefrom, information as to –

- (a) the value of the assets and liabilities thereof, and
- (b) how it proposes to repay the debts thereof, when same will fall due.

(Withdrawn)

HOUSING UNITS - CONSTRUCTION

(No. B/50) Mr R. Uteem (First Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central) asked the Minister of Housing and Lands whether, in regard to the construction of 6,800 new housing units, as announced in the Budget Speech 2018-2019, he will state where matters stand.

Reply: In the Government Programme 2015-2019, the construction of 10,000 social housing units was announced. In his New Year Speech 2019, the hon. Prime Minister and Minister of Finance and Economic Development announced that 12,000 social housing units would be constructed.

I wish to inform the House that as at date, 1,927 social housing units have been completed and construction of 3,028 housing units are ongoing, out of which 2,473 would be completed by February 2,020 and the remaining 555 in December 2020.

In addition, 7,045 new social housing units are now planned for construction on a G + 3 configurations instead of 6,800 social housing units as announced in 2018/2019 Budget Speech.

With regard to these 7,045 new social housing units, I am informed by the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development and the NHDC Ltd that the funding for the construction of 1,050 social housing units has already been secured from the Saudi Fund for Development.

The latter would provide a loan of 50 million USD at a rate of 1% per annum. The loan agreement was signed on 22 October 2018.

The NHDC Ltd is presently carrying out in-house consultancy services for this project. The tender for works is expected to be launched by August 2019.

As regards the remaining 5,995 housing units, I am further informed by the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development that same would be implemented on a Design, Build and Finance mode.

The NHDC is working out an Expression of Interest which would be launched shortly. Following the outcome thereof, a Request for Proposal would be launched.

COROMANDEL - POLICE HEADQUARTERS - LIGHTING PROJECT

(No. B/51) Mr G. Lepoigneur (Fifth Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Rt. hon. Minister Mentor, Minister of Defence, Minister for Rodrigues whether, in regard to the implementation of the Lighting Project of the Police Headquarters in Coromandel, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to where matters stand.

(Withdrawn)

COROMANDEL - POLICE HEADQUARTERS - WATER SUPPLY

(No. B/52) Mr G. Lepoigneur (Fifth Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Rt. hon. Minister Mentor, Minister of Defence, Minister for Rodrigues whether, in regard to the interruption of water supply by the Central Water Authority which occurred on 15 November 2018 at the Police Headquarters in Coromandel for non-payment of the water bill, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to the reasons for the non-payment.

(Withdrawn)

**NATIONAL SPORTS FEDERATION - FINANCIAL STATEMENTS &
PERFORMANCE AGREEMENTS**

(No. B/53) Mr G. Lepoigneur (Fifth Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether, in regard to the National Sports Federation, he will state the Federations affiliated thereto having -

- (a) signed the Performance Agreements;
- (b) submitted the audited financial statements and Insurance Policy Certificate thereof for the period ending 30 June 2018, as required by the Sports Act and Guidelines issued by his Ministry.

(Withdrawn)

REFORMS INSTITUTION ACT - AMENDMENTS

(No. B/54) Ms M. Sewocksingh (Third Member for Curepipe & Midlands) asked the Rt. hon. Minister Mentor, Minister of Defence, Minister for Rodrigues whether, in regard to Remission/Release on Parole, he will state if consideration will be given for amendments to be introduced to section 51A of the Reforms Institution Act with a view to adding murder on the list of offences not eligible therefor.

(Withdrawn)

CHILDREN BILL - INTRODUCTION

(No. B/55) Ms M. Sewocksingh (Third Member for Curepipe & Midlands) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands, Minister of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare whether, in regard to the proposed introduction of a Children Bill in the House, she will state where matters stand.

Reply: I wish to inform the House that my Ministry has conducted wide consultations with various stakeholders such as the Commissioner of Police, the Ministry of Public Infrastructure and Land Transport, the Probation and Aftercare Service under the Ministry of Defence and Rodrigues, the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life, the Director of Public Prosecutions and the Ministry of Education and Human Resources, Tertiary Education and Scientific Research to discuss policy issues relating to the Children's Bill.

The consultations have almost been completed and my Ministry will soon proceed to seek Cabinet's approval to issue drafting instructions to the State Law Office.

MITD - VACANCIES

(No. B/56) Ms M. Sewocksingh (Third Member for Curepipe & Midlands) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources, Tertiary Education and Scientific Research whether, in regard to the Mauritius Institute of Training and Development, she will state the number of vacancies existing thereat, indicating –

- (a) since when, and
- (b) when same will be filled.

Reply: With regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed that to date, the number of funded vacancies is 31 for financial year 2018/19.

The MITD has presently a workforce of 742 in different grades, including Managerial, Technical, Training and Administrative Support. These staffs are engaged in the provision of training in various fields of the different economic sectors through the MITD network of 24 Training Centres in Mauritius and Rodrigues.

As regards part (b) of the question, I am further informed by the MITD that action has already been initiated for the filling of 24 vacancies. These posts have been advertised. The seven other funded vacancies will be advertised in the course of the year.

WATER SUPPLY – 24-HOUR BASIS

(No. B/57) Mrs D. Selvon (Second Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to the proposed distribution of water on a 24-hour basis to all households, he will state where matters stand as at to date.

Reply: I would like to remind the House that the water situation in Mauritius in 2014 was in a dismal state as a result of inaction during the previous regime. From 2009 to 2014, Rs1 billion were spent on Singapore consultancy services with hardly any improvement in water supply. Several projects such as the Pailles Water Treatment Plant, the Bagatelle Dam had been delayed. Less than 40% of the population had water supply for more than 12 hours.

This Government has taken unprecedented measures since 2015, to redress this situation. For the first time since the setting up of CWA, Government has provided funding to CWA of about Rs5 billion to rehabilitate the water supply infrastructure.

The major projects implemented are –

- (i) since 2015, about 438 kms of pipes have been replaced across the country as follows –
 - In the north, water pipes have been replaced at *Morcellement* Swan, Pereybere at the cost of Rs77 m. The inhabitants do not have to rely on water tankers. About Rs409 m. is being spent to replace about 49 kms of pipes at Rivière du Rempart, Plaine des Roches, Roches Noires, Poste Lafayette and for rehabilitation of pumping stations. In the south, pipes have been replaced from Plaine Magnien to Mare d’Albert, at Surinam, Rivière des Anguilles and South West coast, Rose Belle, Riche en Eau, Ferney, Grand Bel Air and Ville Noire and a new service reservoir built at Balisson.
 - In the East and Moka, pipes have been replaced at Moka, Alma, Melrose, Montagne Blanche, Poste de Flacq to Poste Lafayette and Marie Jeannie.
 - In Plaines Wilhems, works have been completed at Residence Kennedy, Solferino, John Kennedy Street, Henrietta, La Brasserie to Botanical Gardens, Piton du Milieu to Hermitage and Coromandel to New Bosquet Reservoir and at Curepipe Lislet Geoffroy.
- (ii) about 60 kms are being replaced under current contracts;
- (iii) by August 2019, the Bagatelle Water Treatment Plant will be commissioned. The installation of water pipes to connect Bagatelle Water Treatment Plant to Soreze for water distribution to Port Louis has been completed. Another pipeline to connect the treatment plant to Belle Rose in order to supply Beau Bassin/Rose Hill and part of Quatre Bornes regions is almost completed. At the same time, two projects for the replacement of 27 kms of pipes in Rose Hill and Beau Bassin, with a total investment of about Rs304 m. will be completed by October;

- (iv) in addition, water from Mare aux Vacoas channeled through La Marie Treatment Plant currently supplied to these regions, will then be channeled to the western regions from Tamarin to Le Morne and increase hours of supply in these regions, and
- (v) since 2015, about 31,000 families have benefited from the grant of Rs5,000 for the purchase of water tanks. Last year, the Prime Minister allocated Rs150 m. for the period 2018 to 2021 to allow an additional 30,000 families to obtain water tanks. This ensures availability of water in homes for 24 hours;

Other measures that have been implemented are –

- (i) six new boreholes have been put into operation contributing to an additional 20,000 m³ per day;
- (ii) three new service reservoirs have been built at Rivière du Rempart, Mont Blanc and Balisson. Two service reservoirs are being constructed at Rivière Dragon and Montagne Fayence. Only one service reservoir had been built from 2010 to 2014, and
- (iii) 17 duplicate boreholes have been drilled and 11 mobile filtration plants have been installed.

With the coming into operation of the treatment plant and the completion of the pipelines, water supply in Rose Hill, Beau Bassin, Quatre Bornes and a large part of Port Louis will be on a 24-hour basis. The number of consumers obtaining 24 hours water supply will increase to more than 302,000 consumers out of a total number of some 375,000 consumers by the end of this year.

ANIMAL WELFARE ACT - CRUELTY TOWARDS ANIMALS - PENALTIES

(No. B/58) Ms M. Sewocksingh (Third Member for Curepipe & Midlands) asked the Minister of Agro-Industry and Food Security whether, in regard to cruelty towards animals, he will state if consideration is being given for the introduction of amendments to the Animal Welfare Act with a view to toughening the penalties provided therefor.

(Withdrawn)

MUSÉE DE L'ESCLAVAGE – SETTING UP

(No. B/59) Mr T. Henry (Fourth Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien) asked the Minister of Arts and Culture whether, in regard to the proposed creation of the *Musée de l'Esclavage*, he will state where matters stand.

(Vide reply to PQ B/38)

POINTE D'ESNY ROAD B87 – REHABILITATION WORKS

(No. B/60) Mr T. Henry (Fourth Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien) asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure and Land Transport whether, in regard to the Coastal Road of Residence Lachaux, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Road Development Authority, information as to when Phase II of the renovation thereof will start.

Reply: I would like to refer the House to the reply made to Parliamentary Question B/864 on 28 November 2017. The House was informed that the Road Development Authority (RDA) is implementing a project for the rehabilitation of the Pointe d'Esny Road B87 over a stretch of about 1.3 km starting from Loretto Convent Mahebourg through Cité La Chaux, up to the entrance of Le Preskil Beach Resorts Hotel, in three phases –

- (i) Phase I of the project comprises the reprofiling of the road from Loretto Convent Mahebourg to the neighbouring fish landing station over a road stretch of about 750 metres;
- (ii) Phase II comprises the construction of new drains over a stretch of about 350 metres from the fish landing station to the Ramsar site to collect surface water accumulating at the Pointe d'Esny road and disposal of same in the adjoining wetland, and
- (iii) Phase III of the project comprises the construction of a rock-armoured structure with an associated retaining wall and road widening works from the Ramsar site to the entrance of Le Preskil Beach Resorts Hotel over a stretch of about 150 metres, to protect the road structure from being washed out by wave action.

Phase I of the project to the tune of Rs16 m. has been completed in August 2016. As regards the second phase of the project, I am informed by the RDA that works to the tune of Rs3.5 m. have started in April 2018 and are expected to be completed by end of May this year. There has been considerable delay on the project due to the poor performance of the Contractor. Four notices for delay have already been served and action is being taken by the

RDA as per the conditions of Contract, including application of Liquidated Damages. I have requested the RDA to closely follow up the matter.

Works for the third phase of the project will be included in the programme of works for the next financial year.

MAURITIAN TERRITORIAL WATERS - JAPANESE AUTHORITIES - FISH CATCHING

(No. B/61) Mr T. Henry (Fourth Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien) asked the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade whether, in regard to the agreement signed between his Ministry and the Japanese Authorities for fish catching in our territorial waters, he will give a list of the species of fish concerned therewith.

Reply (The Minister of Ocean Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping): I wish to highlight that there is no Government to Government Fishing Agreement between Mauritius and Japan. However, a Fishing Agreement was signed in 2000 between the Federation of Japan Tuna Fisheries Cooperatives Association and the then Ministry responsible for Fisheries.

The Fishing Agreement was renewed on successive occasions in 2002, 2003, 2005, 2006, and 2007. The current one was renewed in 2009 between the Ministry of Agro-Industry, Food Production and Security and the Japan Tuna Fisheries Cooperatives Association.

The Agreement provides for tuna longline fishing in the EEZ of Mauritius and the species authorised include Yellowfin Tuna, Bigeye Tuna, Skipjack Tuna and Swordfish.

PROTECTION ORDERS/OCCUPATIONAL ORDERS – 2017 & 2018

(No. B/62) Mrs A. Perraud (First Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands, Minister of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare whether, in regard to the Protection Orders and Occupational Orders, she will state the number thereof issued over the years 2017 and 2018, respectively, in each category.

(Withdrawn)

‘ATELIER PARTAGE PARENTS’ PROGRAMME

(No. B/63) Mrs A. Perraud (First Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands, Minister of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare whether, in regard to the programme “*Atelier Partage Parents*”, she will state if same is being held and if so, give details thereof.

(Withdrawn)

CITY CLINIC – DIALYSIS TREATMENT - INCIDENTS

(No. B/64) Mr J. C. Barbier (Fourth Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether, in regard to the incidents which occurred on or about 07 August 2018 at the City Clinic whereby patients who were undergoing dialysis had suspicious symptoms which resulted in treatment being stopped, he will state –

- (a) the reasons therefor, indicating the –
 - (i) number of patients who were undergoing treatment at the material time and the number thereof who had the said symptoms, and
 - (ii) corrective measures taken, and
- (b) if Government will consider stopping contracting the services of City Clinic for dialysis treatment as a result thereof.

Reply: In reply to part (a) of the question, I wish to inform the House that on 07 August 2018, the City Clinic informed that 10 patients who were on dialysis treatment at their centre were having rigors and headache after around one hour of dialysis treatment.

An urgent visit was, therefore, carried out at the City Clinic Dialysis Centre by a team comprising a Regional Public Health Superintendent, a Nephrologist, the Dialysis Coordinator, a Nursing Officer and a Principal Public Health and Food Safety Inspector from my Ministry.

A decision was taken to suspend all dialysis treatment immediately and to send all patients concerned for medical assessment and appropriate treatment at Dr. A.G. Jeetoo Hospital.

In addition, It was also decided that arrangement be made for the 54 patients who were referred for dialysis at City Clinic to be temporarily shifted for their treatment at Dr. A.G. Jeetoo Hospital, Victoria Hospital and other private Dialysis Centres.

On 07 August 2018, water samples were collected from the Dialysis Water Treatment Plant at City Clinic and sent for bacteriological analysis at Central Health Laboratory. Furthermore, the Administration of City Clinic was requested to carry out general cleaning of the Unit and the disinfection of the whole Water Treatment Plant and to repeat the bacteriological analysis of dialysis water. The dialysis water reports from samples collected from the Water Treatment Plant for bacteriological count was above 200 colony-forming units per milliliter (cfu/ml), that was above the normal range, which in fact should be less than 100 cfu/ml in dialysis water. The high level of bacteriological count in the dialysis water was suspected to be the cause for the rigors suffered by the patients, during their dialysis treatment. The situation was closely monitored.

On 19 October 2018, after having been fully satisfied that all necessary remedial measures have been taken by City Clinic, the team from my Ministry recommended that patients be referred back to the Clinic for dialysis treatment and that the first batch of patients should have their dialysis treatment under the supervision of either a nephrologist or a medical specialist of the clinic.

The team also suggested that the City Clinic should –

- make necessary arrangements for adequate medical coverage of the Dialysis Unit;
- carry out regular dialysis water analysis, for bacteriology every month and for chemicals, and contaminants every 3 months and, to forward copies of the reports to my Ministry, and
- carry out disinfection of the Water Treatment Plant at monthly interval, and as and when required and to keep the records of same for verification.

As regards part (b) of the question, I wish to inform the House that the policy of my Ministry is to expand further the dialysis services in the public hospitals in order to accommodate all dialysis patients, without having recourse to private health institutions in future.

In line with the above, a new Dialysis Unit has been set up at Dr. A.G. Jeetoo Hospital which is equipped with 26 dialysis machines to cater for around 150 patients of the region. The new Dialysis Unit at Dr. A.G. Jeetoo Hospital is operational since 18 January 2019, following which the service for dialysis treatment at the City Clinic was stopped on 31 January 2019.

PRIMARY & SECONDARY INSTITUTIONS - VIOLENCE & INDISCIPLINE

(No. B/65) Mr V. Baloomoody (Third Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources, Tertiary Education and Scientific Research whether, in regard to acts of violence perpetrated in primary and secondary institutions, she will state the remedial actions being taken, indicating if psychologists are presently attached to her Ministry to attend to students victims thereof.

Reply: In my reply to PQ A/20 in the House in October 2018, I have enumerated a list of measures that are being taken at the level of my Ministry, with the collaboration of Heads of schools, to address the issue of violence and indiscipline in schools.

The issue of violence in schools is being dealt with at the school level and in this context, Heads of schools are being empowered to deal effectively with this problem in close collaboration with the National Education Counselling Service and other strategic partners. The Ministry in fact works with institutional partners such as the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life, the *Brigade pour la protection des mineurs*, the Child Development Unit, the Probation and Aftercare Service as well as SeDEC with regard to sensitisation of students, instilling of positive behaviour and helping students better manage their emotions.

Over the past two years (2017 and 2018), more than 200,000 students have been sensitised on topics such as disciplined behaviour, healthy lifestyle and social issues, among others.

The Student Behaviour Policy, which has been elaborated in consultation with Heads of schools and other stakeholders, clearly articulates recommended responses in the face of different acts of indiscipline and violence. Consideration is also being given to the creation of the grade of Discipline Master to support secondary schools in their efforts.

At the level of the Ministry, we have created a Health and Wellness Directorate which is responsible for the implementation, coordination and monitoring of all such actions leading towards the welfare of the learners.

The National Education Counselling Service (NECS) of the Ministry provides a support service to promote the psychological and social well-being of learners and their families, through a wide range of integrated services. The NECS is presently under the responsibility of a Health and Wellness Director who is supported by the Head of the NECS, four Senior Educational Psychologists, 26 Educational Psychologists and four Senior Educational Social Workers and 16 Educational Social Workers posted at the four educational zones of my Ministry. The Private Secondary Education Authority, on its part, currently has eight Educational Social Workers to service Private Secondary Schools.

The Educational Psychologists and Educational Social Workers provide help, support, guidance and counselling to pupils who experience behavioural, learning, social and emotional difficulties. In addition, the Educational Social Workers carry out home visits to assist the parents concerned and provide advice and support. The NECS also conducts talks on topics such as promoting positive behaviour, managing stress and developing good practices at school.

With regard to the service provided by the NECS to victims of cases of violence, the NECS normally attends to both the perpetrator and the victim by providing appropriate support through working sessions with the members of the school community, the perpetrator and the victim and their respective responsible parties. If the situation so requires, referral can be made for further follow-up and monitoring by the competent authorities.

A number of projects and programmes are also being implemented in our primary and secondary schools to help school leaders better deal with issues arising in their schools and to help students in their personal and social development. For instance, the 7 habits of highly effective people by Stephen Covey has been adapted and is being run in some primary schools through the “The Leader in Me” project. Moreover, the Commonwealth Secretariat is sponsoring the “Pan African School Leadership and Management Project for Heads of Schools”.

Focus on life skills and values in the curriculum helps to promote positive behaviour and instil a culture of discipline among the students. This objective is pursued through the Social and Emotional Well-being Programme of the Ministry, with the teaching of social and emotional skills in secondary schools, as well as the implementation, in primary schools, of the Zippy’s Friend Project, which focuses on emotion management. Pupils are moreover sensitised on code of conduct inside and outside classrooms. Likewise, the introduction of

Holistic Education and greater participation in extra-curricular activities contribute to the development and improvement of the social skills of pupils.

Furthermore, the “Get Connected” Project that the Ministry is implementing in collaboration with UNODC has given an impetus to the existing sensitisation and awareness programmes conducted in schools regarding promotion of positive behaviour among students.

It is worth highlighting that the Ministry also conducts counselling for parents of pupils, group counselling and mediation as well as case conferencing, especially when several parties are involved in specific situations. The *service d’écoute* available in schools has been improved with the training of the staff who sit on the Student Counselling Desk.

The issue of violence in schools is one of global concern.

The Ministry will continue to work with the school, the student community, institutional partners, NGOs and other stakeholders to provide to the students the conducive environment to help them grow and develop into emotionally well-balanced individuals and responsible citizens.

POLICE TRAINING SCHOOL - FIRING PRACTICE - INCIDENT

(No. B/66) Mr V. Baloomoody (Third Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Rt. hon. Minister Mentor, Minister of Defence, Minister for Rodrigues whether he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to the actions, if any, taken against Lead Prison Officer Mr R. R. posted at the Correctional Emergency Response Team Unit for allowing a female nursing officer, namely Mrs A., to fire live rounds from a revolver at the Police Training School, against the rules of firing practice, indicating if –

- (a) Mrs A. has followed any theatrical prior to the shooting incident, and
- (b) the live rounds bullet were registered in her name.

Reply: In accordance with section 2 of the Reform Institutions Act, an officer means “*an officer of the Service and includes, a medical officer, a prison hospital officer, the staff of the Correctional Youth Centre and the staff of the Rehabilitation Youth Centre*”.

The Commissioner of Prisons has informed that, as part of the training requirements, all officers have to undergo live firing practice on a regular basis. Presently, this training is carried out at the Beau Bassin Police Training School Miniature Firing Range.

From 04 to 06 December 2018, a weapon handling test and firing practice with revolvers was conducted at the Police Training School for 12 Officers, including one female Prison Hospital Officer.

The weapon handling test and firing practice was conducted by Prison Officers of the Correctional Emergency Response Team (CERT) who had undergone intensive training in weapon handling and firing with different Units of the Police Department, including *GIPM*, *VIPSU*, *SSU*, *SMF* and Police Central Armoury.

With regard to part (a) of the question, on 04 December 2018, the 12 Officers attended the Police Training School for firing. As is the practice, they underwent a weapon handling test (dry firing practice/theatrical) which was conducted by a trained Principal Prison Officer and Lead Prison Officer, Mr R. R., under the supervision of a Superintendent of Prisons. All the Officers, including Mrs A. passed the tests and were authorised to go for live firing.

As regards part (b) of the question, the Commissioner of Prisons has also informed that Mrs A. was duly authorised to participate in the firing exercise, and that the live rounds were registered in her name.

In the given circumstances, no disciplinary action was initiated against the Lead Prison Officer, Mr R. R., as an inquiry carried out by the Prisons Department did not disclose any breach of prison's discipline.

The Commissioner of Police has further informed that no case has been reported to the Police against Prison Officers in connection with that firing exercise.

SAFE CITY PROJECT – DATA COLLECTION

(No. B/67) Mr V. Baloomoody (Third Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Rt. hon. Minister Mentor, Minister of Defence, Minister for Rodrigues whether, in regard to the Safe City Project, he will state the –

- (a) organisation which will collect the data, indicating -
 - (i) how same will be stored;
 - (ii) the authority which will get access thereto, and
 - (iii) the use that will be made thereof, and

- (b) Ministry which will be accountable and responsible for the operation of the organisation that will collect the data.

(Withdrawn)

LABOUR LAWS – PROPOSED AMENDMENT

(No. B/68) Mr V. Baloomoody (Third Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Labour, Industrial Relations, Employment and Training whether, in regard to the labour laws, he will state when proposed amendments thereto will be introduced in the House, indicating if further consultations will be held with the Trade Unions prior to the introduction of the portable Retirement Gratuity Fund.

Reply: The Employment Rights Act 2008 (Act No 33 of 2008) in replacement of the Labour Act 1975 came into effect on 02 February 2009. This Act was aimed to create a more business-conducive environment to promote job creation for the benefit of workers and to curb unemployment as well.

But it turns out that the objective was not fully met. Moreover, there has been wide criticism from various quarters whereby employers have been given a licence to terminate the employment of workers arbitrarily without payment of any compensation.

Though the Employment Rights Act 2008 has certain merits, nevertheless, it is believed that quite a number of employees have made an abusive use of certain provisions of the said Act. Consequently, in my wisdom, I consider that the Employment Rights Act 2008 need an in-depth review and I set up a Technical Committee at the level of my Ministry to work out on amendments to be brought to the Employment Rights Act 2008 and the Employment Relations Act 2008 as well.

The Unions as well as the Association of Employers were invited to submit their proposals/recommendations regarding the proposed amendments. Thereafter, wide consultations were held with those social partners and a draft of the proposed amendments was submitted.

These draft proposals are being examined by a Ministerial Committee chaired by the hon. Deputy Prime Minister, Mr L. I. Collendavelloo.

Further consultations with the Trade Unions may be held prior to the introduction of the portable Retirement Gratuity Fund subject to the recommendations of the Ministerial Committee.

CEB – ELECTRICITY TARIFFS

(No. B/69) Mr S. Baboo (Second Member for Vacoas & Floreal) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, following the recent fall in the price of petroleum products, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Central Electricity Board, information as to if the electricity tariffs will be reviewed.

Reply: I refer the hon. Member to my reply to PQ B/822 on 16 October 2018, wherein I informed the House that the Central Electricity Board is not envisaging any review of the electricity tariff.

I have already informed the House during past sessions that CEB has introduced several measures to ensure that low income groups benefit from a reduced tariff, namely –

- (a) In 2015, the Social Tariff 110 A was extended to households in the Social Register. About 57,000 families are now benefitting from a reduction of 31% in their electricity bills as compared to 5,000 in 2014.
- (b) With the implementation of the Home Solar project, solar panels have been installed free of charge on the houses of 989 families. This will reach 1,000 very soon. These families will not pay any or very low electricity charges. This project will be extended to 10,000 households in the next five years with financing from the IRENA/Abu Dhabi Fund for Development.
- (c) Under the new Small Scale Distributed Generation scheme launched by CEB this year, 2,500 households with a monthly electricity consumption up to 100 kWh per month will benefit from a reduction in their electricity bill of up to Rs443 per month. CEB's target is to reach 87,000 such customers.
- (d) Small commercial customers in the Tariff 215 with a monthly electricity consumption of up to 166 kWh will, under the CEB Green Energy Scheme, benefit from a reduction in their monthly bill up to Rs1,666 per month.

With these measures, about 25% of households will benefit directly from a lower tariff.

SOLFERINO - CANCER CENTRE - CONSTRUCTION

(No. B/70) Mr S. Baboo (Second Member for Vacoas & Floreal) asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether, in regard to the proposed construction of a New Cancer Centre at Solferino, he will state where matters stand.

Reply: I wish to inform the House that the contract for the construction and renovation of the New Cancer Hospital was awarded to Messrs Swadeshi Civil Infrastructure Private Limited (India) on 29 October 2018 and the works started on 22 November 2018.

As at date, the site clearance, barricading of site, demolition works and electrical works at the existing block and foundation works for the new block have been carried out representing some 5% of total works to be carried out.

Contractually, the renovation works to the existing block and the construction of the new block are to be completed by end of November 2019 and May 2020, respectively.

Taking into consideration the increasing number of cancer patients in Mauritius, my Ministry has decided to accelerate the project and accordingly, upon the request of my Ministry, the contractor is making the necessary arrangements to deploy more labour force and implement the double-shift system.

The overall project would now be completed by end of December 2019.

TEXTILE FACTORIES – CLOSURE – WORKERS – FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

(No. B/71) Mr A. Ganoo (First Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Minister of Labour, Industrial Relations, Employment and Training whether, in regard to the number of workers who have lost their jobs as a result of the closure of the Palmar Textiles Ltd. and the impending threat of closures of other textile factories, he will state if urgent consideration will be given for the reviewing of the legislation in order to ensure that a compensation and arrears of wages, if any, be paid in cases of insolvency and closure of enterprises.

Reply: Le Palmar Ltée, an Export-Oriented Company, in existence since 29 August 1980, employed 904 Mauritian, 55 Malagasy and 359 Bangladeshi workers.

Due to financial difficulties encountered, the company went into receivership on 07 February 2019 and Messrs Yacoob Ramtoola and Afsar Ebrahim were appointed Joint Receivers and Managers. Subsequently, the company closed down on 21 February 2019. A great majority of workers applied to join the Workfare Programme and their applications

have been duly processed. As regards the expatriate workers, necessary action is being taken to redeploy them to other companies willing to employ them.

It is to be noted that the Employment Rights Act 2008, which came into effect on 02 February 2009, provides for a Workfare Programme Scheme whereby redundant workers are given financial assistance during the period of unemployment up to a maximum of 12 months. However, over the years, it is found that this piece of legislation has served its purpose and needs to be reviewed to offer a better protection to workers.

My Ministry has set up a Technical Committee to propose amendments to be brought to the Employment Rights Act 2008. The Unions and the Association of Employers as well have been invited to submit their recommendations and thereafter a draft of the proposed amendment has been worked out.

The Government has set up a Ministerial Committee, chaired by the hon. Deputy Prime Minister, Mr Ivan Collendavelloo to examine the proposed amendments and the process is still ongoing.

IMPORT SUBSTITUTION INDUSTRY – TRADE AND CURRENT ACCOUNT DEFICITS

(No. B/72) Mr D. Ramful (Third Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien) asked the Minister of Industry, Commerce and Consumer Protection whether, in regard to the import substitution industry, he will give a list of the sectors where such policy will be developed, as announced in the Budget Speech 2018-2019, in order to address the trade and current account deficits.

(Withdrawn)

CONSUMER PROTECTION ACT - REVIEW

(No. B/73) Mr D. Ramful (Third Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien) asked the Minister of Industry, Commerce and Consumer Protection whether, in regard to the increase in the Consumer Price Index, he will state if consideration will be given for the advisability of -

- (a) reviewing the Consumer Protection Act to provide for more effective supervision on the retail prices affixed and margin of profit made by importers and retail traders, and

- (b) appointing an Ombudsperson for Consumer Protection to receive and investigate complaints from the consumers.

(Withdrawn)

GRADE 10 STUDENTS - ADMISSION

(No. B/74) Mr D. Ramful (Third Member for Mahebourg & Plaine Magnien) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources, Tertiary Education and Scientific Research whether, in regard to the admission of Grade 10 students to the academies in 2021, she will state the criteria laid down therefor.

(Withdrawn)

MEASLES AND DENGUE DISEASES

(No. B/75) Dr. A. Boolell (Second Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes) asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether, in regard to the measles and dengue diseases, he will state the number of detected cases thereof over the past six months.

Reply: I am informed that a total of 618 cases of measles have been detected for the period September 2018 to 25 March 2019.

The first case of measles was reported on 30 March 2018 and the patient was a 9 year old boy who had not been vaccinated against measles. In view of the highly contagious nature of the disease and as an immediate measure, my Ministry arranged for screening of the relatives and visitors who had been in close contact with him and all students of the primary school concerned. In April 2018, 4 scattered cases of measles were detected. In the first week of May 2018, 7 additional cases of measles were reported. My Ministry arranged for screening of fever/rash among students of all pre-primary and primary schools and verification of their vaccination status. Those children who were not vaccinated according to the vaccination schedule were then vaccinated.

Laboratory confirmed cases also showed that the age group 15-49 has been affected. Accordingly, a communiqué was issued advising this age group to be immunised against measles. My Ministry also carried out Supplementary Immunisation Activity by reaching out to the workforce. Moreover, special sessions on immunization were arranged and are still ongoing in the Area Health Centres and Mediclinics. My Ministry also carried out sensitisation of the public at large in the media on measles symptoms and the importance of vaccination.

It is noteworthy that the vaccination schedule for Measles, Mumps and Rubella (MMR) has been reviewed so as to administer the first dose of the MMR vaccine at 9 months and the second dose at 17 months, in line with the recommendation of the World Health Organisation, following outbreak of measles worldwide.

I am further informed that the number of reported cases of measles has declined from 217 in September last year to 13 for period 01 to 25 March 2019.

With regard to dengue, I am informed that 63 cases have been detected during the period September 2018 to 25 March 2019. From September 2018 to 25 February 2019, there were 5 imported cases. Since 26 February to 25 March 2019, 56 local cases were detected including 50 in Vallée des Prêtres, 1 in Bois Cheri, 1 in Palma and 4 in Coromandel. From 01 to 25 March 2019, there were 2 imported cases.

On confirmation of a case of dengue, my Ministry initiates a series of public health measures under its operational plan for the prevention and control of the disease namely isolation of the patient in a health institution, fogging and larviciding around the place of residence and site of work as well as the health institution where the patient is admitted. In addition, contact tracing and fever surveys are conducted in the radius of 500 metres around the place of residence and site of work. The Vector Biology and Control Division of my Ministry, which regularly conducts mosquito surveys, undertakes a close monitoring of the mosquito population in the affected areas.

On 29 January this year, I chaired an inter-sectoral meeting on mosquito-borne diseases and another on 11 March 2019 specifically on dengue with the stakeholders wherein I sought their collaboration for the prevention and control of these diseases.

My Ministry has reinforced the public health measures against dengue including distribution of mosquito repellent creams and mosquito coils to the inhabitants of Vallée des Prêtres, which is the mostly affected region. Moreover, the public at large is being regularly sensitised about the preventive measures against mosquito-borne diseases and surveillance at the Central Health Laboratory has been stepped up.

My Ministry also initiated a vast cleaning campaign in Vallée des Prêtres with the collaboration of the Ministry of Social Security, National Solidarity and Environment and Sustainable Development (Environment and Sustainable Development Division), Municipal Council of Port Louis and the Special Mobile Force.

The measures taken by my Ministry for the prevention and control of dengue will only be successful if the public collaborates, at all times and keep their environment clean to eliminate breeding grounds for mosquitoes.

My Ministry is closely monitoring the measles and dengue situation.