

No. 17 of 2010



REPUBLIC OF MAURITIUS

FIFTH NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

PARLIAMENTARY

DEBATES

(HANSARD)

FIRST SESSION

TUESDAY 23 NOVEMBER 2010

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Dr. the Hon. Navinchandra Ramgoolam, GCSK, FRCP	<i>Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications</i>
Dr. the Hon. Ahmed Rashid Beebeejaun, GCSK, FRCP	<i>Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities</i>
Hon. Charles Gaëtan Xavier-Luc Duval, GCSK	<i>Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Social Integration and Economic Empowerment</i>
Hon. Pravind Kumar Jugnauth	<i>Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development</i>
Hon. Anil Kumar Bachoo	<i>Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping</i>
Dr. the Hon. Arvin Boolell	<i>Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade</i>
Dr. the Hon. Abu Twalib Kasenally, FRCS	<i>Minister of Housing and Lands</i>
Hon. Mrs Sheilabai Bappoo, GOSK	<i>Minister of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare</i>
Hon. Nandcoomar Bodha	<i>Minister of Tourism and Leisure</i>
Dr. the Hon. Vasant Kumar Bunwaree	<i>Minister of Education and Human Resources</i>
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Dr. the Hon. Rajeshwar Jeetah	<i>Minister of Tertiary Education, Science, Research and Technology</i>
Hon. Satyaprakash Ritoo	<i>Minister of Youth and Sports</i>
Hon. Mrs Leela Devi Dookun-Luchoomun	<i>Minister of Social Security, National Solidarity and Reform Institutions</i>
Hon. Louis Hervé Aimée	<i>Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands</i>
Hon. Mrs Santi Bai Hanoomanjee	<i>Minister of Health and Quality of Life</i>
Hon. Mookhesswur Choonee	<i>Minister of Arts and Culture</i>
Hon. Tassarajen Pillay Chedumbrum	<i>Minister of Information and Communication Technology</i>
Hon. Louis Joseph Von-Mally, GOSK	<i>Minister of Fisheries and Rodrigues</i>
Hon. Ashit Kumar Gungah	<i>Minister of Civil Service Affairs and Administrative Reforms</i>
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Hon John Michaël Tzoun Sao Yeung Sik Yuen	<i>Minister of Business, Enterprise, Cooperatives and Consumer Protection</i>

*Members**Members*

PRINCIPAL OFFICERS AND OFFICIALS

<i>Mr Speaker</i>	Purryag, Hon. Rajkeswur, GCSK, GOSK
<i>Deputy Speaker</i>	Roopun, Hon. Prithvirajsing
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MAURITIUS

Fifth National Assembly

FIRST SESSION

Debate No. 17 of 2010

Sitting of Tuesday 23 November 2010

The Assembly met in the Assembly House, Port Louis,

at 11.30 a.m.

The National Anthem was played

(Mr Speaker in the Chair)

PAPERS LAID

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

A. Ministry of Finance and Economic Development –

- (a) The Customs Tariff (Amendment of Schedule) Regulations 2010 (Government Notice No. 208 of 2010).
- (b) The Digest of Crime, Justice and Security Statistics 2009.

B. Ministry of Business, Enterprise, Cooperatives and Consumer Protection –

The Rodrigues Consumer Protection (Control of Price of Taxable and Non-Taxable Goods) (Amendment No. 28) Regulations 2010 (Government Notice No. 209 of 2010).

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS
RICHE TERRE LAND SETTLEMENT – PLANTERS
- NOËL-RAMKISSOON REPORT

The Leader of the Opposition (Mr P. Bérenger) (*By Private Notice*) asked the Minister of Agro-Industry and Food Security whether, in regard to the small planters of the Riche Terre Land Settlement, who refused the compensation offered by Government, he will state if the Ministerial Committee recently set up to look into the implications of the recommendations made in relation thereto by Messrs Alain Noël and Jayraj Ramkissoon has completed its assignment and if so, if the Noël-Ramkissoon Report will be made public, indicating if the recommendations made therein have been approved by the Ministerial Committee and Government.

The Minister of Agro-Industry and Food Security (Mr S. Faugoo): Mr Speaker, Sir, as I indicated to the House last week in my reply to PQ No. 1B/626, Government has set up a Ministerial Committee to look into all the implications of the Noël-Ramkissoon Report.

Under the aegis of this Ministerial Committee, intensive consultations have already been held. The Ministerial Committee will meet shortly and will submit its recommendations to Cabinet this week for a final view on the matter.

Mr Bérenger: The hon. Minister will remember that last Tuesday, when he informed us that this Ministerial Committee was being set up, he also informed us that it will work as rapidly as possible, and to quote himself –

“We will try to sort out things at the earliest possible by early next week.”

As the hon. Minister knows, there are people on hunger strike for the seventeenth day. Can I insist, again, that the Ministerial Committee should complete its work as soon as possible and not wait for Cabinet next Friday?

Mr Faugoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, it is a matter of regret that despite the assurances given to planters by Government to ensure that they get a fair and just deal, some people, with ulterior motives best known to them, have been trying to give an unfortunate twist to this issue which, in fact, is in dissonance with the interest of the planters.

As I stated last week, the Ministerial Committee will meet and submit its report to Cabinet. I am saying again, when I said “next week”, this week is supposed to be the week I referred to. We will be meeting before Friday. The Ministerial Committee is not mandated to

take a decision. They have a specific assignment. We are going to report to Cabinet and Cabinet is going to decide on that after.

Mr Bérenger: Will the hon. Minister agree with me that there is no need to impute motives to those people on hunger strike. The hon. Minister, himself, on 23 March, was categorical that the Noël-Ramkissoon Report would be made public. If I can quote him again –

“There is nothing to hide and we will make it public.”

After such an undertaking, when the report is not made public, those hunger strikers feel that they have to resort to hunger strike. Will the hon. Minister agree with me that there is no need to impute motives? They believe in what they are doing and I don't think it is proper for the Minister to impute motives.

Will the hon. Minister again do his utmost? We are Tuesday and, as I said, they are on their seventeenth day of a hunger strike. If the Ministerial Committee completes its work today/tomorrow, can I put the request again that a decision be taken as soon as possible and not waiting for the Cabinet Meeting of Friday?

Mr Faugoo: There are two things, Mr Speaker, Sir. First of all, I didn't impute any motive on the hunger strikers, on the planters. It is those people who are behind them who have been misleading them for so many years since 2007. Where are those people who advised them to go to court and made them wait for three long years? We have a judgment of the Supreme Court in this case, Mr Speaker, Sir. I didn't at all mean the planters. It is the people surrounding those people who are provoking them to go on a hunger strike and not to see what has been proposed by Government, which is in the best interest of these planters.

Mr Speaker, Sir, it was a leasehold land - land belonging to the Government. There was only five or six years remaining on the leasehold rights. We are giving land of more value to these planters. We are giving them support under the Food Security Fund, Mr Speaker, Sir, to restart their activities. Where is the problem?

Secondly, I had said – it is true – when replying to a PNQ in March of this year and, in fact, if I can quote my own words when I was answering the hon. Leader of the Opposition who had asked: “Can I know whether the report of these two men committee will be made public?” I had said: “We will decide afterwards. Let's have the report first. We will have a look at the contents and then we will decide.” This also forms part of the answer that I had given, Mr Speaker, Sir. When I had answered at that time, there was no report and it is not the first time

that Government has commissioned a committee to come up with a report and the report is not being published. The Leader of the Opposition was Prime Minister of this country before, he knows well. As I said, the Ministerial Committee is going to meet. We are Tuesday today; we have only Wednesday and Thursday. On Friday, Cabinet is meeting; it is going to take a decision.

Mr Bérenger: I am glad that the Minister has corrected. I don't agree that others are manipulating those planters. They are adult enough, they are clear-minded enough, they have chosen their path, Mr Speaker, Sir. Can I ask the hon. Minister: why play around like that? It is true that he is quoting part of his answer earlier, but when I insisted - the very last paragraph which I quoted earlier before you came in to say: Questions addressed to Dr. the hon. Prime Minister and so on, as usual - the very last words which he used: "There is nothing to hide and we will make it public." I think when we remember that, we can understand how these small planters feel. Therefore, can I appeal again to the hon. Minister - seventeenth day of hunger strike - to go as rapidly as possible?

Mr Faugoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, one thing should be made clear to the House and to the population at large. I am not saying that it is not a good report; it's a good report, but we have to look at the implications of the recommendations. We cannot create two types of citizens in this country, Mr Speaker, Sir. The report focuses in isolation to only those 22 planters; there were initially 121 planters. Why should we create injustice because of a hunger strike, if we do that, we are opening the door for these people to undermine the authority of this Government, Mr Speaker, Sir?

Mr Bérenger: We are not aware of the report. Is it in order for the Minister, until now that the report has not been released, to supposedly refer to the contents of the report?

Mr Speaker: I think we are sidetracking on this issue. There was a question which was put last week, on 16 November 2010, concerning the report and this PNQ concerns the report, i.e. when the Ministerial Committee will meet; when the report will be taken into account and when the assignment will be completed by the Ministerial Committee; and the report, if ever will be made public, and the approval of Government obtained. That is the point.

(Interruptions)

Mr Faugoo: I have already answered the question.

Mr Ganoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, this is an appeal on the part of the Opposition. In fact, the hon. Minister is well aware that we welcomed the Ministerial Committee when this was announced last week. Can I put it to the hon. Minister because he, himself, in the last part of his answer last time, when I put him the last supplementary, said –

“As I said, by early next week, we should come out with it.”

And today we are Tuesday! So, one week has elapsed. The report should already have been ready. Can we therefore ask the hon. Minister - because we don't want to come back on what has been said in the past or what has taken place; let us just turn over a new leaf; let us all defuse that situation - if the report is ready, clear it with the Prime Minister and ...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Hon. Ganoo, I think you have to listen to what the Minister has answered on a question put by the Leader of the Opposition. He has said the Ministerial Committee has not met, they are going to meet now. There is an assignment which has been given; the decision will be taken.

(Interruptions)

Am I correct in saying that?

Mr Faugoo: There was a Technical Committee under the aegis of the Ministerial Committee, Mr Speaker, Sir. The Ministerial Committee is going to meet before Friday because we have Cabinet meeting on Friday. As I said last week, early next week means this week, Mr Speaker, Sir. One thing I must say, Mr Speaker, Sir: don't the Members of the Opposition have a duty towards this country?

(Interruptions)

They went there, they are fully aware of the facts. They know that the strike has no basis, Mr Speaker, Sir. They should go and tell them to stop. This is not the way forward in a country where the right of each individual is protected, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Bérenger: Mr Speaker, Sir, he took two undertakings. One, to make it public, he hasn't done that. Last Tuesday, he took a second undertaking, that the Ministerial Committee report would be out early this week. We are Tuesday. He more or less imputes motives, as if we are against the country, because we are not looking into all the implications. How many months Government had to look into all the implications? I can only appeal again. He promised that the report would be out early this week, that is, today. Please keep your word!

Mr Faugoo: Which report, Mr Speaker, Sir? I am not talking of the report of the Committee. I said the report of the Ministerial Committee. That would be done before Friday. Cabinet will be apprised.

(Interruptions)

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

IBA –MINISTER OF ARTS AND CULTURE - COMPLAINT

(No. 1B/640) Mr G. Lesjongard (Second Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in regard to the complaint lodged at the Independent Broadcasting Authority by the Minister of Arts and Culture against a private radio concerning his speech made during the celebration of the fifth anniversary of the Vaish Welfare Association at d'Epinay, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Authority, information as to where matters stand.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Director of the Independent Broadcasting Authority that, on 09 September 2010, the hon. Minister of Arts and Culture made a written complaint to the Authority to the effect that the extracts of a public speech he made earlier, as broadcast by Radio Plus, did not reflect the gist of his entire speech and constitutes unjust and unfair treatment to him.

I am further informed by the Director of the Independent Broadcasting Authority that the case lodged by the Minister of Arts and Culture is being heard before the Complaints Committee of the Authority. In fact, the next meeting, I believe, is expected to be held today.

Mr Lesjongard: Mr Speaker, Sir, I thank the hon. Prime Minister for his reply. I also thank him for issuing a statement, just after the statement was made by the hon. Minister, reaffirming his commitment to national unity. But is he aware that that statement made, where it is said that –

“Wo sabse pehle aap ka pradhan mantree hein; hamara pradhan mantree hein, phir desh ka pradhan mantree hein.”

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: I am sorry! The question relates to complaint lodged with the IBA.

(Interruptions)

Mr Lesjongard: I am coming to that, Mr Speaker, Sir.

(Interruptions)

Let me finish - whether the hon. Prime Minister is aware of that statement which has caused a lot of damage to national unity in this country and even to his image as a *rassembleur*.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: I am sorry! This question does not relate to the present question. If the hon. Member wants to put a question to the hon. Prime Minister on his opinion about the statement which was made, he has to come with a substantive question. Any other question!

Mr Lesjongard: Yes, I have a question, Mr Speaker, Sir. Wouldn't it have been wiser for the hon. Minister rather than going to the IBA to have tendered his apologies to the nation, and I think the nation would have accepted it.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: The question is not related. Hon. Lesjongard, you are an experienced Member of this House!

(Interruptions)

Next question, hon. François!

(Interruptions)

I need some silence in the House, please!

RODRIGUES – DRUGS SEIZED

(No. 1B/641) Mr F. François (Third Member for Rodrigues) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in regard to drugs in Rodrigues, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to the types of drugs seized, over the last five years, indicating the -

- (a) net market value thereof;
- (b) number of persons
 - (i) arrested, and
 - (ii) convicted in connection therewith, and
- (c) additional measures, if any, that will be taken to making of Rodrigues a drug free island.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, in regard to parts (a) and (b) of the question, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that between 2006 and 18 November 2010, a total of

214 drug cases were established, including 211 for cannabis, 2 for Subutex pills and 1 for psychotropic pills. The amount of drugs seized had a street value of Rs10,705,800. During the same period, 144 persons were arrested and 77 were convicted.

In regard to part (c) of the question, I am informed that in order to deal with the drug problem in Rodrigues, the following measures have been taken to reduce supply and demand of illicit drugs, to prevent drug abuse as well as treatment and rehabilitation of drug users -

- regular joint operations involving the ADSU, the CID, the Police stations personnel, the SMF and the Dog Unit are carried out throughout the island;
- stop and search of vehicles and persons is being intensified;
- strict vigilance is being maintained at the port and the airport;
- regular sensitisation campaigns on the ill-effects of substance abuse are being carried out at the level of secondary schools and community policing fora by the local Police and ADSU. During the course of this year, over 1,000 youths and adults have attended the programme;
- the National Agency for the Treatment and Rehabilitation of Substance Abusers in collaboration with CRAC Anti-Drug Group, a NGO, is carrying out vast sensitization campaign on substance abuse and HIV/AIDS targeting primary and secondary students, the youth, the women and the trade unions representatives. Since January this year, over 4,000 people have been targeted; and
- the National Agency for the Treatment and Rehabilitation of Substance Abusers, in close collaboration with the Commission for Health and the CRAC Anti-Drug Group is running two treatment and rehabilitation centres in Rodrigues, namely St Gabriel Day Care Centre and Centre Alcoologie Paille en Queue Residential Centre at Mont Lubin. Since July 2005, some 3,600 patients have followed treatment in these two centres.

Mr Speaker, Sir, my Government is determined to resolve the drug problem in Mauritius, including Rodrigues. We fully realise that it is a global challenge and constitutes a threat to health, development and security. As I have always stated, the fight against the drug scourge should concern every one of us. Our drug policy focuses on different fronts to target the different components of the society. We are continuously reviewing the legislative framework to

deal with the problem of drug and in the Government Programme 2010-2015, we have clearly stated that further amendments will be made to provide for stiffer penalties for drug trafficking and drug dealing offences.

Mr François: I thank the hon. Prime Minister for his answer. Mr Speaker, Sir, allow me to congratulate also the good work of the ADSU and the other teams in Rodrigues for their excellent jobs. Despite they are not fully equipped to face the difficult terrain and environment which is quite dangerous, will the hon. Prime Minister see to it with the Commissioner of Police to provide additional equipment and personal gears to these Police Officers for a more effective service and for their safety?

The Prime Minister: I will pass this on to the Commissioner of Police, but they haven't told me that they are looking for extra equipment, but I will certainly pass this on to the Commissioner of Police.

Mr Leopold: I thank the hon. Prime Minister for his reply, but being given that, especially this year, the amount of drug that has been seized in Rodrigues for such a small island, it is, no doubt, the first time we have it in the island and it is, in a certain way, tarnishing the image of the island. Can I know from the hon. Prime Minister whether the Police have conducted an inquiry in this matter to know whether these drugs seized in Rodrigues was met for local consumption or was it for export to Mauritius or other islands?

The Prime Minister: From what can be gathered, Mr Speaker, Sir, it looks that it was for local consumption. As I said, the increase has been in cannabis and there are only two cases of Subutex pills.

PUBLIC TRANSPORT USERS - PROTECTION

(No. 1B/642) Ms S. Anquetil (Fourth Member for Vacoas & Floreal) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in regard to public transport users, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information, for the past five years, as to -

- (a) the number of reported cases of anti-social behaviour against,
 - (i) women,
 - (ii) students and,
 - (iii) elderlies while travelling, and
- (b) actions already taken and proposed to be taken for their protection.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, anti-social behaviour is not specifically defined as an offence in our legislation. However, in the case of passengers travelling in public transport, including taxis, the law provides for offences of assault, attempt upon chastity, insult and incivility towards passengers.

In regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that since the year 2006 up to 18 November 2010, 101 cases of the offences prescribed in the law have been reported to the Police. In 35 of these cases, victims were women, in 51 cases, victims were students and in 15 cases, victims were elderly persons.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, misbehaviour in public transport is an issue which needs to be addressed by various stakeholders including Government institutions and the public.

In this context, and in regard to part (b) of the question, the Police, through its Motorway and Traffic Field Division and its Divisional Traffic Police, ensures that complaints related to incidents in the transport sector are attended to promptly, and carries out regular patrol on a 24-hour basis, at strategic areas.

At the level of the National Transport Authority, the inspectorate carries out random checks, on a daily basis, in buses and taxis, to ensure that all passengers especially women, students and elderly persons travel as safely as possible and without any impediment.

Regarding students, in order to avoid problems which may arise when they travel by public transport, the Ministry of Education and Human Resources is making arrangements for more dedicated school buses. Currently 30% of the student population is benefiting from the dedicated school bus service provided by the National Transport Authority. Discussions are ongoing between the Ministry of Education and Human Resources and the National Transport Authority so as to extend this service to a greater number of students.

Mr Speaker, Sir, emphasis is also being laid on education and sensitisation at all levels. Several programmes and campaigns are run jointly by the Crime Prevention Unit of the Police, the *Brigade des Mineurs*, the Ministry of Education and Human Resources as well as Public Transport operators. The programmes are meant for different target groups, including school children, women, elderly persons as well as public transport drivers and conductors, and focus not only on crime prevention issues, but also on good citizenship and law abiding principles.

CONSTITUTIONAL REFORMS

(No. 1B/643) Mr S. Obegadoo (Third Member for Curepipe & Midlands) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in regard to the proposal for constitutional reforms and/or for a “Second Republic”, he will state if consideration will be given to -

- (a) bringing changes in the electoral system,
- (b) strengthening the provisions for the freedom of expression and association to include, *inter alia*, freedom of the press,
- (c) the setting up of a Senate, and
- (d) making provisions for the -
 - (i) safeguarding of democracy in local government,
 - (ii) abolition of the mandatory declaration of communal belonging by candidates, and
 - (iii) a charter of social, economic and ecological rights, and if so, when, indicating the procedure therefor.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker Sir, I wish to refer the hon. Member to the reply I made to PQ 1B/376 on 03 August 2010 on electoral reforms and I reiterate the commitment of my Government to review our constitutional regime, including the reform of our electoral system, with a view to consolidating our democracy.

I strongly believe, Mr Speaker, Sir, that constitutional reforms should come after wide public consultations and as announced in our manifesto, I intend to appoint a committee consisting of eminent lawyers who have experience of constitutional law and who can look into all proposals from political parties and other organisations or persons interested in this matter.

I am sure the hon. Member will be able to put before the Committee the issues raised in this question.

I am confident that the country will welcome an opportunity to revisit our constitutional regime in the light of the experience acquired of the way the present Constitution has worked over the last 42 years.

The debate over a new constitutional regime establishing a Second Republic will be an open, consultative process which should be undertaken with an open mind without any *a priori* so that the nation can analyse the different proposals on how our country which is already

acclaimed as the best governed country in Africa can further perfect its democracy and governance.

Mr Obeegadoo: I will limit myself to two supplementary questions, Mr Speaker, Sir. Being given the desire expressed by the hon. Prime Minister to have wide public consultations on this issue and taking into account that we are six months into the present mandate of the Parliament, would the Prime Minister indicate whether he intends to introduce such constitutional changes within the present mandate and if so, when does he intend to initiate discussions with the Opposition and appoint this Commission he mentioned to look into such changes?

The Prime Minister: As the hon. Member has actually said, election is just behind us, but we want to do it in this mandate. I have already taken some opinion from certain constitutional lawyers, including some from abroad, to see generally about constitutional change and therefore we will have these constitutional changes within this mandate.

Mr Obeegadoo: The question raises a number of issues, one of which is the issue of the mandatory declaration of communal belonging which has been very much in the public debate. Would the hon. Prime Minister be willing today to state his stand on this issue and whether he agrees that we would need once and for all to abolish this mandatory declaration of communal belonging for candidates to election?

The Prime Minister: I suppose the hon. Member maybe did not see it or was not in the country, I don't know, but I am on record already in the message I gave to the nation on television to say that I believe it is high time that we abolish the mandatory declaration of communal belonging. But there are implications, as the hon. Member probably know. This is why we have to look at it very carefully.

Mr Obeegadoo: My next point Mr Speaker, Sir - taking the queue from the Indian and South African Constitutions, would the Prime Minister agree that it is high time that we write into our constitutional law the basic principles of the Welfare State with the chart...

Mr Speaker: I will have to interrupt here. I have allowed the hon. Member two questions. The hon. Prime Minister has said that he is going to have wide consultations. He is going to appoint the committee. The hon. Member will have all the opportunities to go before the committee and express his opinion. Thank you very much.

MEDIA TRUST - BOARD OF TRUSTEES

(No. 1B/644) Mr S. Obeegadoo (Third Member for Curepipe & Midlands) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in regard to the Media Trust, he will state when was the Board of Trustees last appointed, indicating if the Board has been regularly reconstituted as provided for by the Media Trust Act and if not, why not.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, the Media Trust Act provides that the Trust shall be managed by a Board, consisting among others, of four representatives of the Press, two of whom shall be Editors-in-Chief, elected by the Press.

The Board of the Media Trust was last appointed in February 2004 for a period of two years.

The Board of the Media Trust could not be constituted for the years 2006-2007 as the four representatives of the Press who were elected in January 2006 to serve on the Board subsequently submitted their resignation.

For the years 2008-2009, the Board of the Media Trust could not be constituted as no Editors-in-Chief had presented their candidature for the elections scheduled on 24 January 2008 and 06 February 2008 to serve on the Board.

Mr Speaker, Sir, in my reply to previous questions on the matter, I have already informed the House that Government will, as announced in the Government Programme 2010-2015, come with a new media Bill which will modernise our outdated legislation. In this connection, Government has appointed Mr Geoffrey Robertson QC, an internationally respected human rights lawyer known for his defence of freedom of expression and individual rights to advise Government on the new law.

Mr Robertson has already submitted a preliminary report on the new media law. He was in Mauritius last week for further discussions with a view to finalising the Bill which will include enhanced provisions relating to training. As the present role and functions of the Media Trust will consequently be revisited in the new Bill, it would not be advisable to reconstitute the Board of the Trust at this stage.

Mr Obeegadoo: Would it be correct, Sir, that we are still attributing public funds to this Trust that has no legal standing at the present time?

The Prime Minister: The Trust has not been abolished, it still has a legal standing; the money is there, but we are going to revisit it. In fact, I met Mr Geoffrey Robertson twice when I was in London. We discussed all the matters, but mainly this Bill. We have some discussions that we had to have with him. He came to Mauritius last week, in fact, to finalise the Bill. It's going to take slightly longer than I thought, but as soon as it is ready we will come up with the Bill.

Mr Obeegadoo: Since on the one hand there is no board and on the other hand, on a yearly basis, public funds are made available to such a board, could I invite the hon. Prime Minister to consider the appropriateness of appointing the Board pending these changes which he, himself, declares will take some time?

The Prime Minister: It won't take so much of time. I think it is imminent; we are just finalising the Bill and as soon as the Bill is ready, I will come to Parliament.

Mr Speaker: Next question!

SEXUAL OFFENCES 2005-2010

(No. 1B/645) Mr R. Uteem (Second Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in regard to sexual offences, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to the number of reported cases thereof, for the period 2005 to 2010, indicating –

- (a) the number of -
 - (i) convictions secured, and
 - (ii) cases in which the victim is a minor, and
- (b) if any study has been carried out to identify the causes thereof.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, in regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that since 01 January 2005 to 18 November 2010, a total of 1,865 cases of sexual offences have been reported, including 1,105 cases in which the victim is a minor. The number of convictions secured in regard to the cases of sexual offence is 358.

There has not been any recent study carried out to identify the causes of sexual offence. However, Government is taking action on several fronts to deal with the problem of sexual abuse, and more specifically targeted measures in respect of child sexual abuse.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the House will recall that in 2004, the US State Department Report on Trafficking in Persons categorised Mauritius under the TIER 2 WATCHLIST regrouping countries whose Governments do not fully comply with the minimum standards of trafficking in persons. Following a series of measures implemented by Government, Mauritius has since 2009 been listed in TIER 1.

Mr Speaker, Sir, on its part, the Ministry of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare has set up a High Powered Committee to collectively address the issue of protection and well-being of children. The main objectives of the Committee will be to look into avenues of collaboration between all parties concerned and define respective roles and responsibilities. Again I should add, Mr Speaker, Sir, that such societal problem is not the responsibility of Government alone; everyone needs to take his/her responsibility.

In view of the prevalence of sexual offences, including child sexual abuse and the sensitivity of this problem, that High Powered Committee will also come up with recommendations to address the causes of such offences.

Mr Uteem: Mr Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Prime Minister whether psychologists follow sexual offenders so that they can know their problem and avoid cases of recidivism?

The Prime Minister: Yes, that is the case, Mr Speaker, Sir. There is assistance of a psychologist who interviews the victims of sexual assault and also people who have been traumatised.

Mr Uteem: May I know from the hon. Prime Minister whether he intends coming up with tougher sanctions for sexual offenders, especially where minors are involved?

The Prime Minister: In fact, this was mentioned, I think, when we were here before the elections, Mr Speaker, Sir. The High Powered Committee is looking into that as well.

Mr Baloomoody: I have listened to the hon. Prime Minister. We find that the number of convictions is less than 25% of the cases reported. Will he agree with me that the victims of sexual offences find it very, very difficult to come and depone in court the way our court is set up? It is not user-friendly for these victims. Does the Government intend to amend the law so that the victims can depone by camera so that these victims can depone in a better and more friendly environment than it is now actually in our court?

The Prime Minister: In fact, the Minister also mentioned this at some point. We also feel the same way and we have already passed this message to those concerned.

Mrs Labelle: Thank you Mr Speaker, Sir. I think I have heard the hon. Prime Minister stating that the victims are receiving support from psychologists, but what about the perpetrators? Do they receive a psychological support because it could be that they are just suffering from any type of Paraphilia? Are these victims receiving particular treatment or support from psychologists?

The Prime Minister: As far as I know the answer is no, but perhaps it's something we should look into.

Dr. S. Boolell: Mr Speaker, Sir, will the hon. Prime Minister agree that the time frame between aggression and court appearance of accused with eventual conviction is far too long? It is generally about three or four years before actually the accused gets to Court.

The Prime Minister: Generally that is the case; in fact, I must say that the Chief Justice is doing his best with the Registrar to make sure that this takes less time than they are doing at the moment. In fact, he has been cutting the time of the appearances. The hon. vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Finance will see in the Budget part of the issue has to be addressed, but we are naming more Judges as well.

Mr Ganoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, I heard the hon. Prime Minister saying that Government intends to set up a High Powered Committee to review all the issues which concern the sexual offences, but can I remind the hon. Prime Minister that there was already a Sexual Offences Bill which was circulated in this House during the mandate of the last Government? And, if I understand, the Ministry of Gender Equality is also looking at a new Child Protection Act. Therefore, isn't that contradictory? On one hand the lead Ministry reviewing the law concerning children and on the other hand the High Powered Committee is to be set up, sit and look at the issue of Sexual Offences against young children?

The Prime Minister: They will look at the whole area of sexual offences including the protection of children in general.

AIR MAURITIUS LTD – CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

(No. 1B/646) Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in regard to the Chief Executive Officer of Air Mauritius Ltd., he will now –

- (a) state if Government, through its representative at the Board of Air Mauritius, has recommended the appointment of Mr R. B., as Chief Executive Officer of the Company, and
- (b) for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Company, information as to –
 - (i) his past experience at the highest level in the field of aviation;
 - (ii) his qualifications, and
 - (iii) terms and conditions of appointment.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I should like to remind the House that Air Mauritius is a public company listed on the Stock Exchange. It is governed by its Constitution and its Articles of Association and by the Listing Rules of the Stock Exchange and the Companies Act.

It would, therefore, be improper for me to provide information about matters for which the Board of the Company is primarily responsible and accountable to all the shareholders of the Company.

However, I wish to point out that, according to a Communiqué issued on 29 September 2010 by the Company pursuant to Listing Rules 11.3, the Board of Directors of Air Mauritius Ltd had met on 29 September 2010 and appointed Mr Soobhiraj Bungraz as CEO, in replacement of Mr Ujoodha following the latter's resignation. Mr Bungraz holds a Masters degree in Information Technology and in Business Administration. He has held several senior management positions within the Australian Government in the field of aviation.

Mr Bungraz is also a member of the following professional bodies -

- Chartered Professional Engineer (CPEng);
- Member of Engineers Australia (MIEAust);

- Member of the Royal Aeronautical Society (MRAEs); and
- Member of the Australian Institute of Management (MAIM).

Furthermore, according to another Communiqué of the Company dated 17 November 2010, a special meeting of the Company will be held on December 2010 to vote on a resolution to approve the appointment of Mr Bungraz. As regards the terms and conditions of his employment, this is a matter which falls under the responsibility of the Board Directors under the Articles of Association of the Company.

Mr Bhagwan: Mr Speaker, Sir, being given that government has representatives on the Board and not less than the Office of the Prime Minister, can the Prime Minister inform the House whether he has taken cognizance of the different statements of that gentleman? Already Air Mauritius had been *dans les eaux troubles*. Right from the start, that person is causing in a lot of harm not only to the reputation of Air Mauritius, but to the country at large.

The Prime Minister: He is adopting a method that is apparently used in Australia, where he wants to communicate with all members of the Board. But we have reminded him on this.

Mr Bhagwan: That person is creating already lots of problems, even industrial problems, at Air Mauritius, and he has been called to order by the Board, which asked him to talk less. Is the hon. Prime Minister aware of that?

Mr Speaker: Hon. Bhagwan, you are asking the Prime Minister whether he is aware of what is happening on the Board. I think it is most unfair. Next question!

(Interruptions)

Mr Bérenger: The hon. Prime Minister said that a meeting has been called for December to reconfirm or confirm the appointment of that gentleman. I thought I heard earlier that he had been appointed General Manager by the Board that met on a given date. Which is which?

The Prime Minister: The Board has appointed him. There is going to be a special meeting of the Annual General Meeting of the shareholders to reconfirm the appointment.

Mr Bérenger: Can the hon. Prime Minister confirm that, in fact, what happened at that Board meeting where he was appointed by the Board, the Chairman took it upon himself to propose the appointment of that gentleman, in the presence of that gentleman, and without members of the Board being in presence of his qualifications?

The Prime Minister: I am not aware of this, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Mr Bhagwan: Is the hon. Prime Minister aware that this person is very fond of e-mails? Has he received one of his e-mails? These e-mails are being circulated all over world, especially in the airline sector? Is the Prime Minister aware of that?

The Prime Minister: He did not send me any e-mail, Mr Speaker, Sir.

PROFESSOR ANDREW SCOTT - SENIOR ADVISER - PMO

(No. 1B/647) Mr A. Ameer Meea (First Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in regard to Mr A. S., adviser at his Ministry, he will state –

- (a) the posts he has occupied;
- (b) his present terms and conditions of appointment;
- (c) the total amount of emoluments, fees, benefits and/or allowances drawn, since his appointment to date, and
- (d) if he has submitted any report as at to date and if so, if same will be tabled.

The Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, Professor Andrew Scott is employed on contract in my office as part-time Senior Adviser on Economic Matters, with effect from March 2006. He has not occupied any other position in my office.

I would like to emphasise, Mr Speaker, Sir, the fact that Professor Scott is a high profile Economist. He is currently the Professor of the Department of Economics at the London Business School, and has just been made Deputy Dean (programmes) at the London Business School. He is also a non-Executive Director of the Financial Services Authority. He is a Fellow at the All Souls, Oxford and held lecturing positions at Harvard University, London School of Economics and Oxford University.

He is a Managing Editor of the Royal Economic Society's Economic Journal, a Fellow of the Centre for Economic Policy Research, and Scientific Chair of the Euro Area Business Cycle Network. He has been an Adviser on Monetary Policy to the House of Commons Treasury Select Committee and to the Chief Economists at both the Bank of England and the Treasury (on fiscal policy and debt management), and of the Bank of England (on monetary policy).

Professor Scott has an exceptional track record and has won several prestigious prizes. He has also authored or co-authored numerous articles and books in the field of economics.

As regards part (b) of the question, Prof. Scott is being paid a fee of £16,000 per annum. He is also provided with air tickets and accommodation for a maximum of three visits to Mauritius per year, including tickets and accommodation for his spouse and his three children for one trip. Prof. Scott has not been granted any other fees, allowances or benefits.

As regards part (c) of the question, the total fees paid to Prof. Scott since his appointment to date amounts to £72,000.

In regard to the last part of the question, given that the task of Prof. Scott, according to his contract, is to advise me on strategic, international and economic issues, he does submit to me regularly his reports, which are meant for internal use and policy formulation.

Mr Ameer Meea: I thank the hon. Prime Minister for his answer. Can I ask the hon. Prime Minister whether Mr A. S. was consulted for putting the NRPT and the tax on savings, and whether he was consulted again...

Mr Speaker: Not allowed! Next question!

(Interruptions)

Mr Ameer Meea: Can I ask the hon. Prime Minister whether Professor Andrew Scott was again consulted for the recent Budget preparation?

Mr Speaker: He is a consultant to the Prime Minister. He advises the Prime Minister.

(Interruptions)

Sorry! I am on feet! He is a consultant to the Prime Minister. The hon. Member should put the question to the Prime Minister in regard to what he advises him, and not about the Budget.

Mr Ameer Meea: Mr Speaker, Sir, he is an adviser to the Prime Minister on economic matters. So, we have the right to know whether he has been consulted. The Prime Minister just said that he has an exceptional track record. We want to know whether he has been consulted on fiscal policies, fiscal matters and economic matters.

Mr Speaker: By the Prime Minister.

Mr Ameer Meea: By the Prime Minister, of course!

The Prime Minister: That's precisely why he is there.

Mr Speaker: Time is over! Questions addressed to hon. Ministers! Hon. Lesjongard!

CEB – CF LAMPS – PURCHASE

(No. 1B/650) Mr G. Lesjongard (Second Member for Port Louis North & Montagne Longue) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to the purchase of 660,000 CF Lamps by the Central Electricity Board, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Board, information as to the –

- (a) names of the bidders;
- (b) composition of the –
 - (i) evaluation committee;
 - (ii) tender committee, and
 - (iii) finance committee
- (c) mode of payment, and
- (d) dates the notice and letter of award were issued.
- (e) dates complaints were received from unsuccessful bidders, if any, and
- (f) date Philips Holland, the company granting license for the manufacture of CF Lamps by overseas companies, was contacted for the verification of the information submitted by the successful bidder.

The Deputy Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, as regards part (a) of the question, names of bidders for CFLs, I am informed by the Central Electricity Board that an open tender was launched on 23 December 2009 for the supply of 660,000 Compact Fluorescent Lamps.

At the closing date of 20 January 2010, 13 bids were received. I am tabling the list of bidders.

In relation to part (b) (i), (ii) and (iii), I am circulating the information requested **(Appendix I)**.

As regards part (c) to (f) of the question, it would not be appropriate and proper at this stage to deal with this and other related issues, in view of the fact that the whole matter is being investigated into by ICAC and the Office of Good Governance of the Prime Minister's Office.

Mr Lesjongard: May I ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether the bid submitted by the successful tender, that is, Alternative Power Solution Ltd, was responsive with regard to conformity of the goods?

The Deputy Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, I have said in my reply that it is being investigated. When the truth comes out and the fact comes out, we will give the proper information. I cannot, at this stage, enter into any details, because there have been such contradictory statements that we have to look stepwise where responsibility is lying.

Mr Bérenger: I understand that the foreign firm that won that tender, in whatever circumstances, has these lamps ready, and has asked the CEB to send people to check on the quality. I am given to understand that if that is done and the lamps are put on board, then there is an irrevocable letter of credit which has to be paid. Can I know what the CEB is going to do?

The Deputy Prime Minister: Mr Speaker, Sir, there have been two developments. The first is that no shipment will be made until and unless inspection has been carried to the satisfaction of the CEB, and the bank itself will not effect any payment until shipment is effected. We have asked the *Société Générale de Surveillance* to nominate somebody to go and check.

Mr Lesjongard: May I ask the Deputy Prime Minister why this inquiry is being carried out by the Prime Minister's Office and not by his Ministry?

The Deputy Prime Minister: The hon. Member wants an independent inquiry. I chose it; I appointed it; this is the whole purpose of having good governance at the Prime Minister's Office and this is independent. I think the hon. Member should appreciate this.

Mr Lesjongard: I do appreciate, but I have to ask questions why, Mr Speaker, Sir. May I ask the Deputy Prime Minister who was the Chairman of the CEB at the time when that tender was allocated, and whether the Chairman had chaired the committee whereby that decision was taken?

The Deputy Prime Minister: All information will be released as soon as they are clarified.

ALMA STREET (UPPER) - VALLEE PITOT – SCAVENGING SERVICES

(No. 1B/651) Mr A. Hossen (Third Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central) asked Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether, following the construction of the new road along the upper Alma Street, in Vallée Pitot, with subsequent easy access to some hundred households, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Municipal Council of Port Louis, information as to if it will provide regular scavenging services thereto and if so, when.

Mr Aimée: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Municipal Council of Port Louis that, since 20 October 2010, the Council is already providing scavenging services to the inhabitants along the Upper Alma Street in Vallée Pitot, immediately after the construction of the new road.

The services are being provided twice weekly, i.e on Wednesdays and Fridays.

Mr Hossen: I thank the hon. Minister for his answer. Can we ask the hon. Minister whether it would be possible for the local council of Port Louis to consider the distribution of household bins in this new area which would facilitate both scavenging services of the council and, of course, the households?

Mr Aimée: I will look into it, Mr Speaker, Sir. In fact, it is not the practice of the Municipal Council to give bins to households. It concerns the Ministry of Environment. But I am going to look into it.

Mr Speaker: PQ Nos 1B/652 and 1B/680 have been withdrawn. Hon. Dayal!

CITADELLE – HEALTH TRACK

(No. 1B/652) Mr A. Hossen (Third Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central) asked the Minister of Environment and Sustainable Development whether, in regard to the construction of a health track along the Citadelle, he will state where matters stand.

(Withdrawn)

TURKEY AND MAURITIUS – FREE TRADE AREA

(No. 1B/653) Mr S. Dayal (Third Member for Quartier Militaire & Moka) asked the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade whether, in regard to the last round of the Free Trade Area (FTA) negotiations between Turkey and Mauritius, held on 01 September 2010, he will state where matters stand, indicating -

- (a) the position that will be adopted regarding the rules of origin, and
- (b) if the FTA would be affected in the event Turkey joins the European Union.

Dr. A. Boolell: Mr Speaker Sir, in the context of the ongoing negotiations between Mauritius and Turkey, so far four rounds of talks have been held. Our object in negotiating Free Trade Agreements with Turkey and other Western European countries is to harmonise our trade relations with the whole of Europe and create better market access opportunities for our exporters.

Regarding part (a) of the question, at the 4th round of negotiations, the framework text of the Free Trade Agreement was almost finalised. On market access, Turkey re-iterated that it would extend duty-free access to all manufactured goods immediately upon entry into force of the agreement. This will enable Mauritius to export some 4000 items, including apparel, jewellery, optical goods, spectacles, leather products, etc. many of which are produced by the Small and Medium Sized Enterprises. The Free Trade Agreement with Turkey will therefore provide real opportunities not only to increase trade but also diversify our market which is becoming more and more important in the wake of the global financial and economic crisis.

With respect to rules of origin for garments, Mauritius requested that Turkey should apply the single transformation rule that would allow Mauritius to source out fabrics from third countries in the manufacture of garments to be exported on the Turkish market. Turkey would be agreeable to apply the single transformation rule provided that Mauritius agrees to Turkey eliminating tariffs on some sensitive apparel items over a period of six years. Turkey would however agree to eliminate tariffs immediately on all apparel items if we do not insist on the single transformation rule. This would imply that to benefit from duty-free access, we will have to start production from yarn instead of fabrics which is not a problem in itself given that the

apparel industry in Mauritius is vertically integrated. We are however consulting the operators on the two options proposed by Turkey and would revert back at the next round of talks which will be held in Mauritius in January 2011.

Regarding agriculture, both sides agreed to deal with market access for agricultural products on a request-offer basis. Turkey indicated that any liberalisation in this sector would be on a tariff quota basis i.e. Turkey would either reduce or eliminate tariffs on a fixed quantity. Accordingly, Mauritius had submitted a list of agricultural items, including sugar for which it would like to have free access on the Turkish market.

With regard to sugar, the Turkish side explained that it has excluded sugar from the coverage of the FTA negotiations with India, Brazil and MERCOSUR which are major sugar exporters. Any gesture towards Mauritius at this juncture would have implications for Turkey in its negotiations with other countries.

In order to compensate for not granting concession on sugar at this stage, the Turkish side is prepared to make an extra effort in other agricultural products. This would imply that, on the basis of the offer already made to Mauritius during the 3rd round of negotiations, Turkey would make further improvements either in terms of expanding the volume of the quota or reducing the tariffs to zero.

The Turkish revised offer includes the following -

- Duty-free access on a list of 20 products
- Tariff reduction by 50% on 8 products, including palm heart, fruits such as litchis, animal feed and canned tuna.

With regard to fish and fish products including canned tuna, the Turkish side would be prepared to apply flexible rules of origin in line with the rules of origin under the Interim Economic Partnership Agreement which we have signed with the EU.

Regarding part (b) of the question, should Turkey join the European Union, then it would automatically apply the trade regime under the Economic Partnership Agreement that would govern trade relations between Mauritius and the EU.

To sum up, Mr Speaker, Sir, the agreement with Turkey is bound to substantially improve market access both for industrial and agricultural products for Mauritius coupled with more flexible rules of origin. It is also to be noted that the FTA will include a *rendez-vous* clause to negotiate in the near future an agreement on services with the objective of eliminating barriers to trade in services.

Mr Dayal: Mr Speaker, Sir, Turkey being a member of the Custom Unions of the EU, can I ask the hon. Minister whether he can state whether negotiations with the Free Trade Area with Turkey will make us less eurocentric?

Dr. A. Boolell: No, if anything, this is an opportunity which is knocking in the Interim Economic Partnership Agreement, there is a clause which makes provisions for export of products into Turkey, provided, of course, there are negotiations and negotiations are ongoing.

Mr Dayal: Mr Speaker, Sir, we all know that with the EU there is the element of predictability and reliability. Can the hon. Minister confirm to the House whether this will be the same with Turkey?

Dr. A. Boolell: Well, negotiations are ongoing. It is true that with EU there is the element of predictability and reliability, but we need to look at other markets. Hence, the reason as to why we want to diversify and penetrate other markets where once we sign an agreement, the element of predictability and reliability will be there.

Mr Dayal: Can I ask the hon. Minister whether he will state in the Interim EPA with EU if there is a Turkish clause and what it is all about?

Dr. A. Boolell: Mr Speaker, Sir, I have stated that.

Mr Dayal: I have a last question, Mr Speaker, Sir. Being given that Turkey is a member of the Custom Unions, what benefit will accrue to Mauritius and whether efforts are being made to provide access for export of our tuna?

Dr. A. Boolell: Yes, I have replied to that. Because of the Custom Unions it is an opportunity which is knocking. And Turkey is also wedged between EU and the Middle East and therefore opportunities are there for us to grasp.

**EUROPEAN FREE TRADE AREA – SWITZERLAND & NORWAY –
DIPLOMATIC TIES**

(No. 1B/654) Mr S. Dayal (Third Member for Quartier Militaire & Moka) asked the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade whether, in regard to the European Free Trade Area countries, like Switzerland and Norway, he will state if Mauritius proposes to pursue more elaborate diplomatic ties therewith and if so, indicate the possible areas of cooperation.

Dr. A. Boolell: Mr Speaker, Sir, the reply being lengthy, I will circulate it. **(Appendix II).**

Mr Dayal: Mr Speaker, Sir, can I just ask a question for the sake of further information. If the hon. Minister can state to the House whether there was a team from *Hôpitaux Universitaires de Genève* which visited Mauritius some two weeks ago and if he can say what has been the outcome of this visit?

Dr. A. Boolell No, there has been a visit made by the representative of the *Hôpitaux Universitaires de Genève*. I know they had a meeting with the Minister concerned, hon. Mrs Hanoomanjee.

Mr Speaker: This question is about “to pursue more elaborate diplomatic ties.” What is it about the *Hôpitaux*? Is it related to the question?

Dr. A. Boolell: No, the *Hôpitaux Universitaires de Genève*, of course, relates to ongoing discussions which we are having with Switzerland on a bilateral basis. This is the question.

Mr Speaker: It has nothing to do with this. Next question!

CIRCULAR MIGRATION

(No. 1B/655) Mr S. Dayal (Third Member for Quartier Militaire & Moka) asked the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade whether, in regard to Circular Migration, he will state the number of Mauritian nationals who have benefitted therefrom, since its implementation to date, indicating –

- (a) the countries in which they are working, and

- (b) if those working for six months or less also benefit from the Schengen visa-waiver exemption.

The vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Social Integration & Economic Empowerment (Mr X.L. Duval): Mr Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I shall reply to this question.

Mr Speaker, Sir, we have signed to date two bilateral agreements on Circular Migration, namely with the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) in September 2007 and with France in September 2008.

With regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed that since March 2008, 284 Mauritians have been recruited to work in Canada, under the circular migration scheme and with the assistance of the IOM office in Mauritius.

Insofar as the bilateral agreement with France is concerned, it may be noted that it has become effective on 01 September 2010 and that the National Empowerment Foundation which is the implementing agency and its French counterpart, *l'Office Français de l'immigration et de l'intégration* have agreed to meet at the end of this month to discuss the practical measures to be put in place for an effective implementation thereof.

Notwithstanding with the above, the French side has reported, during a *Comité de Suivi* meeting held last month, that from 2008 to 2009, some 211 Mauritians have obtained contractual employment under the provisions of art. 2.2.1 of the agreement pertaining to '*migration professionnelles*'.

Mr Speaker, Sir, with regard to part (b) of the question, I am informed that the Agreement signed between the EU and Mauritius on the short-stay visa waiver enabling Mauritians to enter the Schengen area and stay without a visa for a maximum period of three months during a six months period does not cover persons travelling for the purpose of carrying out a paid activity during their stay.

NAVIN SOONARANE GYMNASIUM - CONTRACT

(No. 1B/656) Mr K. Ramano (Second Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes) asked the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the construction of the Navin Soonarane Gymnasium, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Municipal Council of Quatre Bornes, information as to the -

- (a) name of the contractor;
- (b) contract value;
- (c) scope of works;
- (d) date on which the complex was commissioned;
- (e) defects noted, if any, indicating the value thereof, and
- (f) amount of money which has already been paid.

Mr Aimée: Mr Speaker, Sir, first of all, I would thank the two hon. Members representing Constituency No. 18, namely Ms Deerpalsing, who intervened at adjournment time two weeks ago and, today, my friend, hon. Ramano...

Mr Speaker: I am sorry; this is not pertinent to the question. Answer the question!

Mr Aimée: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Municipal Council of Quatre Bornes that the project for the construction of the Navin Soonarane Gymnasium was awarded to the Contractor, Ramloll Bhooshan Renovation & Building Ltd, for a contract value of Rs38,441,809.25. The complex was commissioned on 14 March 2008.

With regard to parts (c) and (d) of the question, the relevant information is being placed in the Library of the National Assembly.

In reply to part (e) of the question, a total amount of Rs33,938,179.20 has been paid to the contractor so far for the project.

Mr Ramano: M. le président, est-ce que je pourrais savoir du ministre si la somme qui a été mentionnée inclue le *retention money*?

Mr Aimée: No, Sir. I stated that Rs38,441,809.25 is for the contract. Payment has been made for Rs33,938,179.20.

Mr Ramano: Il y a des éléments troublants quand même. Alors que certains *tender documents* font mention d'un générateur de 100KVA, la livraison a été acceptée pour un générateur de 50KVA, au coût de plusieurs dizaines de milliers de roupies. Prenant en considération le nombre de *defects* - et lorsque vous soumettrez les chiffres, vous verrez le

nombre de millions que cela encourt - est-ce qu'il n'y a pas lieu qu'une enquête indépendante soit décidée au niveau de votre ministère?

Mr Aimée: Mr Speaker, Sir, as I said before, I need some more information. I have asked officers of my Ministry to look into all the aspects of this matter, which is of concern to me also. Once I get all the information, it will be placed in the Library. In fact, it is a turnkey project. This is the inconvenience in Mauritius for a turnkey project. But, I am following closely this matter.

Ms Deerpalsing: Mr Speaker, Sir, two weeks ago I had asked the hon. Minister, at adjournment, time whether he would institute a fact finding committee. May I ask the hon. Minister where matters stand as far as this fact finding committee is concerned, and what timeframe it would take?

Mr Aimée: No, Sir. I have no intention to institute a fact finding committee because, as I already said, top officials of my Ministry are enquiring. Once I get all the information, then, probably, if there is need to have a fact finding committee, I will do so.

Ms Deerpalsing: Mr Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister is saying that officials of his Ministry are enquiring. Is that then not a fact finding committee, as you are trying to find the facts? Can I know from the hon. Minister how long this will take?

Mr Aimée: It is a preliminary stage to have all the information, so that I can decide whether we need a fact finding committee or any other committee.

Ms Deerpalsing: Mr Speaker, Sir, in the meantime all the facts are obtained, which is why we asked for the facts, can the hon. Minister inform the House whether the Rs5 m. that have not been paid yet would be retained in order to be able to cater for any repairs that need to be done?

Mr Aimée: It has been retained already, hon. Ms Deerpalsing.

Mr Hossen: Mr Speaker, Sir, can we know from the hon. Minister whether, at every stage of this project, the Town Engineer of the Municipal Council of Quatre Bornes has delivered appropriate clearance certificates and that, upon completion of the works, submission of such certificates has been delivered by the Town Engineer to the Council?

Mr Aimée: In normal practice, yes. But, I do not have this information right now. As I said before, I am going to find out all the matters pertaining to this particular case, and I will come back.

Mr Ramano: M. le président, l'inauguration a été faite par le Premier ministre en avril 2009, et c'est maintenant ouvert au public. Est-ce normal, alors que le *commissioning* n'a pas encore été fait? Du fait aussi qu'il y a pas mal de *defects* qui sont assez importants, est-ce qu'il n'y a pas lieu qu'on ferme le gymnase jusqu'à ce que toutes les réparations soient faites?

Mr Aimée: Mr Speaker, Sir, I mentioned earlier that the complex was commissioned on 14 March 2008.

Mr Lesjongard: With regard to commissioning, since money has been retained, and we understand that works have not been carried out to the satisfaction of one and all, can the hon. Minister state whether there has been a certificate of commissioning which has been issued, and when?

Mr Aimée: I just answered that question, hon. Member!

Mr Speaker: Can the Minister address the Chair, please?

Mr Aimée: I just answered that question.

(Interruptions)

Ms Deerpalsing: Mr Speaker, Sir, with regard to the works that have been undertaken by the main contractor, may I ask the hon. Minister whether some or major parts of the works been sub-contracted? Is the hon. Minister in a position to answer this question at this moment?

Mr Aimée: I am not aware up to now. Once I get the information, I will come back to the House and inform all Members.

Mr Ramano: M. le président, est-ce que le ministre serait d'accord de rendre public le *commissioning report*?

Mr Aimée: Of course! I will call to task anybody who has been at fault in that particular case. I will bring it to Parliament.

Mr Bérenger: Can I know the level of the official in charge of that enquiry? Is it the Permanent Secretary and, if not, what level of officer?

Mr Aimée: I have one AS, one PAS, and the Engineer attached to my Ministry.

Mr Lesjongard: We understand from the Minister that money has been retained. Money is retained, because we are not satisfied with the works. How come that when we are not satisfied with the works, the Municipality of Quatre Bornes has already issued a commissioning certificate? I can't understand that.

Mr Speaker: I do not think that the hon. Minister said that he has already issued the certificate.

(Interruptions)

He said that he does not have the information now, and that he will give it.

Mr Aimée: Mr Speaker, Sir, the hon. Member already knows that, in every project, there is retention money. I mentioned that payment has been made to the tune of Rs33 m. and that the project itself costs Rs38 m. So, there is retention money for about Rs4 to Rs5 m.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order!

Mr Aimée: Mr Speaker, Sir, in every project in this country, you have retention money, whether big or small.

SCHOOLS - PHYSICALLY DISABLED PUPILS - ADMISSION

(No. 1B/657) Mr K. Ramano (Second Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether, in regard to the physically disabled pupils, he will state the number thereof who are presently admitted in the primary and secondary schools, indicating if he is aware of the difficulties that these pupils face to –

- (a) move around the school compound, and
- (b) participate actively in the academic programme and if so, indicate the remedial measures that will be taken, if any.

Dr. Bunwaree: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed that, in 2010, 39 children with physical disabilities were admitted in primary schools and 74 such children were in secondary schools, both public and private grant-aided.

Mr Speaker, Sir, let me inform the House that it is Government's moral obligation to provide equal opportunities and quality education to all, so that no child of the Republic is left behind. In this regard, my Ministry had in the year 2006 come up with a National Policy and Strategy Paper for the Special Education Needs (SEN) Sector, which outlines the general policy guidelines regarding the provision of quality educational services and care to the children so as to facilitate their integration in the mainstream and society as well.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I would also like to highlight that most of the children suffering from severe disabilities attend specialised schools operated by registered NGOs which benefit from grants-in-aid from Government. Those with mild disabilities or suffering from physical impairments are normally admitted in our schools.

My Ministry being fully conscious of the difficulties that pupils with physical disabilities usually face has since a couple of years ago introduced several measures to both facilitate access to education for these children as well as their movement around the school compound. These are, *inter alia*, -

- a) schools are being equipped with ramps to facilitate access to the classrooms. As of now, 148 schools (out of over 400 schools) have already been retrofitted accordingly;
- b) all new secondary schools constructed (more than 30) have already been provided with toilets for the disabled. Moreover, links between building blocks have been made to facilitate access, using wheelchairs to the first floor where specialist rooms are usually located;
- c) a flexible approach is adopted towards parents who wish to call at school during the day to provide assistance to their physically disabled pupils;
- d) facilities like music room, library, science laboratory, computer room are available on the ground floor where necessary. In primary schools, Head Teachers/Head Masters usually make arrangements to move the whole class to the ground floor wherever necessary;
- e) students with disabilities are released earlier than the other students so that they do not face any movement difficulties, and

- f) school attendants usually help students on wheelchair to move around the school compound.

The same facilities are available in Private Grant Aided secondary schools to enable children with disabilities to move around the school compound and participate actively in academic activities.

Mr Speaker, Sir, insofar as the academic programme is concerned, I am informed that educators are encouraged to provide individual extra assistance to children with disabilities so as to allow them to keep pace with their classmates.

As a caring and responsible Government, we are leaving no stone unturned to ensure that no child is deprived of his or her rights to education. However, I must concede that, in spite of the affirmative actions taken so far, regarding the Special Education Needs Sector, there is still much to be done. In this regard, my Ministry is already carrying out discussions with various stakeholders, including friendly countries as well as Development Partners for expert assistance to build the local capacity in this domain.

Furthermore, as from January this year 2010, my Ministry has reviewed the registration procedures for Special Education Needs children. An intensive campaign to persuade and encourage parents to register their wards in the nearest primary schools for subsequent admission to the best appropriate school or institution has been carried out. In addition, prior to allocating the appropriate schools, a team led by the Special Education Needs Unit of my Ministry, duly supported by the School Psychologist, Speech Therapist, Occupational Therapist as well as officers working in Specialised Schools (School for the Deaf and School for the Blind) has been to different regions of the country, so as to undertake a scrutiny of the case of each child. The adoption of such an integrated approach as well as the service provided at grass root level has indeed been very well received especially by parents.

Mr Ramano: M. le président, je crois que le problème est grave dans les collèges où les élèves doivent se déplacer dans les différentes classes pour les différentes matières, où, aucun membre du personnel ne veut assumer cette responsabilité. Est-ce que je peux suggérer que cela puisse être pris à votre niveau, peut-être en collaboration avec le ministère de la Sécurité Sociale, pour trouver le moyen pour que ces enfants-là ne soient pas pénalisés et qu'il y ait un personnel spécialement dédié pour déplacer ces enfants-là ?

Dr. Bunwaree: Bien sûr, on est en train de faire le maximum. S'il y a des cas spécifiques, j'aimerais bien en être informé, mais on est en train d'aller dans une très bonne direction.

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, would the hon. Minister indicate whether there has been recently a survey to establish how many physically disabled children, between the ages of 5 and 16 - compulsory education age - who are actually attending schools and how many are not?

Dr. Bunwaree: *How many are not?* Ce n'est pas facile à dire. Un travail a été fait, mais je ne suis pas satisfait du résultat. Comme je l'ai dit dans ma réponse, en ce qui concerne le primaire, on a demandé aux parents de venir inscrire leurs enfants à l'école de leur localité. Et là, on a vu qu'il y a eu une grande amélioration. Mais je suis convaincu qu'il y a quelques enfants qui ne sont pas dans le système encore.

Ms Deerpalsing: Mr Speaker, Sir, the policy measures are all very good. But in practice, for example, in my constituency there is a school girl who goes to SSS Quatre Bornes and she is on a wheelchair and cannot walk. She has to go to the second or third floor and when *la récréation arrive*, none of the school personnel, as hon. Ramano has said, will come and take her down. So, she is just by herself there, when all the children are down playing or talking. Can the hon. Minister inform the House whether the personnel/attendants are first of all, physically fit to partake in that duty and are there supervisors or zone inspectors who go and see that these very noble policies are applied in practice?

Dr. Bunwaree: In most cases I must say that we do not have major problems, but there could be certain specific cases where more has to be done. We are trying to avoid children from moving around or to such stairs where they cannot reach. This is why I said that most of the laboratories, be it music classes, science or computer labs are put on the first floor where there is access through ramps. As I said, quite a number of schools have already been provided with ramps and we are trying to extend this facility to all schools. But, wherever there are handicapped children, we look into the cases individually.

Mrs Ribot: Mr Speaker, Sir, I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether there is going to be a policy for those schools where the specialist rooms are not on the ground floor, but which are most willing to admit those handicapped children?

Dr. Bunwaree: C'est ce que je viens de dire. Il faut avoir les cas précis pour voir ce qu'on peut faire. On va faire le maximum pour que ces enfants n'aient pas de difficulté.

Mr Hossen: Mr Speaker, Sir, in consideration of the intention of Government to review its policy of scholarships as announced in the Budget speech, can we know from the hon. Minister whether it would be possible to consider the award of special scholarships to children who are in special needs?

Dr. Bunwaree: Yes, this is a good idea. It is already being taken care of.

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Speaker, Sir, can I ask two in one since there are many supplementary questions? Firstly, beyond the anecdotal evidence, will the hon. Minister agree to urgently work with the Ministry of Social Security and hon. Bappoo's Ministry - I do not know the exact appellation dealing with children's rights - to conduct this enquiry, to establish how many children benefit from social allowances but do not go to school? This is my first question. We can do it.

Secondly, the previous Government had worked on the per capita spending by the State on children comparing disabled to fully abled. Will the hon. Minister agree to undertake yet another survey and come to the House and make a statement on per capita spending by the State on all children be they fully abled or disabled?

Dr. Bunwaree: As regards the first question that has been put, I've said that the survey has already been conducted, but I am not satisfied with the results. So, we are looking into that. *Mais je ne vois pas pourquoi on me pose la même question encore une fois à moins qu'on n'ait pas compris.*

Deuxièmement, *per capita compared between a normal child and those who are in case of special needs*, je peux dire que d'après les actions qui ont déjà étaient prises, surtout depuis 2008, on a nettement dépassé ce que l'honorable membre est en train de dire. Je viendrai à la Chambre pour donner des détails encore plus avec les chiffres pour voir ce qui se fait maintenant et ce qui se ferait dans les années à venir. C'est nettement pas comparable du tout avec ce qu'il faisait lui quand il était là.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Minister whether there is an established protocol for the integration of a disabled child or student, whether we have such a protocol and, if so, whether the school personnel is aware of such protocol if ever we have one?

Dr. Bunwaree: Absolument, il y en a un protocole, mais protocole que je suis en train d'affiner petit à petit encore. Mon but c'est de faire le maximum de ces enfants handicapés venir dans le *mainstream*, l'école normale.

Mrs Ribot: Mr Speaker, Sir, I would like to ask the hon. Minister if he is aware that one of the main reasons for which those physically handicapped children don't go to school is that they've got problem concerning the means of transport to reach school and what can be done accordingly?

Dr. Bunwaree: Oui, mais déjà on a beaucoup avancé dans ce domaine. Je pense qu'il ne doit pas y avoir de problème maintenant. Dans ma propre circonscription, il y avait un enfant qui avait des problèmes pour aller à l'université. D'ailleurs cela avait commencé ainsi. Parce que j'étais tellement sensible étant donné que l'enfant était dans ma circonscription et ne pouvait pas aller à l'université par manque de transport. Et maintenant le gouvernement est en train de dépenser gros là-dessus. S'il y a des cas spécifiques, faites nous savoir. En principe il ne doit pas y avoir de problème.

Mrs Ribot: Mr Speaker, Sir, does the hon. Minister mean that if ever a case is referred to him of a child who cannot go to school because of the problem of means of transport, the case is going to be referred to.

Dr. Bunwaree: Moi, je n'accepte pas cela. Je suis tout à fait d'accord à faire tout ce qu'il faut pour donner à l'enfant ce qu'il faut pour qu'il continue son éducation.

RODRIGUES – ENHANCEMENT PROGRAMME

(No. 1B/658) **Mr J. F. François (Third Member for Rodrigues)** asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether, he is aware of the difficulties encountered for the implementation of the Enhancement Programme in Rodrigues and if so, will he state if his Ministry proposes to bring changes thereto for the academic year 2011.

Dr. Bunwaree: Mr Speaker, Sir, the Enhancement Programme which is an innovative pedagogical cum extracurricular programme for pupils of Standard IV was launched on 17

February 2010. It has been successfully implemented in 287 Government and aided primary schools of the Republic of Mauritius including Rodrigues and Agalega. In Rodrigues, the Enhancement Programme was widely acclaimed with a participation rate above 80 per cent which exceeds the national average of 72 per cent.

In fact, Mr Speaker, Sir, I am advised by the Rodrigues Education Commission that Heads of schools in Rodrigues have affirmed they did not encounter major problems in the implementation of the programme, especially on its academic component.

However, the schools in Rodrigues were constrained by a lack of qualified resource persons for servicing the component of the programme relating to extra-curricular activities, namely slam, drama and music. This issue is being addressed and MIE resource persons and trainers in their respective fields will be deputed to Rodrigues to train a pool of Rodriguan educators and persons who will act as resource persons for the Programme. The persons to be trained in Rodrigues are being identified presently in consultation with the Education Commission for Rodrigues.

In view of the interest generated in this programme and the benefits derived, my Ministry will provide all necessary support to Rodrigues to ensure that the Enhancement Programme is implemented under the best possible conditions in 2011, the more so that it will be extended, as announced in the Budget Speech, to cover pupils of Standard III as well.

Mr Francois: Mr Speaker, Sir, I thank the hon. Minister. With regard to the introduction of extra-curriculum activities like there is proposal for introducing traditional music and dance, but there is a problem that there is no qualified person as to established criteria and I would like to ask the hon. Minister what does he intend to do in that sense.

Dr. Bunwaree: We will either train other people or we will take care of that matter as per people who can afford to give education in the fields they are aware of. There can be a *modus operandi* worked out for that.

Mr Francois: I have another supplementary question, Mr Speaker, Sir. There will be extension of the programme to Std III as announced in the Budget Speech. Will the hon. Minister of Education and Human Resources inform us whether he will have discussions through a large forum with all stakeholders in Rodrigues beforehand and not sort of imposing this programme to Std III despite what the Commission for Education has said through his reply?

Dr. Bunwaree: Extending to Std III is the policy of Government. So, we are going to extend it. I don't know what is the problem of the hon. Member, but we can meet and tell me about the difficulties that he is envisaging.

Mr. Obeegadoo: Is the hon. Minister convinced that the Enhancement Programme has been a major success? Will he agree to an independent audit by people from both the private sector and the public sector in education to feed information to the Ministry in order to improve this programme?

Dr. Bunwaree: Certainly yes, Mr Speaker, Sir.

RODRIGUES – SCHOOLS - CRÉOLE RODRIGUAIS

(No. 1B/659) **Mr J. F. François (Third Member for Rodrigues)** asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether, in regard to the introduction in schools of the *Créole Rodriguais* and of the setting up of the *Académie Kréol Morisien*, he will state where matters stand.

Dr. Bunwaree: Mr Speaker, Sir, in line with the announcement made in the Government Programme 2010-2015 regarding the need to encourage the use of mother tongues to facilitate the teaching and learning process and Government's commitment to work towards the introduction of '*Mauritian Kreol*' as an optional subject in schools of the Republic of Mauritius, my Ministry has initiated action towards the introduction of the language as an optional subject in schools.

Following submissions of inputs on the matter from various stakeholders, a national forum on this issue was organised on 30 August 2010 and was attended by a wide range of stakeholders including a representative of the Rodrigues Commission for Education. The objective of the Forum was to reflect on and come up with proposals for the introduction of Mauritian *Kreol* in schools.

During deliberations at the forum, consensus was reached to establish a Technical Committee known as '*Académie du Kreol Morisien*' that would look into all the aspects related to the introduction of a harmonised version of written *Kreol* for use in schools.

Rodrigues is represented on the '*Académie*' through the Commission for Education and its representative attends the meetings of the academy.

At its second meeting which was held on 10 November 2010, the ‘*Académie*’ was honoured by the presence of the Deputy Chief Commissioner and Commissioner for Education of Rodrigues who expressed his satisfaction that the ‘*Académie*’ will ensure that due consideration is given to the specificity of Kreol as spoken in Rodrigues.

Furthermore, it has been decided that a Working Group will be set up in Rodrigues as soon as possible and it will be assisted by resource persons from the ‘*Académie*’ and the MIE. The views and inputs of the Working Group will be submitted to the ‘*Académie*’ through the Commission for Education for Rodrigues. I am also informed that an appropriate mechanism is being set up at the level of the Commission for Education to submit materials on the language specificity of Rodrigues.

I shall personally Mr Speaker, Sir, ensure that the Working Group in Rodrigues examines all views and suggestions expressed by the stakeholders in Rodrigues such that the specificity of Rodrigues be taken on board.

Mr Francois: Mr Speaker, Sir, is the hon. Minister aware that in 2003/2004, Government sent Professor Hookoomsingh to Rodrigues to meet and discuss with all stakeholders in Rodrigues with regard to *Créole Rodriguais* and the *graphie l’harmonie*. I have been advised that there is a report that was published where he proposed for the creation of a Rodrigues *Créole* language and as our *Créole* is different to that of the mainland, may I invite the hon. Minister to consider this report for all that will be taken on board?

Dr. Bunwaree: I am sure the report is being considered because the same person, Mr Vinesh Hookoomsingh is the Chairman of the academy, he is presiding over the works of the council.

Mr Obeegadoo: Will the hon. Minister give us some indication of the time frame decided upon for the introduction of Kreol as an optional language?

Dr. Bunwaree: I am very satisfied with the progress that is being done at the academy and I am sure it is going to come very quickly because we have the training of teachers also to consider. All this is being taken care of but I am sure that it is not going to take too long.

Mr Obeegadoo: Can the hon. Minister tell us precisely what measures are under consideration for training of teachers because the big question is who is going to teach Kréol?

Dr. Bunwaree: We are being advised by the Academy on that point.

Mr François: As the hon. Minister said Rodrigues is being represented on the *Académie Kréol* by a public officer and that is for invitation for institutional representation. May I ask the hon. Minister to call for a proper representation of Rodrigues, not from public officer but from the other stakeholders also?

Dr. Bunwaree: I think we are advised by the Rodrigues Commission for Education on that purpose.

At 12.59 p.m. the sitting was suspended.

On resuming at 2.41 p. m. with the Deputy Speaker in the Chair.

The Deputy Speaker: The Table has been advised that Parliamentary Question No. 1B/667 has been withdrawn. Hon. Dayal!

KAILASHNATH MANDIR, VALETTA - WATER ACCUMULATION

(No. 1B/660) Mr S. Dayal (Third Member for Quartier Militaire and Moka) asked the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether he is aware of the problem of water accumulation at the back of the Kailashnath Mandir, at Valetta, and if so, will he state the remedial measures that will be taken.

Mr Aimée: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Moka Flacq District Council that there is an existing earth drain behind the Kailashnath Mandir at Valetta and that, due to the topography of the site, there is an accumulation of water thereat.

The Council is proposing to construct a covered drain of a length of 110 metres to divert the water into a nearby river, upon the availability of funds. The cost estimate for the proposed drain is Rs1,045, 000.

DR A. G. JEETOO AND VICTORIA HOSPITALS - BUG INFESTATION

(No. 1B/661) Dr. S. Boolell (Second Member for Curepipe & Midlands) asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether she is aware of an acute bug infestation in the wards at the Dr A. G. Jeetoo and Victoria hospitals and of the proliferation of rodents on most hospital premises and if so, will she state if a sanitary survey has been conducted to make an assessment of the situation, indicating the –

- (a) conclusion thereof, and
- (b) steps being taken to improve the current situation, indicating if these include the temporary closure of some wards.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed that there is no bug infestation at Victoria Hospital. However, at Dr. A.G. Jeetoo Hospital, bed bug infestation has been a recurrent but sporadic nuisance because its old wooden infrastructure makes the environment more prone to bugs. The bugs find harbourage/hideouts in the crevices of the walls, wooden flooring and roofs of wards which are littered with cracks. In these locations, the bugs escape exposure to insecticides.

Presently, it is difficult to transfer patients in other wards because of their clinical conditions and also because of limited space. The problem of bug infestations is expected to be resolved once the new Dr. A. G. Jeetoo hospital which is currently under construction is operational.

Since my assuming the responsibilities as Minister of Health and Quality of Life, I have given priority to the problem of hygiene and cleanliness in wards, including bugs and I have emphasised on the fact that Ward Managers and Hospital Administrators have to assume their responsibilities and ensure that wards are kept clean and are free from bugs. However, in spite of repeated disinfections, it has been noted that bugs have reappeared in some of the wards only at Dr. Jeetoo Hospital. I have thus requested for an investigation to be carried out into the matter. In the event there has been no follow up on instructions which I have issued, disciplinary action will be initiated against those concerned.

Regarding proliferation of rodents, I am informed that there is no such proliferation on hospital premises. The Rodent Control Unit of my Ministry which has been strengthened with additional Rodent Control Attendants since July 2010 carries out weekly visits at our hospitals and places baits and glue at different points according to a schedule of work. Rodent Control is therefore being closely monitored by the Rodent Control Unit.

Furthermore, due to the large size of Victoria Hospital, the activities of the Rodent Control Unit have been supplemented with the enlistment of the services of a private contractor, who carries out regular rodent control activities in the hospital premises.

Dr. S. Boolell: Could the hon. Minister, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, kindly confirm or inform the House that all incinerators in all hospitals are in perfect working order because otherwise they are the source of rodent attraction.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: They are in working order. I have just replied that everything is under control except at Dr. Jeetoo Hospital where there is a problem of bug infestation in some wards.

Dr. S. Boolell: It is a medical problem. It is quite a statement. So, I would ask the hon. Minister whether she would really look into it as a matter of urgency, even at the risk of closing down some wards because there is no other way than that to actually get rid of bugs.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have just said in my reply that for the time being it is difficult to close any wards in view of the fact that we are having a construction at Dr. Jeetoo Hospital and in view of certain clinical conditions of patients. So, it will be difficult to close the wards, but I am giving urgent attention to this. In fact, I said that I had, since my assumption of duty, issued instructions and I am making a follow up and if my instructions are not carried out, *je ne vais pas défendre l'indéfendable!*

The Deputy Speaker: Next question! Hon. Dr. S. Boolell!

UNIVERSITY OF MAURITIUS – CAMPUS - MOVIE PRODUCTION

(No. 1B/662) **Dr. S. Boolell (Second Member for Curepipe & Midlands)** asked the Minister of Tertiary Education, Science, Research and Technology whether, in regard to the University of Mauritius, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information as to who has given the authorisation for the campus thereof to be used for movie production, indicating the –

- (a) terms and conditions of the contract, if any, in relation thereto, including the financial remuneration received by the university, and
- (b) facilities provided by the university in relation thereto.

Dr. Jeetah: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the University of Mauritius that on 30 April 2010, the Council of the University approved a scheme of fees to be applied to entities applying to use the University campus grounds for shooting of films or television advertisements. The scheme was implemented with effect from 01 May 2010.

This decision was reached following a growing number of requests from advertising agencies, film producers and other entities to use the University Campus grounds for shooting purposes.

Authorisation to use the University grounds for shooting purposes is given by the University, as and when a request is received, on the basis of parameters laid down by the University Council and the recommendation of the Mauritius Film Development Corporation (MFDC) in the case of foreign movie makers.

The terms and conditions of contract, consisting of hourly charges, restrictions and payment conditions, governing the use of the University of Mauritius Campus grounds for movie production is being tabled.

The University of Mauritius has collected revenue totalling Rs559,000 since 01 May 2010.

As regards part (b) of the question, Mr Speaker, Sir, apart from access to its campus grounds, no other facilities are extended by the University to the movie producers.

Dr. S. Boolell: Would the hon. Minister consider it a responsible course of action, on the part of Education Authorities, to allow a campus which is already restricted and limited in space to be used during term and exams time for the filming of movies? I know it is one graduate per family and now it is one actor per family!

Dr. Jeetah: I take exception to the facetious remarks of the hon. Member. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we did have a concern with regard to noise. In its wisdom, the university council has decided that film shootings would be held after normal working hours.

Dr. S. Boolell: An exception was taken to my statement; I remove it. But I take exception to the wisdom of the council.

Dr. Jeetah: There is no question, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

NATIONAL IDENTITY CARDS - REPLACEMENT

(No. 1B/663) Mr R. Uteem (Second Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central) asked the Minister of Information and Communication Technology whether, in regard to the project for the replacement of the national identity cards, he will state where matters stand.

Mr Pillay Chedumbrum: Mr Speaker Sir, the Mauritius National Identity Card (MNIC) project is one of the projects under the National ICT Strategic Plan 2007-2011. It involves the deployment of a smart-card based electronic identification system for the citizens of Mauritius.

The Government of Mauritius decided on 26 March 2010 to consider the implementation of the MNIC project under a G-to-G approach with the Government of Singapore, under the ambit of a Memorandum of Understanding signed with the Government of Singapore during the Prime Minister's visit to that country on 09 October 2008.

The Singapore Cooperation Enterprise has designated CrimsonLogic Pte Ltd, a Singaporean company, to provide advisory services in respect of this project.

Mr Speaker Sir, the advisory services will look into the review of the institutional and regulatory framework and also the review of Government Strategy for the production and delivery of some 800,000 smart cards, as well as the annual production and delivery of around 70,000 smart cards. Furthermore, the advisory services will identify applications, in order of priority, which will reside on the smart card and the feasibility of future applications, and also advise on the setting up of the implementation mechanisms.

Mr Speaker Sir, the Consultants from CrimsonLogic Pte Ltd are starting the pre-kick off activities today itself and the advisory services contract will last for three months. Thereafter, the procurement of the smart cards will be undertaken

Mr Uteem: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Minister if he can confirm how much money has been spent so far by the Government on this project? Because this identity card issue started back in 2008 and 2009, and there has been other procurement for these two years.

Mr Pillay Chedumbrum: What I can inform this House, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, is that the cost for the provision of the necessary advisory services for the project is a fixed sum of USD 375,000, exclusive of vat.

Mr Bérenger: Now, we are starting anew. We are getting advice from Singapore. Then, there will be tendering procurement. The question, if I understood it rightly, is how much has been spent by Government on this project until now.

Mr Pillay Chedumbrum: I am not in a position to answer it right now. I can still communicate it to the hon. Member in due course.

Mr Uteem: Can I know from the hon. Minister what procurement system would be used for the allocation of the contract, to manufacture these identity cards?

Mr Pillay Chedumbrum: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as I have just said, we have just started the pre kick-off activities today itself. It will take some three months. Once we finish with it, thereafter the procurement of the smart cards will be undertaken.

Mr Bhagwan: Is the hon. Minister aware - if he is not aware he can go to the file - that, prior to the general election, the previous Minister effected two or three overseas missions and had taken some commitments with international firms? Can he go to the file and report to the House accordingly?

Mr Pillay Chedumbrum: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I cannot be held responsible for what has happened before, because I am not aware about it. I have just given an indication that we have started the work since March this year. We have already started it with CrimsonLogic, and they are doing the work.

Mr Baloomoody: May I ask the hon. Minister what data this smart card will store with regard to each and every citizen of this country?

Mr Pillay Chedumbrum: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I can tell the hon. Member that great care has been taken at the time of conceptualisation, to ensure that the preferred technology option presents the possibility of having a multi usage card, and the applications relating to the following can gradually be exploited by the use of the smart card, that is, bus pass for the old-age pensioners, payment of pensions, smart log on secure electronic document using National Public Key Infrastructure (PKI), access to secured areas, health card, driving licence, identification for voting, electronic post, transport card, and the replacement of other forms of identity card for other government services where authenticity of the identity is required. For example, fisherman card, planters card and so on.

Mr Baloomoody: Are we going to have the fingerprints of each individual on this card?

Mr Pillay Chedumbrum: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, at this stage, as I have just said, we have started pre kick-off activities. We will inform them in due course.

Mr Lesjongard: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, can the hon. Minister confirm to the House whether his Ministry has already worked out specification with regard to the new national identity cards?

Mr Pillay Chedumbrum: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as I have said, the contracts were made with the Singapore Cooperation Enterprise, a Singapore Government Unity Entity. The Singapore Cooperation Enterprise, in turn, designated CrimsonLogic, a Singaporean company, to engage in discussion with the Ministry of IT, Mauritius, with a view to provide the necessary advisory guidance and entering into a collaboration agreement for the implementation of the MNIC project. There has been a first mission study by CrimsonLogic. It dates back to 06 to 08 of April, with a view to gathering information directly from some of the main stakeholders, so that the company could firm up its understanding of the project and subsequently fine-tune the terms of reference. Then, on 20 May, CrimsonLogic submitted a study report, followed by its proposal on 02 July 2010. An evaluation committee assessed the submission, and noted that there were some missing elements in terms of the convergence of the terms of reference which were submitted by Mauritius. From 11 to 13 August 2010, the Singapore Cooperation Enterprise delegated CrimsonLogic to effect another visit from 11 to 13 August, to meet with the identity card task force and discuss on the issue which did not match the requirements of the terms of reference. The necessary qualification was then imparted to CrimsonLogic Private Limited. On 14 September, the revised technical and financial proposals from CrimsonLogic were received, and the evaluation committee met from 16 to 20 September to assess those proposals.

Mr Baloomoody: I come back to the issue of personal data. With regard to personal data, will it be compulsory or on a voluntary basis? Does one have to submit his personal, for example, blood group, fingerprints or HIV positive?

Mr Pillay Chedumbrum: We are still working on that. We are at the initial stage. In due course, I am going to inform the Members of the House.

Mr Uteem: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in 2009, the Government had already appointed State Informatics Limited to look into the feasibility study, and in March 2009 it had already identified the successful bidder. May I know from the hon. Minister why did the Government not go ahead with the recommendation and selection process by the State Informatics Limited?

Mr Pillay Chedumbrum: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have just given the House the necessary information of how we are proceeding since March 2010.

Mr Lesjongard: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Minister who chairs that ID task force?

Mr Pillay Chedumbrum: We have the Secretary to Cabinet and the other officers.

The Deputy Speaker: Next question!

CERVICAL AND BREAST CANCERS - PREVENTION

(No. 1B/664) **Mrs L. Ribot (Third Member for Stanley & Rose Hill)** asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether, in regard to cervical and breast cancers, she will state if the statistics show increases in the cases thereof, indicating –

- (a) in each case, the measures that her Ministry proposes to take for the prevention thereof, and
- (b) where matters stand concerning the vaccine against cervical cancer.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I wish to point out that the trend for cervical cancer in Mauritius has been on the decrease over the last two decades and more specifically between the two 4-year periods: 1997-2000 and 2005-2008 when there has been a decrease of 15%.

However, as regards breast cancer, the incidence has increased by 45% between the same two 4-year periods, that is, between 1997-2000 and 2005-2008.

As regards part (a) of the question, I am advised that the major contributing factor for all cancers is unhealthy lifestyle. There is also a genetic factor for breast cancer. My Ministry has, therefore, initiated a number of measures for the prevention of cancer. These include the following -

- (i) intensification of media campaigns to educate the population about a healthier lifestyle, for instance healthy nutrition and regular physical exercises;
- (ii) implementation of the National Nutrition Action Plan;

- (iii) door-to-door distribution of waist measurement tapes and teaching of individuals about how to measure their waist in addition to counselling those with abnormal waist measurements;
- (iv) holding of education programmes for housewives on healthy cooking;
- (v) sensitization and screening of the population through Mobile Clinics on non-communicable diseases, including breast and cervical cancers;
- (vi) enforcement of new legislation on tobacco use and implementation of the National Action Plan for Tobacco Control;
- (vii) development of a National Action Plan for Cancer Control and Prevention which will be disseminated shortly, and
- (viii) implementation shortly of a National Cervical Screening Programme through mobile caravans as well as the setting up of a National Mammography Screening Programme.

Concerning part (b) of the question, a study is being carried out to find out whether viruses which cause cervical cancer are present in Mauritius. The study is expected to be completed by May 2011. The findings thereof will guide our decision regarding an eventual vaccination programme against cervical cancer in Mauritius.

Mrs Ribot: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would like to ask the hon. Minister whether she is aware that the question of vaccine against cervical cancer has been discussed since 2006? In 2009, the question was addressed twice and the reply that the then hon. Minister of Health gave on 10 November 2009, was: 'A final report is expected by June 2010'.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Yes, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. In fact, I'm aware of the conduct of that study which started a long time back, but there has been a delay as several issues have had to be cleared, including the commissioning of a PCR equipment and a laboratory; also the preparation of a protocol which is a scientific one and the ethical components thereof.

Mrs Ribot: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would like to ask the hon. Minister whether an estimate of the cost of vaccine has been made already?

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I don't want to pre-empt. I am waiting for the findings of the study before we can come to a conclusion as to whether we will need the vaccination or not.

The Deputy Speaker: Yes, hon. Ganoo!

Mr Ganoo: I want to ask the hon. Minister a question concerning breast cancer. She has underlined the alarming figure of an increase of 45% within a 10-year period. I am talking as a layman. I understand the Minister mentioned the genetic factor. Is it possible for the Ministry to impress upon breast cancer patients that their daughters also be subject to regular checks, because I understand that most of the time the risks for the daughters of breast cancer patients to be liable to that disease are very high? This is one way of monitoring, of identifying, of focusing on potential patients.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: In fact, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that is why I mentioned the genetic factor because we are doing screening and, at the same time, we are doing sensitisation. If we are doing a screening programme we can, at least, know who are those who have got the genetic factor and that is why we are laying emphasis on sensitisation as well.

Mr Obeegadoo: Would the Minister agree that logic would dictate that, if you have a 45% increase in the prevalence of breast cancer over 10 years, it cannot be due to hereditary genetic factors. Therefore, will the hon. Minister consider commissioning an urgent study into the possible explanatory factors for such a dramatic increase, which is not specific to Mauritius but, as the hon. Minister well knows, is a phenomenon world-known in developed societies, so that we can address it in time?

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, only yesterday at one of the meetings I chaired on cancer, I gave instructions to see whether we can get a consultant from WHO, who could help us with an in-depth study on the matter. In view of the prevalence and in view of the figures that I have just given, there is need for an in-depth study.

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, would the Minister agree that, given the increase in importance of cancer as a cause of death in Mauritius, this is a trend of industrialisation? There is an urgent need to review the quality services for the treatment of cancer patients within our public service?

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this forms part already of the National Action Plan which I have just mentioned on cancer.

Mrs Ribot: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would like to know from the hon. Minister if she is thinking of sensitisation campaign starting right from school?

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Well, our sensitisation campaign starts from the roots. That is why I am saying that we are laying much emphasis on our sensitisation campaign as well as on our screening programmes, so schools obviously are included.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, may I ask the hon. Minister whether she will look into the possibility that the high level of pesticide in our fruits and vegetables could be one of the causes? Because, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have an information that I have not been able to confirm, that for some Mauritian ladies who had the treatment in Singapore, a high level of pesticide has been noted in their blood? This was a common factor for those ladies who have got their treatment in Singapore.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in fact, this meets the question which has just been asked by hon. Obeegadoo where I said that we need an in-depth study so that we can go to the source of the problem.

Dr. Sorefan: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the breast cancer question must not be alarming to the young girls. The Minister should be careful.

The Deputy Speaker: Put your question, please!

Dr. Sorefan: There are different types of breast cancers. We must be very careful on the genetic issue. Unless the Ministry comes with an issue about such type of genetic cancer, then it can come and tell the population that this is genetic.

The Deputy Speaker: Put your question, please!

Dr. Sorefan: Can the hon. Minister confirm that they have the means at the level of the Ministry to identify which cancer of the breast is genetic so that the youngsters are not alarmed?

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, if I understood the question, I think what the hon. Member had just said is a little bit in contradiction with what his other colleagues on the same side of the House have said. We are having an in-depth study and all these will be taken into consideration.

The Deputy Speaker: Next question!

OMBUDSPERSON FOR CHILDREN - ANNUAL REPORT

(No. 1B/665) Mrs L. Ribot (Third Member for Stanley & Rose Hill) asked the Minister of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare whether, in regard to the last Annual Report of the Ombudsperson for Children, she will state if urgent actions, if any, will be taken in the light thereof.

Mrs Bappoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I wish to refer the hon. Member to the reply I made to the PQ No. 1B/578 of last week, whereby I elaborated extensively on a series of measures being implemented in the restructuring programme of the Child Development Unit of my Ministry with the setting up of the new Child Protection Services System.

I wish also to inform the House that I have met the Ombudsperson for Children and she has already expressed her satisfaction that several of the recommendations made in her annual reports, including the last one, are being taken care of.

Mrs Ribot: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am well aware that the hon. Minister gave a reply last week, but in the meantime, the report of the Ombudsperson has come out. One of the observations of the Ombudsperson is that officers could not take a quick decision concerning high risk children as they had to consult the Head Office first. I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether something has been done to get a kind of fast track.

Mrs Bappoo: Of course, yes, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, because as from now we have put up a new sort of supervision team. There are three Senior Family Welfare Protection Officers to monitor intervention of the different field officers on a case to case basis to ensure proper follow-up. It has been agreed also that, at the same time, there will be one permanent vehicle attached to each of the out station. We have six like this across the island and this is to give rapid intervention to various cases.

Mrs Labelle: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, one of the remarks is that actions are slow. May I, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, draw the attention of the hon. Minister that this morning there was a case of a young girl, a battered child, in Grand Gaube. Neighbours called the CDU since 2006 and up to now this little girl is still in the same environment. As at this morning nothing has been done regarding the little girl aged 9 years.

Mrs Bappoo: I cannot say yes to this statement, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that I totally agree what the hon. Member has said. Maybe she is right also, but I need to investigate in the case. There is a big debate going on, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. That any child in problem as if the only solution is to remove the child and to place the child in a place of safety. We all know that the proper place for the child is the family. So, there is a lot of mediation and conciliation going on and counselling going on, whether the child needs to be taken out from the family system, and to be placed in a place of safety. But to that particular case, if I get the details, I will certainly look into it and see the gravity of the problem or whether the counselling system is going on fairly well or that the child needs to be removed under a Protection Order and placed into a place of safety.

Dr. S. Boolell: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would like to ask the hon. Minister whether her list of children under scrutiny by her Child Watch Programme includes child mendacity, street children and child labour.

Mrs Bappoo: Yes, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. That's why I explained about the setting up of a High-Powered Committee with all different Ministries and stakeholders is a must, because there are various issues, various problems and each of these problems are being referred for the CDU to take steps. I think that the High-Powered Committee will be the most appropriate forum to get the responsible authority to react and to take action. Indeed, these three items that the hon. Member has just mentioned makes part of our concern as far as the protection of the child is concerned.

Dr. S. Boolell: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, can the hon. Minister inform the House whether there is a specific programme, returning for the street children, which is a bit of a special case?

Mrs Bappoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, street children, today, is mostly a concern of NGOs, where together with the support from Government authorities, from finance resources from the CSR Programme, etc, there are special programmes for street children. SAPHIRE which is one of the most important NGOs working with the street children, they form part of a pool of trainers that I have put up at the level of the Ministry to give training to members of the community network in various *régions à risque* just to help in the problem of street children in these areas.

Mrs Ribot: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, one of the recommendations of the Ombudsperson for Children was the setting-up of a principle of child monitoring order where the child can remain in the family, but falls under the responsibility of a person outside the family who can step in in case of problem. I would like to know from the hon. Minister how she regards that recommendation?

Mrs Bappoo: I elaborated in the parliamentary question of last week, but because it is of a point of interest to the hon. Member, I should say that everything has been done at the level of the Ministry for the putting up of a Child Mentoring Programme. The only thing which is being awaited is that the Master and Registrar now needs to work on the Order so that we can implement the programme. The mentors are there, the mentees have been selected, it is only the final ruling of the Registrar which is in waiting just to be able to implement the programme. My wish is to see it as soon as possible.

Mrs Ribot: One last question! Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would like to know from the hon. Minister if she is going to take into consideration the recommendations of the Ombudsperson for children as to the introduction of sexual education in schools?

Mrs Bappoo: I think it is better to put the question to my colleague, the Minister of Education. As far as in our network programme, we are bringing it in our social welfare centres, community centres, women centres, children's club, but if it is to go into the school curriculum, it must be finalised at the level of the Ministry of Education.

Mrs Navarre-Marie: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, regarding urgent actions, the hon. Minister spoke at length after the death of Janick Martin at Richelieu about recruiting additional child welfare officers. I would like to know whether this has been done, because I have seen none in the Budget Speech?

Mrs Bappoo: The simple reason is that, maybe four weeks back, the vacancies were published in the press and candidates will be going through their interview. At the level of the PSC, there are 10 additional posts that have been given to the Ministry. Once these 10 posts are being filled, then we are going to see for additional posts. I want to assure everyone that the advertisement was in the press and, actually, PSC will start the exercise about the recruitment of 10 of these officers.

Mr Guimbeau: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister just stated that street children is the concern of NGOs. We would like to know, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, what is the concern of a Ministry then?

(Interruptions)

What is the role of a Ministry if the hon. Minister puts it on the back of the NGOs?

Mrs Bappoo: I never said that, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. It is a pity that the hon. Member does not understand. I said it is an issue that is being tackled mostly by NGOs with financial support from Government. On the social front, Government alone will never be able to find solutions to the social evils. We need to have NGOs. Government is investing in NGOs through CSR and additional funds. So, it is not that it is not a concern of the Ministry. The Ministry is in partnership with the NGOs. The hon. Member must be right in his observation.

Mr Obeegadoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, given that the hon. Minister seems to be suggesting that the recommendations of the report are being followed, given the cross-party support for the importance of the institution of the Ombudsperson for Children, has the hon. Minister taken cognizance of the very serious public declaration of the Ombudsperson to the effect that she does not know whether she is being taken seriously by the authorities and, if so, will she take urgent steps to establish proper lines of communication and dialogue between the office of the Ombudsperson and her Ministry?

Mrs Bappoo: Ombudsperson, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, has regular meetings in my office, with myself and the staff of the Ministry.

SIC - CASINOS - SHAREHOLDING

(No. 1B/666) Mr K. Li Kwong Wing (Second Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to the casinos, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the State Investment Corporation, information as to its percentage shareholding therein and in their management companies, if any, indicating -

- (a) since 2007 to-date, on a yearly basis;
 - (i) their gaming revenues and profits;
 - (ii) the amount of licence fees, taxes and dividends paid to Government;
- (b) if the financial situations thereof have deteriorated and need full investigations for remedial actions to be taken, and
- (c) where matters stand concerning the decision of Government to cede a majority stake in the companies to foreign operators.

The vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development (Mr P. Jugnauth): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as regards the first part of the question, I have been informed by the State Investment Corporation that its percentage share holding in the casino companies and the SIC Management Services is as follows -

Casino de Maurice Ltd	100%
Beach Casinos Ltd	100%
Sun Casinos Ltd	100%
Le Grand Casino du Domaine Ltée	62.36%
Le Caudan Waterfront Casino Ltd	51%
SIC Management Services Co Ltd	100%

Concerning part (a) (i) and (ii) of the question, I am tabling the requested information.

With regard to part (b) of the question, I am informed by the State Investment Corporation that the financial situation of the casino companies have, in fact, deteriorated due to the drastic fall in gross revenue since February 2009 which is mainly attributable to the following factors -

- (i) proliferation of Gaming Houses 'A';
- (ii) increase in number of gaming houses for football and other gaming outlets;
- (iii) proliferation of TOTE system in towns and villages;
- (iv) introduction of national lottery;
- (v) decline in high action betting due to the restriction of transaction exceeding Rs500,000 in compliance with legislations, and
- (vi) fall in market share.

Concerning part (c) of the question, it is recalled that the House was informed in the reply to PQ No. B/522 in May 2009 and to PQ No. 1A/47 on casinos of 27 July 2010 that SIC had given its in-principle acceptance to the offer submitted by Peermont Group of South Africa. This was however subject to further discussions and negotiations.

Matters have been put on hold pending a final decision as the philosophy of Government is to create a conducive environment together with the accompanying regulatory framework which would allow stricter control and enforcement with regard to the operations of casinos and gaming houses. Government is also envisaging the long-term rezoning of the casinos and gaming houses outside the residential areas and will develop a global and holistic approach that will also tackle the issue of proliferation of gaming activities.

Once Government is satisfied that a sound and economically sustainable framework can be devised which meets the aspirations of all key stakeholders, the appropriate decisions will be taken.

In the meantime, one of the measures already announced in the 2011 Budget Speech is the increase in gaming license fees and slot machine license fees.

Mr Li Kwong Wing: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, will the hon. vice-Prime Minister inform the House who are the current Chairman and Chief Executive of the casino companies and whether he would confirm that there is, at present, no General Manager in charge, and if yes, when will the appointment be made?

Mr Jugnauth: I don't have the information with me, but I can communicate to the House the information that has been requested.

Mr Li Kwong Wing: Will the vice-Prime Minister, therefore, also inform the House as to the amount of money that has been spent in this aborted disposal exercise and the number of missions and the cost of the missions that have been made to visit the successful bidder?

Mr Jugnauth: It is not yet aborted, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. I said the matter has been put on hold and a decision will be taken.

Mr Bhagwan: Apart from the reasons mentioned by the vice-Prime Minister, can he direct the SIC to conduct a study about mismanagement? One of the main problems of the casinos is that it has become a dumping ground for people of one political party. Is he agreeable, in the public interest, to at least direct the SIC to conduct a study on the management of casinos?

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order, please!

Mr Jugnauth: This is a matter of opinion, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. Of course, we are looking into this and, as I have said, we hope pretty soon a decision will be taken with regard to the casinos.

FOOD SECURITY FUND - BENEFICIARIES

(No. 1B/667) Mr K. Li Kwong Wing (Second Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Agro-Industry and Food Security whether, in regard to the Food Security Fund, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Fund, information as to -

- (a) the amount of funds
 - (i) raised, and
 - (ii) disbursed, as at to-date, giving the list of the beneficiaries thereof and the projects funded

- (b) the conditions and procedures laid down for eligibility thereto, and
- (c) if measures will be taken to improve the operation and effectiveness thereof.

(Withdrawn)

AIR MAURITIUS – TRADE UNIONS - REPRESENTATIONS

(No. 1B/668) Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment whether he will state if he has received representations from the Cabin Crew Staff Union and from other recognized trade unions of the Air Mauritius Ltd., concerning the industrial relations thereat, and if so, indicate -

- (a) the actions that have been initiated in connection therewith, and
- (b) if he proposes to appoint a mediator in relation thereto.

Mr Mohamed: I wish to inform the House, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that in October 2010, I have, in fact, received representations from the legal adviser of Air Mauritius Cabin Crew Association to the effect that management has failed to implement some of the clauses contained in an agreement reached in November 2009 between Air Mauritius and the association. According to records available at my Ministry, there are no other representations from other recognised trade unions regarding the state of industrial relations at Air Mauritius.

With regard to part (a) of the question, I wish to inform the House that in view of the complexity of the case at hand, officers of my Ministry had to carry out some preliminary investigations with management of Air Mauritius Ltd. My Ministry has now convened a meeting with representatives of both management and the association on Thursday 25 November 2010 at 1400 hrs to sort out the matter.

With regard to part (b) of the question, I wish to inform the House that the necessity of appointing a mediator in relation to the matter does not arise for the time being. I assure the House that all efforts will be made by my Ministry to reach a settlement as regards this dispute to the satisfaction of all parties concerned.

Mr Bhagwan: M. le président, est-ce que le ministre est au courant qu'il y a une politique de répression contre les dirigeants des syndicats ces jours-ci à Air Mauritius, particulièrement après l'annonce publique qu'il y a des problèmes industriels à Air Mauritius depuis la nomination du nouveau CEO dont on connaît les réputations ?

Mr Mohamed: I thank the hon. Member for his question which gives me the opportunity to set the record right. I think it is important to note, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that the object of my Ministry is, precisely, as I have explained in my answer earlier on, to listen to both sides of the story. There are always two sides of a story. Sometimes we even have three or four sides. In this particular instance, what the hon. Member is saying is one side of the story. I think it is imperative for any responsible institution, before one is to make any public comment or any finding or any decision or before even one comments in any way and, even in a general way, about a situation, one should not only limit oneself to one side of the story. Precisely, that is why we have this meeting on 25 November at 1400 hours, in order to hear the other side. What we intend to do is to bring mediation in the interest of all parties where everyone can live happily.

Mr Bhagwan: Can the hon. Minister give the assurance to the employees of Air Mauritius that pending this meeting, the officers of his Ministry will see to it *qu'il n'y ait pas une politique de représaille* à Air Mauritius and that there is a constant follow up at the level of his Ministry? I have an eye on Air Mauritius.

Mr Mohamed: Well, I can reassure the hon. Member and the Members of the House that I will not only have one eye, I'll have two eyes on them. As far as the issues of Air Mauritius are concerned, the fact that management has agreed to meet the officers of my Ministry on 25 November at 1400 hours, is in itself an excellent piece of news. It shows that all parties are interested to reach an amicable settlement. So, I am quite positive and hopeful about the outcome.

Mr Bhagwan: The doors of the hon. Minister are always open.

Mr Mohamed: Always!

Mr Bhagwan: Especially the way he dealt with Hitler there!

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Member should put his question.

Mr Bhagwan: Can the Minister at least give the guarantee to the House that his doors will be opened for the workers of Air Mauritius apart from trade unions?

Mr Mohamed: I can go even further than that, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. My door is also open to the hon. Member.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order please! The Table has been advised that PQ 1B/682 has been withdrawn. Next question hon. Ameer Meea!

PONT DE PARIS – FOOD HAWKERS

(No. 1B/669) Mr A. Ameer Meea (First Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the Pont de Paris, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Municipal Council of Port Louis, information as to –

- (a) if the kiosks thereat have been allocated and if so, indicate the –
 - (i) number of hawkers who will be operating in each kiosk, and
 - (ii) rent charged to each hawker, indicating the quantum of the deposit fee, if any, and
- (b) if additional money has been spent in relation thereto, and if so, give details thereof.

Mr Aimée: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am informed by the Municipal Council of Port Louis that -

- (a) none of the kiosks has been allocated yet and the allocation exercise is scheduled for early December 2010 and, that
 - (i) four hawkers will be operating in each kiosk, and
 - (ii) there will be a monthly rental fee of Rs2000 and a trade fee of Rs2000 to be paid on a yearly basis. No deposit fee will be claimed.

In regard to part (b) of the question, no additional money has been spent on the project which has been implemented by my Ministry and supervised by the Ministry of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping.

On the other hand, the Municipal Council of Port Louis has decided to construct additional trading spaces, including a ramp. Quotations were invited and contract has been awarded to Star Manufacturing and Contracting Ltd on 16 November 2010. The duration of the works is 45 days from the date of commencement.

Mr Ameer Meea: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, firstly, can I ask the hon. Minister whether he made any site visit to the Pont de Paris, and secondly...

The Deputy Speaker: One by one please, let the hon. Minister answer!

Mr Aimée: I have made various visits to the Pont de Paris.

Mr Ameer Meea: Can I ask the hon. Minister whether there has been any meeting with the food hawkers of Desforges Street? According to my information, the Pont de Paris does not meet their expectations in terms of space, parking, security and design.

Mr Aimée: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am the Minister...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Yes, answer please!

Mr Aimée: ... and there is a Council that deals with that particular matter.

The Deputy Speaker: Address the Chair, please!

Mr Aimée: There is a Council that looks into that particular matter about how to allocate these stalls and if anything happens, it is only afterwards that the Minister would be advised. I do not have this information, I am sorry.

Mr Ameer Meea: My question is *simple comme bonjour*. *Est-ce que le ministre a eu des rencontres avec* the food hawkers of Desforges Street and what was the outcome? He did not reply to this question.

The Deputy Speaker: Okay, we will listen to the Minister!

Mr Aimée: M. le *Deputy Speaker*, les applications sont traitées par le *Council*...

The Deputy Speaker: No, the question is whether you had meetings or not.

Mr Aimée: No, I could have said no.

Mr Bérenger: Just a point of clarification, I heard the hon. Minister say that there will be four hawkers per kiosk and then he gave figures for sums that will be claimed from them. Are those sums per kiosk or per hawker?

Mr Aimée: It is per hawker.

Mr Barbier: How many kiosks and how many hawkers are there in total?

Mr Aimée: According to my information, there are around 74 hawkers.

Mr Uteem: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, can the hon. Minister give the assurance to the House that he will see to it that those stalls are allocated in the most fair and transparent manner possible?

Mr Aimée: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Council in a certain way is *autonome*. They will do the exercise and if there is anything wrong afterwards, it is only then that the Minister can intervene. It is not from the very beginning that I am going to give the stalls to the hawkers.

Mr Ameer Meea: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we all know the track record of the Municipality of Port Louis in terms of stall allocation namely at Ruisseau du Pouce and at Ibrahim Abdullah market fair. What I would like to ask the hon. Minister is what type of commitment does he have from the food hawkers that they will move to Pont de Paris when the project is completed?

Mr Aimée: In fact, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that kiosk has been done to meet the requirement of hawkers and I cannot pre-empt to say whether they would go there or not. But, we have offered them a place to work. This is a question which the hon. Member is pre-empting and which I cannot answer.

Mr Hossen: It is known to everybody that the situation of hawkers along SSR Street has been left unattended for so many long years....

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Put your question, please!

(Interruptions)

Order please!

Mr Hossen: Can I have confirmation from the hon. Minister...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order please! Order! Put your question and let the Minister answer!

Mr Hossen: Can I have confirmation from the hon. Minister that the Pont de Paris project caters for both food hawkers in the evening and regular hawkers during the day?

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order please, we will listen to the Minister now!

Mr Aimée: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am not looking in the mirror to see what is going on behind my back. But, what I can say is, since my appointment as Minister in February, I am looking deeply into the problem of hawkers and I am doing it on a humanitarian basis. You would recognise that on the SSR road they were selling food and the Municipality of Port Louis has chased them from there in the first instance. But then, we have tried to find ways and means on how to house these people, not only for Pont de Paris, but for other areas of Port Louis. In fact, for the New Year we are trying to find ways and means to let them have their bread, if I can say.

Mr Ameer Meea: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, there is a substantial amount of money invested in Pont de Paris, about Rs28 m. The Minister is now telling us that he does not have any commitment from the food hawkers to move there!

(Interruptions)

He just said that he does not have any commitment from the food hawkers!

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Put your question, please!

Mr Ameer Meea: Does he have a written commitment from the merchants of Desforges Street that they will move to Pont de Paris? As I said, it cost us Rs28 m. and the Minister also

added that there is an extension to the project and we do not know how much it will cost. Does he have any written commitment from the hawkers?

Mr Aimée: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the commitment is not between me and the hawkers. It is between the Municipal Council and the hawkers. That is what I said before. I said that if there is problem which occurs pertaining to the people working there, I will then interfere. I cannot interfere now.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order, please!

Mr Aimée: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, when we deal with problems pertaining to hawkers and any other hawkers around Mauritius, they say that the Minister is interfering in the Council's business. So, now when I say to let the Council deal with it and then the Minister will interfere, this is not good. But, tell me which is good!

Mr Hossen: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, there have been questions put referring to the allocation of stalls. Can we have confirmation from the hon. Minister that allocation of stalls will be effected, taking into account the nature of practice of food hawkers? We have so many hawkers doing what we commonly call *grillade*; others selling *biryani*. Will the allocation going to be effected so as to regroup the nature of practice of those hawkers on the one hand and, on the other hand, the Council will make sure that this allocation is not a cause of nuisance to people residing in that locality?

Mr Aimée: Precisely, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I think that the Council will bear in mind that there is the Food Act, and that we have people living in the locality. I am sure that they are dealing with it, but I will look into the matter.

Mr Ameer Meea: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in a reply to a past PQ in June 2010, the hon. Minister stated that, concerning the criteria for allocation, I quote -

“Criteria for allocation of stalls: the Municipal Council of Port Louis has set up a sub-committee to work out the criteria, taking into account that the project was initially designed for food sellers.”

Five months have elapsed. What is the outcome of that sub-committee in terms of allocation?

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order, Please! Let the hon. Minister answer!

(Interruptions)

Mr Aimée: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am not prepared to answer that question.

Mr Uteem: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, may I know from the hon. Minister whether the kiosks are reserved only for food sellers, or other merchants also will be allowed to use these?

Mr Aimée: It is, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

Mr Barbier: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, being given our past experience with the hawkers in Port Louis, the hawkers palace project, when the then Lord Mayor was no less than hon. Abdullah Hossen...

(Interruptions)

Mr Barbier:...and he was also the Chairman of the DBM development project, and the Government...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order please!

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order please! Hon. Hossen, please! Unfortunately, I did not hear what the hon. Minister said. We listen to the answer of the hon. Minister.

Mr Aimée: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir,...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Hossen, please!

Mr Aimée: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the PQ of today is on Pont de Paris and hawkers who will be there. The question today is not on the Garden Palace. I have already replied to the issue of Garden Palace in another previous PQ.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: We move to the next question.

MAURITIUS VOLLEY-BALL ASSOCIATION - OPERATION

(No. 1B/670) **Mr F. Quirin (Third Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière)** asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether he is aware of conflicting situations prevailing at the Mauritius Volleyball Association and, if so, will he state the measures his Ministry proposes to take to ensure that the rights of all the clubs affiliated thereto will be preserved.

Mr Ritoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the federations are autonomous bodies recognised by my Ministry under the Sports Act. They are governed by their own rules and bylaws for all operational matters, including internal conflicts, if any.

As at date, I have not received any grievance whatsoever from any club affiliated with the Mauritius Volleyball Association.

Mr Quirin: M. le président, dans le mouvement sportif, nous sommes tous au courant de la situation qui prévaut au sein de la fédération de volleyball. Le ministre n'est pas au courant, et j'en suis bien étonné.

The Deputy Speaker: Put your question!

Mr Quirin: Le ministre peut-il nous dire malgré tout, M. le président, s'il est satisfait du fonctionnement de la fédération de volleyball ?

Mr Ritoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as I said in my answer, the federations are autonomous bodies, and they function separately, according to the Sport Act, of course. As at date, I have not received any grievance. Just to mention that my Ministry acts only as a regulator and facilitator, and creates appropriate environment to enable federations to develop and promote their respective sports discipline. Actually, the volleyball federation is organising the *Championnat des Clubs Champions Zone 7*; a competition involving clubs from Madagascar, Reunion Island, and Mayotte Island actually in Mauritius. I have not received any complaint from any club. Any matter regarding the internal conflicts of clubs is dealt by the federation only.

Mr Bhagwan: Is the hon. Minister aware that, at the last meeting of the Mauritius Volleyball Association, held in Quatre Bornes, the Federation had the services of bouncers - *pas dimoune couma dire baton mouroum*, but like hon. Henry, big, big people? Il y a eu une

déposition faite à la police de Quatre Bornes. Est-ce que le ministre peut s'enquérir auprès du commissaire de police et informer...

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Order, please!

Mr Bhagwan: ...la Chambre *accordingly*?

Mr Ritoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, for the last two years, the Association did not have any meeting and, of course, I requested its President that he should have his meeting held. He immediately advised me that he would do so without delay. I have been informed that the Mauritius Volleyball Association held its general annual meeting on 11 November 2010, and that there was no bouncer. The meeting was held at Gold Crest Hotel, and it was the security guard of the Gold Crest Hotel. I have never seen any bouncer there.

Mr Quirin: M. le président, le ministre peut-il nous dire comment et pourquoi la fédération de volleyball n'a pas tenu son assemblée générale annuelle depuis trois ans sans être rappelée à l'ordre par les autorités ? Et là, je cite le ministère des sports et le *Registrar of Association*.

Mr Ritoo: Justement, c'est le *Registrar of Association* qui doit informer la fédération pour la tenue. Quand j'ai eu la nouvelle, j'en ai parlé avec le président, et il y a eu l'assemblée générale.

Mr Khamajeet: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, should there be any problem with the volleyball federation, should there not be any sanctions, hon. Minister?

Mr Ritoo: Of course! The hon. Member is right. If there is any problem, it is the *Fédération Internationale de Volleyball* that is supposed to take any action against the Mauritius Volleyball Association. As at date, I have not received any complaint. Again, I say that not even one club has complained about the federation. On the contrary, they have even signed a vote of confidence for the President and its committee.

Mr Quirin: M. le président, j'aimerais aussi demander au ministre où en est son projet de la mise sur pied d'un *Steering Committee* en vue de relancer le volleyball. Lui même en a déjà parlé.

Mr Ritoo: I do not need to have any Steering Committee. The volleyball federation is functioning very well. So, where does the question of Steering Committee arise.

Mr Quirin: Malgré tout, M. le président, j'aimerais demander au ministre s'il est satisfait du niveau du volleyball actuel à Maurice.

The Deputy Speaker: This has been answered. Last question from hon. Guimbeau!

Mr Guimbeau: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, every time in this House, we speak about sports and conflict. I would like to know from the hon. Minister when he, as well as the other Ministers, are going to do the job they are being paid for, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

The Deputy Speaker: This is not a question! We move to the next question!

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Quirin!

MAURITIUS SPORTS COUNCIL – BOARD MEMBERS

(No. 1B/671) Mr F. Quirin (Third Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether, in regard to the Mauritius Sports Council, he will state when the Chairperson and the members of the Board thereof will be nominated.

Mr Ritoo: The Board of the Mauritius Sports Council was last constituted in the year 2008 and is now due for reconstitution.

A new Board will be nominated in one or two weeks.

Mr Quirin: M. le président, le ministre peut-il nous dire pourquoi il prend autant de temps pour nommer un nouveau *Board* et, bien sûr, son président?

Mr Ritoo: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am sure that the hon. Member would agree that the Mauritius Sports Council is a very specific institution where you require people who are well-versed in sports matters, including management and maintenance of stadia and sports infrastructure.

Hence, it is important that we have a Board with the right profile. I can assure the Member that the exercise has already been done and it is a matter of days for its nomination.

Mr Bhagwan: Can the hon. Minister inform the House since how many months the past president has resigned?

Mr Ritoo: The past president has resigned in April 2010.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Quirin, please! Order, please! Order please from both sides!

Mr Quirin: M. le président, le ministre peut-il nous donner la garantie qu'il nommera des personnes qui ont fait leurs preuves dans le domaine sportif et non des agents politiques ?

Mr Ritoo: I can assure the House that the person whom I am going to nominate will have the best competences in the appropriate field.

Mrs Ribot: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether the Chairman and the members of the Board are going to be nominated before the award night of the MSC?

Mr Ritoo: Yes Sir.

PRIVATE CLINICS – BLOOD – REVENUE COLLECTED

(No. 1B/672) Dr R. Sorefan (Fourth Member for La Caverne & Phoenix) asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether, in regard to blood, she will state -

- (a) the number of pints thereof collected, processed and delivered to each private clinic, indicating the;
 - (i) amount of money paid by each of them, since January 2010 to date;
 - (ii) revenue collected from private clinics, in terms of a percentage of the total revenue of the estimate for 2010, and
- (c) how the processing of the blood is financed.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I wish to inform the House that during the period 01 January 2010 to 31 October 2010, 41,491 pints of blood were collected and processed. During the same period, 6,094 pints of blood were delivered to the private clinics, out of which

4,176 pints were used. However the private clinics were charged for only 3,052 pints of blood and blood products because certain categories of patients suffering from Thalassaemia, Haemophilia and those on renal dialysis are exempted from payment of fees as well as regular voluntary blood donors.

As regards part (a) (i) of the question, the information is being tabled.

As for part (a) (ii) of the question, the revenue collected from the private clinics as a percentage of the total estimated revenue of the Ministry for 2010 is about 12%.

Concerning part (b) of the question, activities pertaining to processing of blood are totally financed through the budget of my Ministry.

Mr Sorefan: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, can the hon. Minister confirm to this House whether collection analysis distribution of blood will be under the aegis of a Trust Fund, if yes, whether all stakeholders have been consulted?

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Well, this is in line with the Bill which have been passed and obviously all the stakeholders will be consulted.

CEB – POLES - DISPLACEMENT

(No. 1B/673) Mr C. Leopold (First Member for Rodrigues) 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 from the Board, information as to the policy regarding the payment of fees by the customers thereof for the relocation of electric poles on or in the vicinity of residential premises, indicating

- (a) when same was applied, and
- (b) if same applies in Rodrigues and if not, why not.

The Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities (Dr. R. Beebeejaun): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the scheme for assistance for displacement of poles, was introduced in April 2009.

Under this scheme, financial assistance is provided to hardship cases, that is, to households with a combined salary of Rs17,500. Households with salary above Rs17,500 have to meet the cost of the displacement of poles.

Applicants should be domestic consumers, first time owner of a house.

The scheme is applicable to Rodrigues. I have requested the Central Electricity Board to liaise with the Rodrigues Regional Assembly on the matter.

Mr Leopold: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, even if the scheme seems to be applied to Rodrigues, but most of the time Rodriguan citizens do not beneficiate from it, can I ask the hon. Deputy Prime Minister to see to it that we enjoy the same facilities as in mainland Mauritius?

The Deputy Prime Minister: Of course, there is no question of otherwise, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

Mr François: On the same line, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, there is a general practice where CEB requests for way leave for fixing electric poles on State lands - either residential or commercial. On the other hand, when relocation of such electric poles are required, it costs a fortune from public funds. Will the hon. Deputy Prime Minister see to it that a fair agreement or policy decision be established to save public funds while delivering a way leave?

The Deputy Prime Minister: I will look into the matter.

RODRIGUES – PV GRID COLLECTED SYSTEM

(No. 1B/674) Mr C. Leopold (First Member for Rodrigues) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to the project, ‘Removal of barriers to solar PV power generation in Mauritius, Rodrigues and Outer Islands’, he will state where matters stand, indicating the stage reached regarding the PV grid collected system in Rodrigues.

The Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities (Dr. R. Beebeejaun): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the “Removal of Barriers to Solar PV Power Generation in Mauritius, Rodrigues and the Outer Islands’ project aims at promoting the deployment of photovoltaic systems in Mauritius, Rodrigues and the Outer Islands

The UN Global Environmental Facility (GEF) is being approached for funding. In this respect, in April 2010, GEF and UNDP provided a grant of USD 108,000 for the preparation of a full project document to be submitted to GEF for approval.

In June 2010, UNDP recruited a team of Consultants, who prepared and submitted the full project document, in October 2010. The project has been submitted to UNDP/GEF, which is expected to reply in January 2011.

The photovoltaic projects under the GEF project would cover both Rodrigues and Agalega, and the installation of PV systems in two (2) schools in Rodrigues will be funded by the *MID* Fund.

**MALAGASY WORKERS – AMBASSADOR OF THE REPUBLIC OF
MADAGASCAR - COMPLAINTS**

(No. 1B/675) Mr V. Baloomoody (Third Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Minister of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment whether, in regard to the complaints and decisions taken by the Ambassador of the Republic of Madagascar regarding the treatment of Malagasy workers in Mauritius, he will state -

- (a) the actions taken, if any, against the employers, and
- (b) what he proposes to do to reassure the Ambassador of the Republic of Madagascar.

Mr Mohamed: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I thank the hon. Member for his question. However, I will ask the hon. Members of the House to bear with me as it is a long answer.

The Deputy Speaker: If the hon. Minister thinks that it is quite a long answer, he can circulate it.

Mr Mohamed: Well, it's not quite that long that it will require to be circulated.

With regard to the first part of the question, I wish to inform the House that on 09 November 2010, the Secretary for Foreign Affairs transmitted to my Ministry a "*Note Verbale*" from the Ambassador of the Republic of Madagascar concerning the employment of Malagasy workers in Mauritius.

With a view to improving the living and working conditions of the Malagasy workers employed in Mauritius, the Ambassador of the Republic of Madagascar has proposed that pending the establishment of a bilateral labour agreement, the Government of Mauritius should put in place, *inter alia*, the following interim mechanisms with regard to -

- (i) the vetting of the contract of employment by both the Malagasy Embassy and the Ministry responsible for employment in Madagascar;
- (ii) the recruitment of Malagasy workers through duly licensed recruitment agencies in Madagascar;
- (iii) the contract of employment, passport and other personal documents of Malagasy workers which have to be in possession of the employee, and
- (iv) the costs of the return air ticket of the workers which have to be borne by the employer.

I am pleased to inform the House that some of the measures proposed are already applicable to all expatriate workers working in Mauritius, including Malagasy workers. Here, I am referring to -

- (i) terms and conditions of expatriate workers which should not be less favourable than those prescribed to a local worker;
- (ii) the obligation of employers to providing an air ticket to enable an expatriate worker to return to his/her home country after completion of his/her contract of employment or for any cause whatsoever, and
- (iii) the repatriation of the corpse of a demised worker at the expense of the employer.

The Special Migrant Unit of my Ministry is monitoring closely the situation and where necessary, action is being taken against non-compliant employers.

As regards the second part of the question, I wish to reassure the House that as soon as the political situation in Madagascar will be stabilised, the possibility of entering into a bilateral labour agreement with Madagascar will be looked into. The other issues raised by his Excellency the Ambassador of the Republic of Madagascar in his "*Note Verbale*" and which are presently not covered will also be examined at such opportune time.

Mr Baloomoody: The hon. Minister will agree that the statement which was made public tarnished the image of Mauritius. It was made public by the ambassador and it was even on the internet. Can I ask the hon. Minister whether Mauritius intends to adhere to the convention of migrant workers?

Mr Mohamed: There are two Conventions with regard to migrant workers. Maybe it is not in the habit of a Minister to put questions, but, however, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would like to know which one exactly is the hon. Member referring to?

Mr Baloomoody: Referring to both of them; the one with the condition of the workers and the right of the workers.

Mr Mohamed: If the hon. Member is referring to both of them, let me please inform the House that one of them we have already adhered to. As regards the second one, we are working on it.

(Interruptions)

As regards the first one, we have adhered to it and as regards the second one, we are working on it.

Mr Baloomoody: To which one did we adhere?

Mr Mohamed: The only one which we did not adhere to is the Convention on Migrant Workers that also refers to their family. In fact, at a previous sitting of this House, if I am not mistaken, this question was already asked, but not answered.

(Interruptions)

The hon. Member should verify in a Library.

With regard to what we have adhered to...

(Interruptions)

I am still answering!

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

The Deputy Speaker: Yes! A point of order!

Mr Baloomoody: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I did ask a question last time but, unfortunately, due to lack of time I could not get the answer but ...

The Deputy Speaker: What is your point of order?

Mr Baloomoody: The hon. Minister is telling me to go and find the answer in the Library. Should it be in the Library or should it be written and circulated today with regard to Answers to Questions?

The Deputy Speaker: No, we know what has been the practice in the past and the same practice is going to prevail in this case.

Mr Baloomoody: Again, the practice in the past, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we used to get it as Written Answers which was circulated. Now, we are being informed that we have to go to the Library.

The Deputy Speaker: If the hon. Member wishes to raise any administrative issue regarding the sitting of this House, he should do so privately with Mr Speaker.

Mr Mohamed: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, if I may continue with the answer. Now, the only one, as I have said, which we have not adhered to is with regard to the migrant workers in relation to their family members. As it stands today - and that was part of the answer which we did not have time to give last week - since our local legislation does not provide for migrant workers to come to Mauritius and our laws do not define migrant workers in line with their family members, that is the only reason why as regards the second Convention we cannot adhere to it as yet. In order to adhere to it, we would have to make amendments to our local law in order for the migrant worker definition to also include his family members. So, as I have said, that is the reason why we are working on it.

Mr Baloomoody: The hon. Minister mentioned that there is a Migrant Unit at his Ministry. May we know the composition of this unit, the number of staff?

Mr Mohamed: Well, at the moment there are approximately five people working in the Migrant Unit. Since, we have just gone through the exercise of the Budget, there is a re-organisation going on but what I may reassure the hon. Member and all Members of the House, there is always this view - which is in my humble opinion a wrong view - that because there are only five, four or three members of the Migrant Unit working, there is this perception - which is wrong, I say again - that only those people take care of migrant workers which is very wrong. Every single inspector at the level of my Ministry is responsible of all workers, be it local or migrant. Therefore, the wrong perception because I have the ability, maybe, to read the mind of

my hon. friend when he is putting the question. It is not because the Migrant Unit has only five people, this means that they are the only ones thinking of migrant workers. What they specifically do is vet contracts and also we have someone who speaks fluent Chinese who is there to vet all contracts of employment in order that there is no problem and that they are in line with our local laws.

The Deputy Speaker: Time is over!

MOTION

SUSPENSION OF S.O. 10(2)

The Deputy 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 vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Social Integration and Economic Empowerment (Mr X. L. Duval) rose and seconded.

Question put and agreed to.

The Deputy Speaker: I suspend the sitting for half an hour for tea.

At 4.03 p.m. the sitting was suspended.

On resuming at 4.37 p.m with Mr Speaker in the Chair.

PUBLIC BILL*Second Reading***THE APPROPRIATION (2011) BILL****(NO. XVII OF 2010)**

Order read for resuming adjourned debate on the Appropriation (2011) Bill (No. XVII of 2010).

Question again proposed.

The Leader of the Opposition (Mr P. Bérenger): M. le président, pendant cinq ans, de 2005 à 2010, le MSM et, en particulier, le ministre des finances actuel, ici même au Parlement et, en dehors du Parlement, n'ont fait que dénoncer avec une virulence extrême la politique économique pratiquée de 2005 à 2010 par le gouvernement Travailleiste/PMSD et, par le ministre des finances d'alors, Rama Sithanen. Pendant, cinq ans dénonciation virulente pour venir dire que le gouvernement Travailleiste/PMSD, le ministre d'alors Sithanen ne regardaient que dans une direction, ne faisaient que des cadeaux au secteur privé et à l'industrie sucrière; ne faisaient qu'appauvrir le salarié, le pensionné, les *ti-dimounes* pendant cinq ans.

Le fameux discours en date du 07 décembre du ministre des finances actuel sur le budget 2010 est à être encadré. Je pense qu'il n'oubliera jamais ce discours, d'une virulence extrême, pour dénoncer plus que jamais la tendance pro-capitaliste du gouvernement Travailleiste/PMSD et du ministre d'alors, Rama Sithanen, et pour promettre, monts et merveilles, aux salariés, aux *ti-dimounes* et aux pensionnés. Et voilà qu'après cinq ans de dénonciation pareille, aujourd'hui s'il y a une chose sur laquelle l'unanimité s'est faite, c'est le fait que sur le fond c'est un budget de continuité. Tout le monde l'a dit avec raison, à commencer par qui? À commencer par le Premier ministre d'alors qui est Premier ministre de maintenant et qui a pris un malin plaisir à souligner la continuité entre ce budget 2011 et le budget de Rama Sithanen et de son gouvernement de 2005 mais, un malin plaisir! J'allais dire un plaisir vicieux, sadique ...

(Interruptions)

...mais je préfère retenir ma langue! Je préfère dire un malin plaisir. Inaugurant le projet de Bel Ombre le vendredi 12 novembre, Navin Ramgoolam confirme la continuité des réformes économiques initiées en 2005! Pour bien *rub* le couteau dans la plaie, retourner le couteau dans la plaie, le jour où ce budget est prononcé, il s'empresse d'aller à son bureau pour tenir une conférence de presse pour souligner, encore une fois, que c'est un budget de continuité. Le secteur privé: un budget de continuité selon le Premier ministre. Mais c'est évident! Ne voilà-t-il pas qu'avant-hier, la Banque Mondiale à son tour, l'Union Européenne à son tour, ravies de la continuité qu'elles trouvent avec raison dans le budget, félicitent à droite et à gauche.

(Interruptions)

Voilà la chose sur laquelle l'unanimité s'est faite! Sur le fond, un budget de continuité par rapport au budget présenté de 2005 à 2010, et il est facile de le prouver, il n'y a même pas besoin de le prouver. Deux exemples, M. le président - le ministre des finances actuel avait dénoncé les cadeaux faits aux firmes privées, l'assistance financière donnée par le gouvernement à certaines firmes privées et les cadeaux au secteur sucrier, à l'industrie sucrière. Qui ne se souvient de la virulence avec laquelle il avait dénoncé le fait qu'on prenait de l'argent dans le Stimulus Package de Sithanen pour aider telle ou telle firme? Une virulence extrême! Continuité totale! Il a répondu à une question parlementaire il y a quelques jours, le 16 novembre. En trois mois, sous son Stimulus Package, R 247 millions ont été *extended* à des firmes privées. Et je dois dire qu'à l'époque de Sithanen, on lui posait des questions et il répondait- les noms et les sommes concernées.

Le ministre des finances actuel était supposé de tenir cela très à cœur: l'utilisation de l'argent public pour aider les firmes privées. Quand je lui demande le nom des sept firmes privées qui, en trois mois, ont reçu R 247 millions de son Stimulus Package à lui, une désinvolture que je considère inacceptable. Il donne la liste des sept firmes, quand il arrive à la dernière firme, DCL, il ajoute: *I don't know what DCL stands for*. Lui qui dénonçait le moindre sou donné à des firmes privées, dans le cas de son Stimulus Package, il n'a même pas la décence de ne pas dire cela: *I don't know what DCL stands for*. Quant à l'industrie sucrière, dans le budget qui est devant nous, à la page 367 des *estimates - accompanying measures for the sugar industry*, VRS et compagnie - R 500 millions prévues. Lui qui s'élevait contre le fait que l'argent de l'Union Européenne était utilisée pour aider l'industrie sucrière, il ne ratait pas une

occasion de le faire, sans même faire référence à la chose, R 500 millions de *further accompanying measures for the sugar industry*. C'est pourquoi la continuité saute aux yeux et reste dans les poches de certains! C'est du Sithanen sans Sithanen! C'est du mauvais Sithanen! C'est la continuité et tout le monde, à l'unanimité, à commencer par le Premier ministre actuel, le secteur privé, la Banque Mondiale, l'Union Européenne, les syndicats aussi pour différentes raisons - certains étant heureux qu'il y ait continuité, d'autres dénonçant le fait qu'il y ait continuité mais, en tous les cas il y a unanimité: secteur privé, syndicats, le Premier ministre, l'Union Européenne, la Banque Mondiale. Tout le monde constate l'évidence que c'est un budget de continuité par rapport au budget de Sithanen et du gouvernement Travailleuse/PMSD.

Ceci dit, bien sûr, il fallait tenir – certes, il ne pouvait pas faire autrement – certaines promesses. Il fallait le faire! Il l'a fait ! Mais M. le président, ayons un peu de décence! Comme l'a dit mon collègue, l'honorable Rajesh Bhagwan, ceux qui ont applaudi quand Rama Sithanen a introduit ces mesures, NRPT et compagnie, applaudissent encore plus, quand on les retire, mais soyons sérieux!

Je revois, M. le président, ceux qui applaudissaient quand Sithanen avait introduit ces mesures-là. Je les revois qui attendaient dehors pour l'embrasser. Aujourd'hui les mêmes qui avaient applaudi quand ces mesures avaient été introduites, applaudissent quand on retire ces mesures. Un peu de décence, M. le président! La même chose pour le *gambling*. Ceux qui, au fil de cinq années, alors que nous objections, ont distribué les permis de Gaming Houses A, Gaming Houses B, Gaming Houses Z, casinos pendant cinq ans, ne voila-t-il pas que quand, après avoir distribué les permis, les mêmes qui ont vécu tout cela, applaudissent. Mais c'est mon ami, le Premier ministre, M. le président, qui, à chaque fois que Rama Sithanen présentait un budget - il se passait la même chose que vendredi dernier - se retirait rapidement dans son bureau pour dire quoi? Bon budget! Et comme il l'a fait vendredi dernier: «ça a été préparé en étroite collaboration entre moi et mon ministre des finances.»

Alors quand on a introduit toutes ces mesures, qu'on vient de retirer avec violence, c'était en étroite collaboration entre mon ami le Premier ministre et le ministre des finances. Je ne sais pas dans combien d'années, parce qu'il y a certaines choses qu'il faudra retirer que le nouveau ministre des finances a introduites. Ce sera, bien sûr, encore une fois, en étroite collaboration entre le Premier ministre et le ministre des finances. Il était obligé de tenir certaines promesses et

il les a tenues, mais la plus grosse promesse, M. le président, avec son premier budget, après les dernières élections générales, c'était de commencer à rattraper la perte de pouvoir d'achats que les salariés, les pensionnés, les veuves et les orphelins ont subi de 2005 à 2010. C'était la plus grosse promesse et celles qu'on trouvait dans le discours du 07 décembre bien sûr à la une. C'est cette promesse là qui a été trahie, qui n'a pas été tenue. C'est dans ce sens là qu'il y a là aussi continuité parce qu'il n'y a pas eu ce début de rattrapage. Les salariés, les petits salariés, les pensionnés, les veuves continueront à s'appauvrir, continueront à voir leur pouvoir d'achat dégringoler.

Il y a eu aussi, M. le président, le fameux *discussion paper* qui clairement a été introduit par le ministre des finances sans être passé par le conseil des ministres, mais même pas avec le *green light* du Premier ministre. Il a eu donc, en dernière minute, en catastrophe, à retirer le *discussion paper*. Mais la compensation salariale accordée à tout le monde à partir du 01 janvier est totalement insuffisante. 3.2%, 1.3% en moyenne et, quand on pense que les pensionnés, ceux qui touchent la pension de veillesse *non contributory* n'auront même pas R100 additionnelles par mois. En même temps, pour ceux qui ne sont pas complètement au bas de l'échelle, les barèmes, les plafonds d'*income tax* n'ont pas été relevés ce qui fait qu'on est coincé des deux côtés. D'un côté, la compensation salariale ne compense pas pour l'inflation et, de l'autre côté, les barèmes d'*income tax* ne sont pas ajustés en fonction de l'inflation. En plus, la TVA en douceur on va voir les prix augmenter. J'avais l'habitude de dire *the devil is in the details*. C'est maintenant que beaucoup de secteurs, de gens, de professionnels se rendent compte de ce qui s'est passé. Pour balancer son budget, d'une part, il n'a pas donné une compensation salariale adéquate, mais d'autre part, la TVA augmente. Pour financer son budget, il va obtenir deux milliards de roupies additionnelles de la TVA et trois milliards de roupies additionnelles du *tax on goods and services*. D'où vont sortir ces cinq milliards de roupies? Dans la poche des consommateurs évidemment ! D'un côté pas de compensation salariale adéquate, pas d'ajustement du barème *income tax*, mais par contre la TVA augmente comme les chiffres le démontrent.

Il y a aussi sa décision de *move* certains items *from zero rated to exempt*. Ça aussi c'est maintenant que les gens commencent à comprendre. Qu'est-ce que cela veut dire? Cela veut dire alors qu'on ne payait pas de TVA, de *value added tax*, sur les intrants pour toute une série - l'huile comestible, la farine, le yaourt, le poulet. Sur tout cela, on ne payait pas la TVA sur les intrants. En catimini, on a introduit la TVA avec pour résultat que tous ces produits vont

augmenter. Les prix vont augmenter. Ça va être passé aux consommateurs. C'est inévitable. Ça a été fait en catimini, M. le président. Pourtant, M. le président, le budget a prouvé que ce que je disais j'avais raison. Quand je disais que la situation économique internationale est difficile, il faut faire attention mais qu'en terme de marge de manœuvre budgétaire, Sithanen a laissé au gouvernement actuel une bonne marge de manœuvre budgétaire. Les chiffres le montrent, M. le président. Il avait essayé de faire peur. Le ministre des finances avait essayé de peindre les choses en noir complètement. Le *GDP growth* - il nous l'a répété combien de fois - *would be in the range of 3.5% to 4%*. Dans son discours du budget, la vérité sort, ce sera du 4.1%. Ils ont autant de revenu en plus autant de marge de manœuvre en plus. Comme je l'avais prévu, plus d'un milliard de roupies, qui sont restées *special funds* mis sur pied par Rama Sithanen, sont transférées au *Consolidated Fund*. Donc, la marge de manœuvre budgétaire était là, il fallait une compensation salariale qui permettait le début d'un rattrapage de la perte du pouvoir d'achat par les salariés, les pensionnés, les veuves, les orphelins et ceux au bas de l'échelle.

Ceci dit, je trouve choquant qu'il n'y ait pas eu un mot sur le gaspillage. Le directeur de l'audit vient une fois de plus de produire son rapport pour dénoncer plus que jamais le gaspillage dans les ministères et dans les corps paraétatiques. *Not a word*, même pas une mention dans le discours du budget sur la lutte contre le gaspillage, l'inefficience dans le gouvernement, dans les ministères et les corps paraétatiques. Pas un mot non plus sur une réorganisation, une remise en ordre des corps paraétatiques. Nous savons quel est l'état de la plupart des corps paraétatiques. Je dois dire que ce n'est pas clair ce que j'ai entendu à deux reprises, mais concernant les *tender procedures*, les *procurements*, on va amender à nouveau et la façon dont on fait les *procurements* m'inquiète profondément. J'adresse une mise en garde au gouvernement. Il ne faut pas essayer d'étrangler le *Independent Review Panel* parce qu'il a dénoncé combien de passe-droits de *tenders* mal faits par certains ministères et par certains corps paraétatiques. Nous savons que c'est déjà difficile parce que nous sommes un petit pays. Quelqu'un qui perd un *tender* avant qu'il fasse appel, il faut beaucoup de courage. Il faut des sorties, mais il faut beaucoup de courage parce qu'on sait comment certains peuvent *retaliate*. Donc il y a peu de cas qui vont dans le *Independent Review Panel*, mais 50% des cas - comme l'a dit le ministre des finances lui-même - casse la procédure suivie soit par le *Central Procurement Board*, soit par les corps paraétatiques, les *tender committees*. Là nous entendons dire que l'idée serait de rendre l'appel devant le *Independent Review Panel* encore plus difficile en haussant la somme qui doit

être déposée pour faire appel devant le *Independent Review Panel*. J'adresse une mise en garde, j'espère que le gouvernement n'a pas l'intention d'aller de l'avant avec cela, M le président.

Parmi les promesses qui ont été tenues, il y a une promesse sur laquelle je devrais m'attarder et je pense que le Premier ministre aussi devrait m'écouter attentivement. C'est cette proposition que tout le monde réclamait, que nous proclamions, que le MSM réclamait :

'We are reintroducing the tax exemption on the first sixty tonnes of sugar for small planters with less than fifteen hectares of land'.

Aussitôt qu'ils ont entendu cela, je crois que tous les députés du gouvernement ont applaudi bruyamment, mais tellement bruyamment qu'ils n'ont pas entendu le reste !

Je ne sais pas si le Premier ministre a fait attention à ce qui suit. Ce qui suit, mais que personne n'a entendu, c'est ceci -

"47. We are reintroducing the tax exemption on the first 60 tonnes of sugar for small planters with less than 15 hectares of land and who rely solely on sugar income."

Can you tell me how many small planters those days do rely solely on sugar income? C'est vicieux ; *it is very unfair*, parce que plus les petits planteurs ont été en difficulté, plus ils ont eu à se débrouiller, investir *somewhere*, faire un petit business. Ce sont ceux qui ont réussi à garder la tête hors de l'eau, qui ont fait un autre petit business, qui n'ont pas disparu avec ce malheureux sucre qui vont être pénalisés maintenant. Cela veut dire que si un petit planteur a R 500 de dividende du SIT, cela ne s'applique pas. *He must rely solely on sugar income. Now that the Prime Minister hears it, I am sure we will have to revisit that.* C'est trop *unfair* ; ce n'est pas possible. Plus un petit planteur se sera débrouillé pour survivre, aura diversifié ses sources de revenus tant bien que mal, plus il sera pénalisé. *There must be a way out of that. It must apply.* Je ne dis pas que cela doit s'appliquer de la même façon pour tout le monde. Non ! *We can find a graded formula.* Mais ça, c'est profondément injuste. Je suis sûr que tous ceux qui m'écoutent ont applaudi tellement bruyamment qu'ils ne se sont même pas rendu compte de la chose. Je fais un appel pour que cela soit revu immédiatement, M. le président.

Budget de continuité, c'est évident ! Mais aussi, un budget sans vision, sans souffle, et certainement sans les mesures qu'il fallait pour vraiment faire face à la crise de l'euro. C'est pourquoi le budget a été très mal reçu au Parlement même. J'ai une longue carrière de

parlementaire - je crois que je suis le plus ancien - et je n'ai jamais vu un budget être reçu de cette façon par la Chambre en général. Jamais ! Sans précédent ! C'était fade ; c'était des petits bouts collés ; *cut and paste*. Je n'ai jamais, de ma carrière de parlementaire, vu un budget être reçu de cette façon. *More and more people are finding that the devil is in the detail*, comme ce que je viens de dire sur les petits planteurs, M. le président, et les commentaires dans la presse en général. Ce n'est pas moi seulement qui le dis. Les commentaires en général sont: fade, décousu, pas d'imagination, pas de souffle, pas de vision. Cela aussi est presque aussi évident que le fait que ce soit un budget de continuité.

Je passe, M. le président...

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: If there is any further provocative remark, I will ask the hon. Member to leave the House.

Mr Bérenger: Mr Speaker, Sir, I shall move to the Bank of Mauritius. What has been said in the Budget is explosive. Let me look at South Africa, Mr Speaker, Sir, and I will quote from some comments. In South Africa, the Minister of Finance has just come out with the mini-Budget, and the comments which have been made go along those lines.

“One of the key messages coming out of Government - the Minister of Finance - is that there is room for the Reserve Bank to run more accommodative monetary policy. The Finance Minister is saying: ‘we have our bit, do yours!’ Nobody is suggesting that there is a fundamental divergence of views between the Bank and Treasury, but it does appear that Treasury is wishing a more expansionary mandate on the bank.”

Ici nous sommes dans une situation bien différente, et je précise les choses tout de suite, M. le président. Personne parmi nous n'a demandé de dépréciation, et encore moins de dévaluation de la roupie. Ce que nous avons dénoncé, c'est une politique de roupie forte. Le ministre des finances reconnaît qu'il y a eu ces derniers temps une politique de roupie forte. A la page 5, paragraphe 24, le ministre des finances lui-même le dit -

“As regards the rupee, it has been strengthening in recent years(...)”

Et c'est cela que nous avons dénoncé. Nous n'avons pas réclamé de dépréciation et encore moins de dévaluation, mais qu'il n'y ait pas une roupie forte, M. le président. Ce qui m'amène à cette proposition, toujours à la page 5, paragraphe 23 -

“To ensure that the MPC plays this role with even greater effectiveness, a review of its functions will be carried out by an independent consultant.”

Je n'ai entendu aucun désaccord entre le ministre des finances et le Gouverneur de la banque, contrairement au passé récent. Au contraire, le ministre des finances a volé à la rescousse du Gouverneur de la banque à chaque occasion qu'il a eue. *What lies behind this review, Mr Speaker, Sir? The law is clear. The Monetary Policy Committee deals with monetary policy; both interest rate policy and exchange rate policy.* Mais le Gouverneur actuel maintient que le *exchange rate policy* n'est pas du ressort du *Monetary Policy Committee*. Pour lui, le *Monetary Policy Committee* s'occupe uniquement de *interest rate policy* et pas de *exchange rate policy*. C'est les deux côtés de la même médaille. *Everywhere, monetary policy deals with both.* Alors, je me demande qui a proposé ce *review*, parce que cela semble montrer un désaccord, alors que moi je n'en ai vu aucun, ces derniers temps, entre le ministre des finances et le Gouverneur de la banque. Moi, je serais pour qu'on *spell it out that monetary policy includes both interest rate policy and exchange rate policy.* Cette suggestion d'un *review* est un blâme pour le Gouverneur de la banque de Maurice. Est-ce que c'est cela que le ministre des finances a en tête, ou bien est-ce que c'est une suggestion qui est venue d'ailleurs, avec raison ? Un bon professionnel qui a vu ce qui s'est passé ces derniers temps ! Donc, on est en droit de demander des éclaircissements à ce sujet. Quant au *merger* de la Banque de Maurice et du *Financial Services Commission*, le moment viendra pour qu'on en discute en détail ; il y a du pour et du contre. Je ne me prononcerai pas à ce stade. Mais je me prononcerai sur deux autres choses qui sont proposées dans le discours du budget.

Premièrement, la mise sur pied d'un *Sovereign Wealth Fund*. Il me semble qu'il y a une confusion totale. De par le monde, il y a eu combien de *Sovereign Wealth Fund* ces derniers temps, surtout dans les pays pétroliers, mais ailleurs aussi ? De quoi parlons-nous ? Nous parlons d'énormes fonds que ces pays mettent sur pied ; des milliards de dollars. D'énormes fonds qui font quoi ? Qui achètent des compagnies, *strategic partners* aux Etat-Unis, à droite, à gauche, qui investissent dans l'économie réelle. Ici, on nous propose un *Sovereign Wealth Fund*

qui est supposé faire deux choses. C'est vrai que la Banque de Maurice a eu de *very poor returns* sur ses investissements à l'étranger ces derniers temps. D'accord !

Mais là, on nous propose un *Sovereign Wealth Fund* pour faire deux choses. Pour moi, c'est une confusion totale. D'une part, pour mieux investir l'argent de la Banque de Maurice, on n'a pas besoin d'un *Sovereign Wealth Fund* pour cela. *Un Sovereign Wealth Fund*, je le répète, M. le président, c'est d'énormes fonds qui investissent dans l'économie réelle, dans des compagnies existantes et profitables. Et là, on parle d'un malheureux R 500 m. *This is not serious, we should revisit that*. C'est la confusion totale ! Est-ce qu'un *Sovereign Wealth Fund* qui va faire cela et qui va supposément aider à *exchange rates stability* ? Mais c'est la confusion totale ! Cela n'a rien à voir avec un *Sovereign Wealth Fund*. Si on veut changer le mécanisme à travers lequel la Banque de Maurice a investi son argent à l'étranger, *fair enough, no problem with that*. *But don't call it a Sovereign Wealth Fund, it has nothing to do with Sovereign Wealth Fund*.

Donc, je pense qu'il faut *revisit* ce point là bien sérieusement. Mais j'ai parlé de propositions explosives - et je parle toujours de la Banque de Maurice - et là, je suis profondément inquiet. J'ai fait référence et, M. le président, c'est une bombe à retardement, mais on n'a pas beaucoup de temps. Au paragraphe 85, Je cite, et là, je parle de la Banque de Maurice -

« *The list of collaterals which the Bank may accept when granting advances will be broadened.* »

La Banque de Maurice prête au gouvernement. *Fair enough* ! La Banque de Maurice fait des avances – des *lines of credit* - aux banques privées mais, jusqu'aujourd'hui, l'argent qu'elle avance aux banques privées est garanti par des *Treasury Bills* et *Government Bonds, fool proof*. De quoi on est en train de parler ? On est en train de parler du fait que les Banques Commerciales ne sont pas prêtes à prêter leurs argents à droite, à gauche facilement aux canards boiteux - qui reçoivent l'argent du *stimulus package* en passant. Alors, de quoi nous parlons là ? Qu'est-ce que c'est que *the list of collaterals* ? Là, pour le moment, je le répète, la Banque de Maurice fait des avances aux banques privées et pas aux firmes privées. J'espère que ce n'est pas cela qu'on a en tête, que la Banque de Maurice va maintenant prêter à des firmes privées. Cela, je n'ose même pas y penser. Mais jusqu'à présent, la Banque de Maurice fait des avances aux

banques privées sur la garantie *fool proof* de *Government Bonds, Treasury Bills, etc.* Est-ce qu'on va changer cela ? Est-ce qu'on est en train de dire que la Banque de Maurice va faire des avances aux banques privées et que les banques privées vont donner comme *collaterals, toxic assets in private companies* ? Autrement, qu'est-ce que cela veut dire, que "*the list of collaterals which the Bank may accept when granting advances will be broadened*"? *If we start going down that way, on va finir la petite île Maurice plus mal que cela n'a fini aux Etats Unis et ailleurs. This is explosive.* On est en droit d'avoir *the full explanation*. De quoi on parle ? Je répète, je n'ose même pas penser que certains s'imaginent que la Banque Centrale peut prêter directement à des firmes privées. Je n'ose même pas penser à cela. Ce serait de la folie furieuse. Mais même si on est en train de penser que la Banque Centrale va prêter aux banques privées, avec comme garantie non pas des *Government Bonds* et *Treasury Bills* mais des *toxic assets*, c'est extrêmement sérieux ce dont on parle. Et qu'on ne vienne pas me dire que dans le passé, quand j'étais ministre des finances, la Banque de Maurice a *extend* une ligne de crédit de R 2 milliards à l'industrie sucrière, *guaranteed by Treasury Bills and Government Bonds 100 percent*. Donc, je pense qu'il faut qu'on fasse très attention. *We start down that slippery road*, si vraiment on change la *list of collaterals which the Bank may accept when granting advances* pour y inclure des choses autres que les *Treasury Bills and Government Bonds*, *we are going down a very, very dangerous and explosive road*, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

Je passe à un prochain point. *Look East, young man* ! C'est vrai que l'économie mondiale est en train de se rééquilibrer et quelle ironie de l'histoire ! C'est une chose extraordinaire que jusqu'aux années 1850, jusqu'à la moitié du 19^{ème} siècle, les deux nations commerciales dominantes c'était qui ? La Chine et l'Inde ! L'impérialiste est passé par là, le colonialiste est passé par là et aujourd'hui, ces deux puissances redeviennent et redeviendront de plus en plus les deux puissances économiques et commerciales dominantes. Quelle ironie de l'histoire – la roue de l'histoire ! Et quelle chance pour nous que parmi les cinq pays de peuplement d'où nos ancêtres sont venus sont la Chine et l'Inde ! C'est une grande chance pour l'île Maurice. Mais en même temps que je suis naturellement tout à fait d'accord qu'on se tourne de plus en plus vers l'Est dans le cas du rééquilibrage mondial qui est en train de se faire, vers la Chine, l'Inde mais *a word of caution*. Il faut trouver le bon équilibre. Jusqu'à présent, ce sont l'Union Européenne et les Etats Unis mais c'est surtout l'Union Européenne pour nos touristes, pour la vente de nos sucres, pour notre textile et dans le cas du textile, les Etats Unis. *A word of*

caution, il faut trouver le bon équilibre. Ne pas se tourner tellement vers les nouveaux émergents qu'on arrive à négliger nos marchés établis sur lesquels on va dépendre encore longtemps. Je trouve les chiffres avancés trop optimistes. Cela va être difficile. Et évidemment tout le monde sait que pour qu'on fasse de plus en plus de touristes venir de Chine, de l'Inde, c'est une question d'*air access* aussi. Pas seulement d'*air access*, mais d'*airline flights* si nous voulons atteindre le nombre de touristes que nous visons. C'est au-delà de l'*air access* qu'il faut. Il faut faire de sorte que notre *air access policy* permette cela mais au-delà de l'*air access* il faut le nombre de vols nécessaires pour atteindre les chiffres. Donc, *we look East*, oui, mais *a word of caution*. Il faut trouver le bon équilibre entre nos marchés traditionnels établis et les *emerging markets*.

Je passe au Maurice Ile Durable où il est dit que *significant strides* have been made. *I beg to disagree*. Jusqu'aujourd'hui, le concept Maurice Ile Durable reste une coquille vide malgré des actions éparpillées ici et là. Evidemment même avant que le concept ne fasse surface, il y avait des actions du côté de la CEB et du ministère de l'environnement. Mais ce sont des actions éparpillées ici et là. Et il n'est pas trop tard, il est très tard. Ce qui manque jusqu'aujourd'hui pour que ce concept du Maurice Ile Durable devienne une réalité, c'est une stratégie globale et détaillée. Ce n'est pas trop tard, mais c'est très tard. Ce n'est pas là, ça reste une coquille vide avec des actions ici et là, éparpillées. C'est comme le *food security*, *Mr Speaker, Sir*. Il y a une certaine candeur quand le ministre des finances actuel vient dire : 'Je prévois pour le *food security* R 105 m. pour l'année 2011. Ce qui est le double - il dit cela fièrement - de ce qui a été dépensé en terme de *Food Security Fund* en 2010'. Mais c'est une catastrophe si vraiment seulement R 50 m. a été dépensé de ce fonds en 2010. Et cela m'a bien déçu qu'il n'y ait pas au moins une référence à *global warming* ; l'impact du *global warming* sur le *food security*. Monsieur Jacques Diouf était ici jusqu'à hier.

Cette question de *food security is going to come back and hit us hard*, *Mr Speaker, Sir*. Ce que je voulais dire c'est que R 50 millions seulement ont été dépensées l'année dernière et on va dépenser R 100 millions cette année-ci. *But it is peanuts!* Et je vous rappelle, M. le président, que le *Food Security Fund* était un *Fund* de plus de R 1 milliard. Et voilà ce qu'on a trouvé comme moyen de dépenser! Pas un mot en terme de *food security* avant tout sur la coopération avec le Mozambique et Madagascar! Pas un mot sur la coopération régionale! Je vois que le Premier ministre a fait un discours superbe dans le cas du *Mo Ibrahim Foundation meeting*, un discours canon sur la coopération régionale. Mais dans le discours du budget, il n'y

a pas un mot. Incroyable! Il y a tout ce qu'il faut sur la taille des chaussures que les policiers vont utiliser, quel genre de papier toilette qu'on va utiliser dans tel ministère, pour cela il y a beaucoup de détails dans le budget. Mais, sur quelque chose comme la coopération régionale que le Premier ministre vient de vanter, pas un mot! Pas un mot sur la coopération avec le Mozambique et Madagascar en terme de *food security*! *And I say it, Mr Speaker, Sir, those who have been following closely what has been happening* concernant le *global warming* d'une part mais *food crisis* de l'autre. On n'est pas encore retourné à la situation de 2008, mais je crains fort que d'ici un an, on va se retrouver en terme de *food insecurity* dans une situation plus dangereuse que cela n'était devenue en 2008. Il y a urgence d'utiliser à fond ici même à Maurice, à Madagascar malgré la crise, préparer le terrain pour l'avenir. Au Mozambique, on y est déjà. Activez les choses! Autrement, cela va être terriblement difficile pour la petite Ile Maurice dans les mois à venir. On a perdu beaucoup de temps, mais il n'est pas trop tard, M. le président. Quand j'évoque la question de *food security*, Madagascar et Mozambique, *it is the kind of subject that should be way above party politics*. Il y va de la survie de notre population même, M. le président.

I shall now move to education. Il est bon qu'on augmente le nombre de *scholarships*, c'est très bien. Mais quel aveu, M. le président, à la page 17 lorsque le ministre dans son discours du budget, parlant de l'éducation, parle de l'hémorragie, un mot très fort. *I quote –*

“(...) haemorrhage caused by a 30 percent failure rate at the CPE. This is where our efforts to increase tertiary enrolment should start. This is where the bottleneck is tightest (...)”.

Totalement vrai! Et c'est pourquoi, au gouvernement ensemble entre 2000 et 2005, nous avons engagé une réforme profonde de notre système d'éducation. La Banque Mondiale, elle-même, vient de dire que c'est le principal goulot d'étranglement à l'île Maurice. Nous avons embarqué le pays sur la voie qui menait à l'élimination du CPE. Aujourd'hui, le ministre des finances, avec raison, vient parler de l'hémorragie que cela représente pour notre pays et surtout pour la population du pays. Je considère que, par fanatisme politique, le parti travailliste avec le PMSD, entre 2005 et 2010, a perdu la tête concernant cette réforme de l'éducation que nous avons engagé entre 2000 et 2005 et qu'il fallait continuer. Depuis, les passions se sont calmées, des bonnes choses sont faites, mais seulement, c'est par à-coup la catastrophe Gokhool. Pour

combien d'années encore va-t-on payer cela? Actuellement, avec un autre ministre de l'éducation, certaines bonnes décisions ont été prises ou sont en train d'être prises, M. le président. Mais un pas en avant, deux pas en arrière, deux pas en avant, un pas en arrière! C'est décousu. Il faut reprendre la grande réforme de tout notre système d'éducation que nous avons engagé et cela passe par encore plus de bons collègues, encore plus de régionalisation, M. le président. Là aussi, il y a eu beaucoup de temps perdu, mais je dirais qu'il n'est pas trop tard. La réforme de notre système d'éducation est la clé de l'avenir. Tertiaire oui, secondaire oui, mais le début de cette hémorragie dont parle le ministre est au niveau du CPE. Il faut reprendre une vraie réforme de notre système d'éducation et cela aussi je le place *way above party politics*.

Je suis sûr que le Premier ministre est conscient qu'il y a une véritable psychose dans le pays pour ce qui est du *law and order situation*, mais là surtout, depuis que les armes et les balles des SOS Guards sont dans la nature, c'est venu s'ajouter à un climat de psychose généralisé. Ce qui me fait dire que c'est très bien, *what's in a word*, j'ai tendance à dire. *Our Police Force* va devenir un *Police service*. *Very good!* Qu'est-ce que cela veut dire? Un *Police Force* avec des policiers qui sont plus *public-friendly*. C'est très bien! Nous sommes tous d'accord, mais il faut leur donner les moyens. On va recruter 770 *trainees*, mais où sont ces fameuses promotions? On est en train de casser la motivation des policiers et des policières complètement. Combien de constables qui vont devenir sergents et les sergents qui vont devenir inspecteurs ont fini de prendre leur retraite! Ils sont partis avec une fin de carrière gâchée. Je suis sûr que le Premier ministre - on peut tâter cette frustration dans la force policière. *So, get on with it!* Faisons le nécessaire!

Je suis un peu choqué qu'à part une référence à Melrose - et Dieu sait tout le temps qu'on a perdu du côté de la nouvelle prison de Melrose - pas un mot sur la situation dans les prisons. Ce n'est pas sérieux. Encore plus et cela n'est pas une question de ne pas être sérieux, c'est choquant, pas un mot sur la drogue, le combat contre la drogue, l'aide à être apportée aux drogués, la réhabilitation, pas un mot dans un discours du budget alors que c'est tellement d'actualité ces jours-ci, M. le président.

Je passe aux *SMEs*, les petites et moyennes entreprises. Les salariés et les pensionnés ont été trahis, ils n'ont pas eu une compensation salariale qui permettait un début de rattrapage. En ce qui concerne les *SMEs*, je considère qu'on les a laissé tomber là aussi. Encore une fois, *what's*

in a name? On change le nom de la banque de développement et puis on promet une coordination entre la banque de développement qui s'appellera maintenant le *Development Finance Agency (DFA)*. Donc, on change son nom et puis on préconise *a new coordinated framework that brings together* la banque de développement, la *Small and Medium Enterprises Development Authority (SMEDA)*, le *National Productivity and Competitiveness Council*, le *National Institute for Cooperatives Entrepreneurship*, le *National Women's Entrepreneurs Council* et *l'Enterprise Mauritius*. Je ne suis pas d'accord du tout. On va avoir un énorme machin qui va encore moins fonctionner que la banque de développement, mélangé tout cela c'est une solution pour que les choses s'empirent.

J'aurais aimé un petit éclaircissement parce qu'il est même dit que *'this coordinated framework will be overseen by a Unified Business Enterprise Board'*. Est-ce qu'on va avoir encore un *Board* avec un *Chairperson*, un *General Manager*, le staff et la bureaucratie, etc.? *We should be enlightened*. Mais, en tout le cas, je pense, M. le président, que ce n'est pas la solution du tout. Je l'ai déjà dit dans le passé, je reviens là-dessus.

En ce qui concerne les petites et moyennes entreprises, elles vont continuer à souffrir.

D'ailleurs je crois que j'ai oublié de citer le ministre qui dit bien que, les petites et moyennes entreprises, sont très en difficulté, dans son discours. Moi je maintiens que les petites et moyennes entreprises resteront prisonnières de leurs difficultés tant qu'il n'y aura pas une nouvelle institution. La DBM et la SMEDA, *merge these two and come up with a new body that will actively support* les petites et moyennes entreprises, *and that will extend credit as well, that will do both*. Je ne suis pas en train d'inventer quoi que ce soit. Dans ce cas-ci on peut se tourner vers l'Afrique du Sud. En l'Afrique du Sud, il y a un *body* pareil, qui s'appelle le *Khula Enterprise Finance*, qui a été mis sur pied depuis 1996, qui a une expérience extraordinaire et qui récemment a obtenu l'autorisation de prêter aussi. Avant, c'était une organisation qui aidait activement les petites et moyennes entreprises à préparer leur *business plan*, à résoudre leurs problèmes de *marketing* activement et qui a connu un grand succès. Le gouvernement Sud-Africain donne à *Khula Enterprise Finance* de l'argent pour prêter. Il suffit de prêter aux petites et moyennes entreprises et ils n'ont pas à découvrir l'Amérique aussi, je cite –

“Khula’s experience has been that commercial banks give out loans and at the first sign of trouble for the small company, simply calling the guarantee from Khula without assisting the business to get back on its feet and continue repaying the loan.”

En d’autres mots, jusqu’à récemment, Khula garantissait l’argent prêté par les banques privées. Mais, à la première alerte, les banques privées rappelaient les garanties de Khula.

Now, they are going one step further. I think we should send people there. We should learn from that experience. It is a successful experience that that body in South Africa has been living through. Aider activement, préparer leur *business plan*, les aider à résoudre leurs problèmes de productivité, de *marketing* et prêter aussi non pas seulement garantir les prêts aux banques privées, mais prêter aussi. Bien sur pour cela, le gouvernement Sud-Africain donne à Khula Ltd des sommes d’argent *to be on-lent* aux petites et moyennes entreprises. Je répète: je pense que nous devrions envoyer des gens là-bas, de nous inspirer de cette réussite, de cette expérience, *merge the Development Bank of Mauritius et le Small and Medium Enterprises Development Authority and then we will be able to help* les petites et moyennes entreprises comme elles le méritent.

Mais puisque je parle des petites et moyennes entreprises, il y a une chose sur laquelle je pense que le ministre des finances n’a probablement pas réfléchi suffisamment. Emporter par sa vision d’une *duty-free island*, d’une *duty-free paradise*, je pense qu’on n’a pas assez réfléchi à l’impact que ce projet de *duty-free island* va avoir sur les petites et moyennes entreprises. Là, je vais citer le ministre lui même – les mots durs - à la page 9, qui dit ceci –

“Government will support the Domestic Oriented Industries (...)”

Evidemment, c’est avant tout des SMEs que nous parlons !

“Government will support the Domestic Oriented Industries to prepare for that new reality. The cost of shielding them from foreign competition is becoming too high. (...) we are providing them a further breathing space before removing protection.”

Attention ! Quand on parle de *Domestic Oriented Industries*, c’est avant tout les petites et moyennes entreprises qu’on a en tête. On vient de nous dire qu’il y aura un *sub-fund* dans le *Private Equity Fund*, mais cela ne va pas résoudre le problème.

I would request Government, the Minister of Finance and the Prime Minister to revisit that issue of duty-free island, son impact - I believe that there should be a full study - *sur les petites et moyennes entreprises, sur les Domestic Oriented Industries, M. le president.*

Comme je suis là, je vais toucher sur deux points qui ne sont pas directement liés, mais on parle de petites gens, etc. Je ne comprends pas une démarche et je demande au Premier ministre d’y réfléchir à deux fois. Je pense à cette mesure, à la page 40. Il est dit -

“Moreover, to further open up our country to foreign talents, the threshold for BOI to issue Occupation Permits for professionals will be lowered to Rs 45,000.”

De Rs75,000 à Rs45,000! *But, who came up with this idea? Déjà, we are in trouble. I am sure the hon. Prime Minister est responsable de security, il reçoit ses rapports. Il y a déjà beaucoup trop, ça va finir par tourner mal dans certaines regions de l’île.*

(Interruptions)

Dans certaines régions de l’île, c’est déjà un problème. *I am sure the hon. Prime Minister is aware.* Il y a déjà beaucoup de frictions dans l’air. Il y a beaucoup de petits boulots, marchands de glaces – maintenant les glaces c’est pour les classes moyennes - mais un tas de petits boulots que les mauriciens faisaient, coiffeurs, mais qui sont en train d’être accaparés.

(Interruptions)

Fleuristes! *Name it!* Il y a un certain nombre de gens qui obtient leur *Occupational Permit* etc pour faire autre chose et des choses louches aussi! On est déjà arrivé à un point de saturation, franchement! *Who came with this idea of bringing down from Rs75,000 to Rs45,000? It is a recipe, pas pour la catastrophe, mais pour des problèmes. De gros problèmes qui sont déjà là! So, I will request Government to review that.*

Autre chose - ce qui est dit à la page 46 cette fois concernant la PSC. Là-aussi, le Premier ministre a l’habitude de reprocher a certains leurs *bedside manners.* *Does the Prime Minister agree that that kind of language should be used when referring to the Public Service Commission? The Public Service Commission is a constitution animal, it is in our Constitution. It is in the guaranteed causes of our Constitution. Nothing can be changed in the Constitution with reference to the Public Service Commission without a three-quarter majority.* Je considère

que ce qui est dit est un manque de respect - à part d'être une motion de blâme contre la PSC - vis-à-vis de la PSC. *It is not constitutionally in order for a Minister of Finance to say: the PSC will further delegate recruitment and promotion authority to Ministries and departments.* C'est un manque de respect. La Constitution garantie l'indépendance de la PSC.

To remove a member of the PSC, *c'est aussi compliqué que retirer un juge.* It is the same procedure. Their independence is guaranteed in the Constitution. They decide where they should delegate their powers or not. *C'est un manque de respect et c'est contre la Constitution d'utiliser ce genre de langage. Let's change the name of Mauritius and let's call it Singapore.*

“Again in that case we will adopt the more modern procedures put in place by other Commonwealth countries such as Singapore”.

What procedures are we talking about? I repeat, Mr Speaker, Sir, we will need a three quarter majority to do anything like that and we will join forces with Government *quand c'est dans l'intérêt du pays, quand c'est pour approfondir la démocratie, quand c'est pour faire de bonne choses.* But, I repeat, Mr Speaker, Sir - *d'abord, c'est confus* - what procedures are we talking about? I believe *que cela a été un manque de respect à la PSC, M. le président.* Let's cool down, let's think well *et c'est un manque de considération pour l'Opposition aussi.* You can't amend that clause in the Constitution without us. At least, tell us what you have in mind and share with us, but don't just come out like that *surtout vis-à-vis de la PSC.*

As regards social housing, *on nous annonce la construction de seven* very low income social houses *et cela ne permettra pas de rattraper le retard accumulé depuis 2005 en terme de* social housing, firinga type houses and others. I want to know how many do we expect will get going out of those seven. *Combien* will get going? The tenders will be out this year 2011. We are entitled to know that.

On the other hand, there is a very complicated comprehensive housing with good living programme *qui va s'étaler sur dix ans et cela va concerner 13,000 familles.* It is very confused. We deserve to have much more details. *Les différents* schemes *ont été* spelt out, *mais ce n'est pas clair.* Cette année, l'année 2010, *apart les 700* very low cost housing, the others are going to start this year. What kind of a start? We need a lot of clarification on this so-called comprehensive housing with good living programme, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Let me move to infrastructure *en ce qui concerne le métro léger à la page 42*. I don't want to read too much in the words used, *mais la seule référence à ce qu'on croit être le métro léger à la page 42* is where *le ministre des finances fait référence à une série de projets*. The Highlands project, the Les Salines project, the Harbour Bridge, the Terre-Rouge-Verdun-Ebène road - *et une référence* - a state-of-the-art Rapid Transit System. *J'aurais été plus rassuré si l'expression qui avait été utilisée avait été Light Rail Transit System, appellation consacrée* parce qu'un Rapid Transit System *peut-être soit un Light Rail Transit System, métro léger* by whatever name called, *ou bien bus - le chéri du ministre des infrastructures publiques jusqu'à tout récemment, jusqu'à qu'il soit frappé par la lumière. C'était son chouchou ! Il voulait un Rapid Transit System de bus qui allait d'ailleurs être moins polluant que le métro léger*. I am sure he has cooled down since then, but confirmed that we are still talking about the Light Rail Transit System. And, if yes, is it acceptable? *Pas un mot à part cette référence là, pas un mot dans le discours du budget et pas un sou dans les Estimates. Pas un sou ne va être dépensé sur ce fameux projet !*

Maintenant le Premier ministre est devenu plus royaliste que le roi, surtout depuis qu'il a été à Singapour. Mais, pour lui, l'urgence des urgences c'est le métro léger and yet not one cent *dans le budget* et not one word except that reference to a Rapid Transit System.

En passant, j'éclaircis une chose. Tout le monde a compris ce que j'ai dit récemment sauf apparemment le ministre des finances actuel. J'ai dit, et je le répète, que j'ai été choqué par toute cette affaire de métro léger. Pendant trois ans, au gouvernement, nous avons préparé le terrain, nous avons progressé. Pendant cinq ans, de 2005 à 2010, ce projet a été enterré, massacré et, après cinq ans, on redécouvre le métro léger - après cinq ans de perdu. Je dis donc que j'ai été choqué. Il me semble que le ministre des finances n'ait même pas compris cela, qui pense que je suis maintenant contre le métro léger et que hier j'ai dit 'my God' ! J'ai toujours été et je reste plus que le Premier ministre, il fera tous les efforts qu'il pourra pour être plus en faveur du métro léger que moi, il ne réussira pas. J'ai toujours été et je resterai en faveur du métro léger, *but we must put our money where our mouth is*. Le métro léger est supposé être une urgence pour le Premier ministre et pour le *duty free island concept* et il n'y a pas un sou dans le budget de 2011 pour le métro léger, M. le président, ce n'est pas sérieux.

En ce qui concerne l'eau, pas un mot sur la situation actuelle. Pas un mot sur tous les problèmes que nous connaissons aux quatre coins de l'île et pas un mot non plus sur la demande. C'est vraiment *adding insult to injury*. Au moment où la *CWA is failing*, la CWA ose demander une augmentation des tarifs d'eau. *Not a word on that, Mr Speaker, Sir*. Quatre cent cinquante quatre millions de roupies *budgeted for the next three years*. *Peanuts* pour remplacer les tuyaux, il faut les remplacer d'urgence, mais quatre cent cinquante quatre millions de roupies, c'est *peanuts*. Je rappelle qu'au CEB et qu'au ministère des *Publics Utilities*, le 29 Juin 2010, qui avait estimé dans sa réponse qu'il nous fallait dix milliards de roupies ? C'est vrai que cela va coûter une fortune, mais il faut le faire. Il avait estimé que cela va nous coûter 10 milliards de roupies pour remplacer tous les tuyaux qu'il faut. A ce rythme, ce qui est prévu dans le budget, va nous prendre 10 ans.

L'effort aurait du être beaucoup plus grand, M le président. On nous dit qu'il y a un problème parce qu'il n'y a pas de pluie. Tous les ans c'est comme cela, mais je maintiens que les quatre causes réelles de la pagaille actuelle est, premièrement, le retard accumulé dans la construction de nouveaux *dams*, à commencer par Bagatelle. Il y a eu cinq ans de perdu. Et maintenant combien de temps va-t-on attendre pour Rivière des Anguilles ?

La première cause de la pagaille actuelle est le retard accumulé dans la construction de nouveaux *dams* et réparation à être faite aux *dams*, comme La Ferme, où il y a de plus en plus de fuites et de pertes.

La deuxième raison est la lenteur *in the delivery of tenders for new boreholes*.

La troisième raison - *deteriorating water losses*. Ces dernières années, au lieu de progresser, la quantité d'eau perdue dans les tuyaux a augmenté, et

La quatrième raison est la pagaille, *the mess*, at the CWA, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Le *Deputy Prime Minister* est lui-même d'accord avec ce que je dis, je n'ai qu'à le citer. Je cite une déclaration du vice-Premier ministre dans « Le Défi Quotidien » -

« Personne ne peut-être satisfait d'un service qui n'est pas à la hauteur des attentes. »

Et là, il y a quelques jours de cela, il a fait un discours sur le programme gouvernemental et il a dit -

« *I agree that we have to relook at the CWA. We are taking our responsibility. We are going to do it and we are going to do it in a radical way* ».

Quand j'ai lu cela - je n'ai pas entendu cela, mais je me suis fait un devoir de le lire - j'ai eu de l'espoir que '*vrai même, tantôt Booluck pé aller! Tantôt pé secouer la baraque ! Tantôt de l'eau pou commence couler!*' *A radical way!*

(Interruptions)

Au lieu de cela, M. le président, c'est la fuite en avant! Au lieu de mettre de l'ordre *in a radical way* à la CWA, *dismiss the General Manager* ; secouer la baraque ! Au lieu de faire cela, c'est la fuite en avant !

Government is, therefore, merging the Central Water Authority, the Irrigation Authority, the Water Resources Unit and the Wastewater Management Authority into one single Water Authority. This is not going to work. *Mélanger le Wastewater Management Authority avec la Central Water Authority! Je n'ai pas beaucoup d'efforts d'imagination à faire pour imaginer ce qu'on va finir par boire*, when you mix the Central Water Authority with the Wastewater Management Authority! *Mais enfin!* Pour l'*Irrigation Authority*, je suis d'accord! Irrigation Authority and CWA, I go along. *C'est un prétexte! C'est une fuite en avant! M. le président, à partir de maintenant, que va-t-on nous dire quand les gens vont crier et manifester? 'Ti patience, merger là pé vini là!'*

Le *merger*, si *merger* il y a, va prendre je ne sais combien d'années, et ce sera pire qu'avant. I would request Government to reconsider that, and merge the Central Water Authority and the Irrigation Authority; shape up and shake up both the Central Water Authority and the Wastewater Management Authority.

Bagatelle is mentioned in the Budget Speech. We have wasted a lot of time. *Je ne suis pas dans un mood pour m'appesantir là-dessus*. We have wasted a lot of time. The tenders are still. Why? I won't name the country concerned. *Nous revoilà sur la route Terre Rouge-Verdun*. You will remember that episode, Mr Speaker, Sir. A given country was lending us money. Therefore, the tendering would be restricted to companies from that country. *Résultat? Pas difficile à deviner*. We shouted; others shouted in the press, and professionals shouted. *Le gouvernement finit par entendre raison. Le gouvernement trouva du financement alternatif, et le*

tendering *fût* open to everybody, that is, the country that was concerned before and any other country. The tendering exercise was carried out, and we know the result, Mr Speaker, Sir. *R 500 millions d'économisées! R 500 millions!* It's not peanuts! Now, we are travelling down the same wastage way. *Je ne blâme pas le pays concerné! Pas du tout!* But we are doing the same thing again. We have obtained money from a given country; the tendering is going to be restricted to contractors, to companies from that country, and the tenders are still not out. Why? Because the country concerned has still not notified us the names of the contractors who are '*couchou couchou*' out there. I am not blaming the country. Contractors the world over are the same; in any country. The contractors will get together and they will agree, as was clearly the case for Terre Rouge-Verdun. Clearly!

Now, *regardez l'ironie de la chose!* The tender for Bagatelle Dam *est en train d'être retardé, parce que* the country concerned has not yet submitted the contractors who are, I am sure, spending a lot of time planning and harmonising things amongst themselves. Let's forget about them. The Minister of Finance says that this will cost Rs3 billion. '*Marquer garder!*' as we say here! If we travel down that way, *ce n'est pas R 3 milliards, mais R 5 milliards à monter.* Take my bet on that!

So, I think, as in the case of Terre Rouge-Verdun, we should find the required finance, and have open tender and international open tender. The contractors from that country will be perfectly entitled to tender. We have clean tendering procedures and, I am sure, we will save Rs1 billion, Rs2 billion. We saved Rs500 m. on the Terre Rouge-Verdun and, here, if we do our duty towards the country, we will save Rs1 billion, Rs2 billion, if not more, Mr Speaker, Sir.

Toujours, sur cette question de l'eau, en ce qui concerne les water tanks, Mr Speaker, Sir, at page 47, it is stated -

“Government will give a cash grant of Rs3,000 to families with a monthly income below Rs10, 000(...)”

“(...)first come first serve basis”

I don't know how many on the other side of the House phoned on Friday afternoon for people to get ready. First come first serve! *C'est moins grave!* As in the case of the small planters, they will get tax exemption if it is their only sugar income. Here, Government will give

a cash grant of Rs3,000 to families with a monthly income below Rs10,000. Fair enough! And then, these few words. What does that mean?

“(...)and with restricted water supply(…)”

Quel est le critère ? Who is going to decide what is meant by ‘restricted water supply’? How many hours *de coupure*? *Quelle pression ?* This is a recipe for accusations of malpractice, especially when we say it is going to be ‘first come first serve’. Who is that officer who is going to say “Oh no! Your water is not restricted enough! You are not entitled to that tank!”

Mr Speaker, Sir, we have had *le précédent des chauffe-eau solaires* and, in due course, I will come back on *le précédent des chauffe-eau solaires*, because there need to be an audit. The country has spent, through *la Banque de Développement, des millions*. There must be an audit, for us to know how many of these so-called solar water heaters are still at work, and what has been the saving that it has caused. There must be a complete audit. *Mais, avec ce précédent*, now we are heading for trouble again with those tanks ‘first come first serve’ to people who have restricted water supply.

There is not a word on the Central Electricity Board, *alors qu’il y a une situation aussi grave là-bas*. The General Manager has had to resign; there are inquiries by the Police and ICAC; there is no chairman - a civil servant as chairman. Two tenders for *les ampoules économiques* and the extension works in Rodrigues have been struck down already by the Independent Review Panel. Now, what is going to happen to the tender for 4x15 MW? We are talking about a contract for Rs5 billion. *Si la firme qui a gagné en appel refait appel, elle va regagner. Et, dans l’intervalle, le temps passe !* You know that! We are playing with fire, *ou plutôt avec du courant électrique*. Every time the Deputy Prime Minister says “no problem, everything is okay!” No! If we have to re-tender, or if the Tender Committee of the CEB has to re-sit, do you know how many months we would have lost? *Le tender a été alloué*, but if there is appeal it is going to be struck down. And I remember the hon. Deputy Prime Minister gave us the guarantee that this time there would be no emergency procedures. *On est en train de jouer avec le feu. Ce projet de 4 X 15 megawatts - on est sur la corde raide. On est sur le fil électrique, M. le président, and yet, not a word.* When we are talking about those de 4 X 15 megawatts engines, we are talking about semi load. Our real problem is base load, is a unit that will produce a hundred megawatts base load all the time. Why does Government refuse to go for an

international tender for a hundred megawatts coal plant; state-of-the-art, least polluted alternative and, of course, CT Power can tender like anybody else. Of course, we've always said, we have said international open tender. CT Power comes in and then the required experts will choose the least expensive, the state-of-the-art technology, operators that are operating across the world. *Que le meilleur gagne!* If it is CT Power, it is CT Power, but we are *tourner en rond*.

Rightly, the contract with CT Power is not being finalised. Rightly so, *mais dans l'intervalle on est en train de tourner en rond*. I appeal to Government, we should go for an international tender urgently for base load, for a hundred megawatt *et que le meilleur gagne mais il y a urgence, M. le président*.

I move on to CSR and sport. I believe that the Minister should have given us some figures. As I understand it, Mr Speaker, Sir, each firm has to put aside *2% de ses profits*. They can directly lend to NGOs, to organisations, but NGOs and organisations that are on the approved list of the CSR committee. If they reach investment of the whole of 2% that's it, if they don't spend the whole of the 2%, the rest goes to the Mauritius Revenue Authority. For us, as Members of Parliament, to see clearly what happens, we should have been provided with figures, that so much has been spent by so many companies directly through NGOs and organisations approved by the CSR committee and so much has gone to the Mauritius Revenue Authority. It is not too late. But what disturbs me is that we should have already had legislation in place. We don't even have regulations from what I see. We have guidelines issued by the CSR committee. *Ils n'ont pas force de loi* - guidelines with a lot of loopholes, Mr Speaker, Sir. I hear strange things. I read that hon. Minister X. L. Duval *a pris la précaution, il y a quelques semaines de cela, à travers la presse, de dire aux compagnies concernées: 'Faites bien attention! Ne vous laissez pas rouler, etc.'* I hear disturbing things at the level of those organisations, NGOs that are approved by the CSR committee. I hear strange things and I resent the fact that, until today, there is no legislation. We should have a Bill, how this functions, *les responsabilités de tout un chacun*. And I expect everybody on the CSR committee to behave as good Mauritians. If there is funny business taking place, if there are attempts at funny business, they must come out because it is billions we are talking about, Mr Speaker, Sir. Now we are not provided with the required information and now the whole thing, *la nature de toute l'affaire est en train de changer*. Aujourd'hui, on nous dit le gouvernement va prendre 50% - à peu près R 500 millions je crois - of CSR money. Ce qui fait, d'après ce que je comprends, à peu près R

500 millions qui seront allouées à trois programmes spécifiques that fall under the Ministry pour l'intégration et le combat contre la pauvreté. So, in other words, the CSR, la nature du CSR est en train de changer.

(Interruptions)

No! I repeat, Mr Speaker, Sir, before the companies were entitled to help NGOs deserving and approved. If there was money left, it would go to Government. Now, 50% goes straight to Government.

(Interruptions)

Yes! This is what is announced in the Budget! What 'no, no, no'? Mr Speaker, Sir, I'll quote.

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Order!

Mr Bérenger: We are reviewing the utilisation of CSR. Our aim is to focus on the most urgent problems so as to maximise the social benefits and ensure national coverage. We will, therefore, use 50% of the CSR resources to focus on three National Programmes.

(Interruptions)

Yes, priority! But the whole point, you need money for these three programmes! Provide for it through the Budget, provide for it through the special funds, but not through CSR money, Mr Speaker, Sir! C'est une dénaturalisation. C'est tout simplement si on ne prenait pas cela du CSR, il aurait fallu prendre du *Consolidated Fund* en général et c'est ce qu'il fallait faire, M. le président. Pourquoi je dis CSR et sport, M. le président? It is because I am sure the hon. Minister of Sports is perfectly aware of what I am going to say. This idea of imposing 2% *sur les profits de toutes les compagnies* has killed sports sponsorship. I know personally of firms which were helping *telle administration régionale, telle fédération, tel club*. Good sports sponsoring, dead! Les reactions sont, Ok, you impose 2% on us, we will stop helping this sport federation, this sport club, this municipality that is involved in sports promotion. *C'est grave*. I am sure the hon. Minister of Sports will agree with me. Notre sport avait déjà ses problèmes mais on est en train de les multiplier, M. le président.

I'll quote the hon. Minister of Sports in the estimates. *Un cri du cœur!* I'll quote page 430, his main constraints and challenges.

« There is a need to tap other sources of financing to top up financial grants to national sports federations. However, there is a lack of sponsorships.»

Un aveu, un cri du coeur! Because this is happening, Mr Speaker, Sir, and then the Minister says: "A Trust will set up for fund raising." What are we talking about? What kind of fund? When will it be set up? It will be funded how? Who is going to put money in that? You have the CSR on this side, you have sports sponsorship stopping on the other. I would like to be enlightened because I know that this CSR business is damaging sports sponsorship very, very seriously, Mr Speaker, Sir.

(Interruptions)

And, yes, I was going to say, the CSR committee can help sports, but only as far as vulnerable groups are concerned. It is a good thing to help sports by vulnerable groups, but it is not sports in general. Therefore, we are in a difficult situation. I think we should review the whole thing and we must provide the required funds to our sportsmen and women – R 48 millions de plus dans le Budget. It is peanuts *en cette année des jeux des îles*, Mr Speaker, Sir ! So, there is an urgency there and I hope that Government will revisit the whole situation concerning CSR, sports sponsorship and will enlighten us on this issue of that Trust to be set up.

I repeat my conviction Mr Speaker, Sir. Le ministre fera les efforts qu'il veut. Les fédérations fonctionneront comme elles veulent, mais la promotion du sport sans une vraie régionalisation des administrations régionales on ne s'en sortira pas. On ne va pas réinventer la roue à l'île Maurice. De part le monde, what do we see? Manchester United, what is the key word? 'Manchester'; Liverpool: 'Liverpool'; Paris St. Germain: 'Paris'. Throughout the world it's like that, you must fund sport through regional organisations: municipalities, towns and so on. It is like that all over the world. So, I hope that, at a time when notre sport est en grande difficulté, et où on nous parle d'une réorganisation de notre administration régionale, que cela vienne le plus tôt possible et qu'on donne un grand coup de main au sport à travers les municipalités qui vont couvrir toute l'île Maurice, M. le président; ce qui m'amène aux municipales.

It is a lot that the Minister says we are putting: 'Rs190 m. for the Municipal elections, the Village Council elections and Rodrigues Regional Assembly elections. En d'autres mots, on renvoie en un mot. En disant cela, en mettant dans le budget de 2011, une somme pour les élections municipales, on n'a même pas la décence de venir informer le Parlement que les élections municipales vont être renvoyées; qu'elles auront lieu en 2011. On n'a même pas cette décence là! Le ministre des finances tout simplement jette une poignée de roupies – R 190 millions et on est supposé d'accepter. Mais oui, c'est un renvoi normal, et pas un mot sur la réforme de l'administration régionale qu'on nous promet. Si on a une vraie réforme de l'administration régionale, *it's going to cost money. It's clear.* D'une part, on renvoie les élections municipales; d'autre part, on nous promet une réforme en profondeur de l'administration régionale et on ne met pas un sou pour le financement de cette réorganisation de l'administration régionale. Ce n'est pas sérieux et c'est dangereux pour la démocratie.

Je terminerai sur Rodrigues, Agaléga et les Chagos. Rodrigues – Rama Sithanen, lorsqu'il avait présenté son premier budget en 2006, avait oublié la moindre mention de Rodrigues. Je l'avais critiqué le jour même de la présentation du budget, il s'est rattrapé, mais là, répétition; là aussi, continuité. Rien à part une somme pour La Digue ! Pire ! Il n'y a pas une somme que je donne tant d'argent et tant d'argent pour le budget *full stop!* Rodrigues mérite plus que cela. Il fallait mentionner Rodrigues. Il fallait souligner les points forts et permettre aux Rodriguaises et aux Rodriguais d'avoir l'espoir qu'ils méritent M. le président. C'est d'ailleurs pour ça, M. le président, que Johnson Roussety, Chef Commissaire de Rodrigues - *it is serious* - a été tellement choqué par ce qu'il n'y a pas dans le budget pour Rodrigues qu'il a déclaré ceci, je cite monsieur Johnson Roussety: 'Le ministre des finances n'a rien compris aux réalités rodriguaises. Ce budget contribuera à accentuer l'inégalité entre Maurice et Rodrigues. Aucun grand chantier n'est prévu dans l'île à se demander – *and this is the dangerous part* – si nous devons continuer de faire partie de la République de Maurice ou faut-il engager une réflexion sur son statut au sein de cette République.» *I don't approve of these words, but I understand that frustration, Mr Speaker, Sir.* Là-aussi il n'est pas trop tard pour corriger le tir.

En ce qui concerne Agaléga, on nous dit que R 120 millions seront dépensées pour la remise en état de la piste d'atterrissage. Combien d'années perdues ?

(Interruptions)

Mr Speaker: Hon. Jhugroo, why are you so excited? Are you the Minister of Finance? Let him reply later on! Keep quiet for the time being!

Mr Bérenger: Combien d'années perdues? Le Premier ministre, je suis sûr, est conscient de la souffrance que cela a causé à la population. Bien sûr, en catastrophe, on a envoyé l'avion de la Police et, ça coûte cher, parce que cela endommage l'avion aussi, mais il fallait un va-et-vient normal pour les malades, pour les étudiants. On a imposé à la population d'Agaléga des souffrances inutiles, injustes depuis des années. Enough is enough! J'ai entendu le Premier ministre dire aux chagossiens l'autre jour que Rodrigues a eu son autonomie, un jour eux aussi, ils auront une institution à travers laquelle ils s'exprimeront. Très bien, parfait, mais le *Agaléga Island Council* qui existe au terme de la loi ne peut même pas siéger depuis des années parce que les membres ne peuvent pas se joindre. Ceux qui sont à Agaléga restent à Agaléga, ceux qui sont ici, restent ici. *I would like to know when will the tenders come out for* la remise en état de la piste d'atterrissage à Agaléga.

En ce qui concerne les Chagos, M. le président, c'est vrai que pour la première fois dans les *estimates* - et c'est un peu alambiqué comme expression - voilà ce qui est mis: *Programmes for 2011 – safeguard of our sovereignty and territorial integrity as defined by the Constitution of Mauritius*. Au moins, il y a une référence, même si là les Chagos ne sont pas mentionnés, mais il y a quelques jours de cela, le ministre des affaires étrangères avait dit avec raison que dans le budget qui arrive là, il y aura de l'argent voté spécifiquement - pas pour des gros mots à l'adresse des anglais - *to move forward our struggle for sovereignty*. Là, plus la lutte que la lutte, il a annoncé que dans le budget il y aurait de l'argent, mais il n'y a pas un sou. Il y a une déclaration, c'est très bien, mais il n'y a pas un sou prévu dans le budget comme l'avait promis le ministre des affaires étrangères en ce qui concerne notre combat pour la souveraineté sur les Chagos.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I'll end. For us, for me, c'est un budget de continuité; un mauvais budget dans la mesure où les salariés, les pensionnés, les veuves, les orphelins continueront à s'appauvrir. Un budget sans souffle, sans inspirations et un budget avec de graves lacunes que j'ai dénoncées tout à l'heure, lacunes en ce qui concerne *global warming and food security*; en ce qui concerne la roupie forte; en ce qui concerne la réforme de l'éducation, le métro léger, la CWA, la CEB, les petites et moyennes entreprises, les SMEs. Je considère qu'il y a des lacunes sérieuses dont j'ai parlé tout à l'heure mais, néanmoins, je terminerai en souhaitant que le pays

retire de ce budget le meilleur possible, que le tir soit corrigé là où il est urgent de le faire et que les lacunes que j'ai dénoncées soient comblées le plus rapidement possible.

Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir.

The Minister of Education and Human Resources (Dr. V. Bunwaree): Mr Speaker, Sir, let me first of all congratulate my colleague, the vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Finance and Economic Development for the – what I can call - widely-acclaimed Budget he presented to this Assembly on Friday last.

This Budget, Mr Speaker, Sir, is indeed a daring one which I can call well balanced and based on a programme and promises made during the electoral campaign.

Mr Speaker, Sir, we must not forget, however, the circumstances, both local and international, in which this Budget has been prepared and presented.

It is also important, Mr Speaker, Sir, that we remind ourselves of the most challenging issues that have kept shaking the world economy at the turn of the last century, which we qualified last time, when we took power under the able guidance of the Prime Minister, as a the triple shock in 2005/2006, with -

- the phasing out of the sugar protocol;
- the dismantling of the Multi-Fibre Agreement;
- the constantly rising price of fuel on the world market.

Le Leader de l'opposition vient nous dire que c'est un budget de continuité. J'espère qu'il n'a pas oublié que le budget est une affaire du gouvernement. Il s'agit, aujourd'hui, du gouvernement de l'Alliance de l'Avenir - le gouvernement Parti Travailleiste, MSM et PMSD et le même Premier ministre. C'était le même Premier ministre depuis 2005, le Premier ministre va continuer le budget. Bien entendu, il y aura des nuances en fonction des circonstances du pays, puis, bien-sûr, l'approche du ministre des finances lui-même.

We should not forget, Mr Speaker, Sir, the difficulties that were facing the country when the Prime Minister took power for the second time in 2005. And then, since 2006, another shock characterised by an unprecedented economic and financial turmoil hit the world and whose ripple effects are still, until today, undermining progress and development with, what I can call, a saw-tooth like evolution.

In such a fragile and global economic environmental context where risks still exist for a downturn at any time and where our hands are attached and where situation of countries like ours, being subject to vulnerabilities associated with the size, location and, more importantly, the inner workings of the economic system, Mr Speaker, Sir, the Opposition, through the speech of the Leader of the Opposition, is claiming that the 2011 Budget is, what I have read outside, “*fade, décevant, mauvais*” and that it lacks inspiration and imagination, as the Leader of the Opposition has tried to make us believe today.

Nothing, Mr Speaker, Sir, is further from the truth. In fact, it is, I must say, the comments of the Leader of the Opposition that are “*fade et décevant*”.

Mr Speaker, Sir, we can proudly say that the nation has overwhelmingly accepted the first Budget of the *Alliance de L’Avenir*, as a Budget truly designed to foster the development of the standard of living and quality of life of all our fellow citizens, no matter what creed, religion or social class they belong to.

It is an ample proof, if proof is needed, Mr Speaker, Sir, that this Government has “at heart” the well-being of the whole nation and that the Budget has been framed with this fundamental philosophy in mind.

J’ai entendu le contraire de la bouche du *Leader* de l’opposition. Il a essayé, dans un premier temps, de mettre le ministre des finances à contrepied contre l’ancien ministre des finances et puis contre le Premier ministre. C’est du beau jeu et dans un style théâtral. Ce matin même, j’ai entendu l’honorable Satish Boolell parler d’un acteur par famille. Je pense qu’il y a bien un acteur par famille dans l’opposition en ce moment.

(Interruptions)

Il y avait beaucoup de théâtre. Moi aussi, j’ai été longtemps dans cette Chambre. J’ai entendu le Leader de l’opposition répondre au discours du budget à plusieurs reprises, même à moi-même quand j’étais ministre des finances. Mais, pour la première fois, je vois que c’est un discours décousu, on a pris *cut* plusieurs fois, même pas *paste – cut and throw* – jeté à droite et à gauche. Il a l’habitude de prendre trois ou quatre items, de rentrer en profondeur dans ces items et d’essayer de faire la part de choses. Je dois dire qu’il y a eu quelques éléments positifs aussi. Je ne peux pas faire de la démagogie comme les autres. Il y a eu certains éléments positifs qu’on

va prendre en considération. Un budget est préparé, il y a des discussions qui continuent et le *Finance Bill* arrive. Parfois on doit voir comment on doit présenter le *Finance Bill*, qu'est-ce qu'on va mettre dedans. Même après le *Finance Bill*, il y a des choses qu'on considère toujours. On va voir les choses positives, mais seulement c'était un discours où on a pris un peu de tout, les projets mentionnés dans le budget, dans très peu de cas critiqué vraiment parce qu'il n'y avait pas de critiques possibles, mais plutôt attiré notre attention sur les écueils, c'est son devoir. Dans ce cas là, bien-sûr, on tiendra en considération ce qu'on doit faire.

Je viendrais sur certains points mentionnés par le *Leader* de l'opposition au cours de mon discours, en ce qui concerne l'éducation et la compensation salariale. Je dirais quelques mots ça et là. Mais je pense qu'il ne faut pas que je rentre dans ces détails, prendre point par point, ce que le *Leader* de l'opposition a dit pour les raisons que je viens de mentionner.

Mr Speaker, Sir, it is clear that the 2011 Budget is not just an accounting exercise for it transcends figures and dwells in values, core values, that we all want to cherish for ourselves and for generations to come. In fact, this Budget steers the way to accomplish the Mauritian Dream.

No one can deny that the Minister of Finance has, in fact – I have been Minister of Finance myself - very skilfully and tactfully used the various fiscal tools available to him to chart the right course to propel Mauritius into a higher economic threshold.

The bold measures taken in this Budget to fight the social nuisances afflicting our youth, such as cigarette smoking, alcoholism and gambling, are clear and strong signals of this Government's determination to improve the quality of life in the country.

Another area, Mr Speaker, Sir, where the Government has not hesitated to take the bull by the horns is in the field of environmental protection. We want to bequeath a clean Mauritius to our children and the future generation.

All this paradigm shift was clearly propounded, I must say, Mr Speaker, Sir, in the electoral manifesto of the *Alliance de L'Avenir* for the last general election. Mr Speaker, Sir, there is nothing more sacred for a political alliance than to honour its promises to the nation.

We promised change for the better and we have in this Budget respected our word. Two classical examples are the elimination of the NRPT, but the *Leader* of the Opposition has tried to make a play on this. In fact, it was approved by the previous Government. When we listen to

the people and we are coming back to the people, we took the pledge that many people have not understood the *bien-fondé* of this tax. *Il n'y avait pas beaucoup de revenus qui venaient de cette taxe. La décision a été prise, le ministre des finances avait fait son cheval de bataille pendant tout le temps qu'il était dans l'opposition, c'était normal. Il n'y a rien de plus franc que cela et la preuve que ce gouvernement est un gouvernement qui dirige pour le peuple et avec le peuple.* The same thing is on tax on interest income. These are classical examples, I must say, where we have promised change and we have changed.

Mr Speaker, Sir, we should also welcome the other innovative measures announced in the Budget and I will go quickly. There is the setting up of the Sovereign Wealth Fund.

Le *Leader* de l'opposition a parlé de ce *Sovereign Wealth Fund*. Je dois vous dire, sans entrer dans les détails, qu'il a essayé de nous comparer à des pays qui ne sont pas comparables. Il parle de fonds par trillion dans certains pays bien avancés, mais nous, à Maurice, il nous faut aller d'après nos moyens. Donc, je pense que la population verra que c'est une chose avant-gardiste et cela aura tout son intérêt.

There is also, Mr Speaker, Sir, the enlargement of the scope of activities for Category 1 Global Business Licence Companies; the greater use of economic diplomacy to open new markets through our embassies abroad. There is the question of promoting the Creative Industry as a full-fledged domestic industry. The conversion of the DBM – here also the Leader of the Opposition talked lengthily on that – into a Development Finance Agency to effectively support the SMEs sector. I must say, Mr Speaker, Sir, that this is a very important and intelligent project. We all know that over the years there have been various criticisms levelled against the DBM in several quarters. Small planters, fishermen and SMEs have all complained against the poor service they were obtaining from that bank. And it was obvious, Mr Speaker, Sir, that the DBM could not compete with commercial banks in view of the fact that the DBM did not have the wide network of branches which commercial banks have throughout the island. Moreover, DBM does not possess the advanced technological banking system which commercial banks enjoy such as credit and debit chip cards as well as e-banking online facilities. So, they will never be able to compete with commercial banks.

Alors on a trouvé la meilleure façon de régler le problème. And in this Budget, we are proposing a complete reorganisation of the DBM into a Development Finance Agency and this

Development Finance Agency will rather offer partial risk guarantees and other instruments to induce commercial banks and other financial institutions to lend to SMEs essentially. In addition, it will focus on providing support services and technical assistance to SMEs, micro enterprises and start-ups. It is exactly the same thing that was being mentioned by the Leader of the Opposition. Là on va voir la banque devenir beaucoup plus efficace. Elle va aider les petites et moyennes entreprises à faire ce qu'on n'a pas pu faire depuis bien longtemps.

The e-payment mechanism also, Mr Speaker, Sir, is one of the very important measures that have been mentioned in the Budget. There is the setting up of the National Agricultural Biotechnology Institute.

At this stage, the Deputy Speaker took the Chair.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I was saying that there is the setting up of the National Agricultural Biotechnology Institute. All these important measures that have been mentioned are *avant-gardistes pour le développement et la modernisation du pays*. They have been mentioned in the Budget Speech of the hon. Minister of Finance.

There is also the study for the opening of a port at Mahebourg. I am sure that in the years to come, we'll be bound to open that port there because of the saturation in Port Louis and we know that in Mauritius there is no other place except Port Louis and Mahebourg and Grand Port where you can open ports. There is no way of opening a port anywhere else. So, the study of the opening of a port at Mahebourg is indeed a laudable proposal.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have said earlier that this Budget is not only an accounting exercise. It sets out a road map outlining the future trajectory which our economy will have to follow. We cannot tax this Budget *de fade, décevant* and uninspiring as we have been hearing in the quarters of the Opposition. It contains, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, reform programmes which will pave the way for our country to step in the modern era with confidence.

I prefer not to go into details with the points that have been raised by the Leader of the Opposition where he doesn't seem to believe in the merger of the water authorities and this is a question of '*comment on regarde le problème*'. Si vous regardez le verre à moitié vide, bien sûr vous resterez là sur place sans rien faire.

There has been much thinking done around this *et on ne peut plus continuer avec cet état de choses, cette façon où les autorités se passent la balle*. When you ask this one, he says it is the other one; when you go to the other one, it is the other one *et on tourne en rond*. *On n'arrive jamais à résoudre le problème*. This question of merger of parastatal bodies must be looked at in a very optimistic way.

Concerning the delegation of powers within the public service, we have taken note of what the hon. Leader of the Opposition has said. But there is already delegation of powers by the PSC for many cases. So, this will be taken care of in the same line as what exists.

I have already mentioned the Sovereign Wealth Fund and the complete reorganisation of the DBM as being audacious measures to lead Mauritius on another path of its development.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in line with our basic philosophy, this Budget has given a special attention to protect the vulnerable segments of the population and eradicate absolute poverty. The most far-reaching measure has been the one concerning the housing sector, especially the introduction of the five schemes. Certainly for years to come, this present Government, under the able leadership of our determined Prime Minister, will be remembered for its important contribution in this crucial sector, similarly as Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam is remembered for his tremendous contribution in the provision of free secondary education to all boys and girls of this country, in fact, free education altogether.

Another criticism that has been levelled against this Budget, not only by the hon. Leader of the Opposition, but by certain other quarters, concerns the salary compensation. And I would like to make an interesting point concerning the salary compensation. When we look at this issue, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it must be looked at in a global manner. Financial salary compensation must be added with other fiscal reliefs granted in the Budget to working families.

Il ne faut pas voir la compensation que la compensation. M. le président, les négociations tripartites, comme on les appelle, pour la compensation salariale ont de tout temps, eu lieu juste avant le budget. Quand on passait le budget au mois de juin, juste au début de juin, on avait les négociations tripartites. Cette année-ci, le ministre des finances a lu le discours du budget en décembre et deux ou trois semaines avant on avait les tripartites. Pourquoi ? Pour deux raisons principales. La première c'est que le ministre des finances a besoin de savoir quelle est l'enveloppe qui sera utilisée pour qu'il puisse l'inclure dans son budget. C'est normal, c'est

logique. Mais la deuxième raison, et la plus importante, c'est que le ministre des finances prend cela en considération quand il décide sur les diverses mesures qu'il va préconiser pour le budget de l'Etat. Je vous mentionne une série d'autres mesures. Je vais aller vite pour ne pas prendre trop le temps de la Chambre et vous allez voir combien des familles gagnent par d'autres moyens et les moyens qui sont énoncés dans le budget.

« Extending the partial exemption of School Certificate and HSC fees »

Vous savez ce que le ministre des finances a fait en élargissant la base ? Plus de 19,000 familles vont bénéficier. 100%, c'est environ R 10,000 et 50% c'est environ R 5,000.

With regard to higher housing subsidy, on vient d'augmenter l'allocation pour la dalle à R 65,000. Une famille qui va construire sa maison bénéficie de

R 65,000. C'est la famille qui bénéficie.

Concerning income tax deduction for children studying locally and abroad, ce sont des revenus qui reviennent à la famille ou qui ne sortent pas de la famille. Donc, ce sont les familles qui en bénéficient.

- *Maintaining free transport pour tous les écoliers. Il y a des enfants dans toutes les familles mauriciennes, et ce free transport est pour tout le monde, même ceux qui sont possédants. Quand les enfants voyagent en autobus, c'est gratuit. On sait que les familles dépensent entre R 400/R 500, R 1,200/R 1,300, et même jusqu'à R 1,400 par mois pour le transport des enfants pour aller à l'école.*
- *Maintaining the various subsidies on commodities, such as rice and flour, gaz ménager.*
- *Distribution of school bags, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. Savez-vous ce qu'il y a dans ces school bags? On ne donne pas des cartables vides. il y a des chaussures pour les enfants, les uniformes, les livres, et un tas d'autres choses. Le complet coûte à l'Etat environ R 1,500. On a donné des dizaines de milliers de school bags. Est-ce que ce n'est pas les familles qui bénéficient de tout cela? Ce sont des mesures qui sont annoncées dans le budget ; soit des nouvelles mesures qui viennent, soit les mêmes mesures dont on augmente le plafond.*

- Distribution of books and atlas freely in primary sector. *Si on n'avait pas distribué, les familles n'auraient-elles pas dû aller trouver de l'argent de leurs revenus pour payer tout cela?* There is distribution of books and laptops to the needy in the secondary school sector.
- Concerning casting of slabs, I have just mentioned that the ceiling has been raised to Rs65,000. *Donc, tout cela doit être pris en considération, M. le président. Il ne suffit pas de voir la compensation salariale en tant que telle. Au contraire, les règlements disent que si l'inflation ne dépasse pas 5%, il n'y en a pas. Pourquoi a-t-on mis cela ? On aurait pu s'arrêter là. Malgré tout, le ministre des finances a eu du cœur, et il a décidé qu'il fallait quand même faire un beau geste, d'autant plus qu'il vient pour la première fois, sous la bannière de l'Alliance de l'Avenir, présenter son budget. Il faut que la population comprenne, et il ne faut pas faire de la démagogie avec des choses aussi simples que cela.*

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Budget in itself is a responsible Budget, paving the way for a modern approach to economic management, which is based on values. As Dr. Stephen Covey had rightly pointed out recently, there are three constants in life - change, principles and choice. The vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, has clearly stuck to his unwavering principles, through right choices in the face of change. I wish again to congratulate him for that. My firm belief, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, is that such values should be fostered across all generations, through appropriate and quality education for all. This brings me to my sector, which is Education and Training.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I believe I should be justifiably proud that Education and Training is the recipient of the second largest budget in the 2011 budget presentation. Should we forget that we are here talking of an increase, at a time when developed countries such as the UK and the USA have planned to reduce spending on higher education, science and research? We cannot afford that, here in Mauritius! If anything, we have to continue increasing our spending on education if we want to drive progress in a substantial manner. Can it be otherwise, when the global challenges confronted by countries today have made that the education and training system has become the linchpin for mobility in society, and also for the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals? In fact, the global agenda is today placing a premium, and

focusing on such landmarks as the development of linkages between education, higher education, vocational sector and the world of work. This has to be done throughout, with the harnessing of both ICT in education and existing knowledge, especially indigenous knowledge, for the development of the country as a whole. In fact, in view of the critical importance of knowledge as a factor of production, many less developed countries are exploring ways to harness it, and deepen its role and contribution to their development.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, education systems worldwide are in a state of flux and are subject to reforms, focusing on the following four areas, namely -

- access;
- equity;
- relevance, and
- quality.

We, in Mauritius, while engaged in our reform agenda for the education and training system, are also adding a fifth dimension to it, upon which, I believe, our very survival as a Small Island Developing State depends - I am here referring to the Achievement concept. Until and unless we factor in this dimension, the four other pillars would be incomplete and ultimately inadequate.

These five major pillars, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, constitute the very foundation for the various education reform projects and initiatives which have been highlighted in the Education and Human Resource Strategy Plan 2008-2020, and also enunciated in the Government Programme 2010-2015. This present Budget has given the Education sector yet another challenge to overcome, that is, a dream to make happen for a quality education for all, and a human resource base to transform Mauritius into that intelligent island in the vanguard of the global progress and innovation and this, on the basis on which a true democratic, inclusive and modern society is built, a society with which the population as a whole can identify itself. This Budget, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, envisions transforming Mauritius into an educational hub, in order to propel the economy on a modern development path.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, improving the quality of educational output remains indeed one of the highest priorities on the development agenda of my Ministry, as this is the key that would lead the country to high value-added growth, and increase its competitiveness on the global

market. One of the key determinants of our country's competitiveness is its ability to invest in the brain power of our human resource. The educational goal is thus to empower learners with 21st century skills, competencies and attitudes to operate in both the local and global environments.

It is imperative, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that all attempts be geared towards the elimination of wastage and inefficiency in the system at different levels. Only this will guarantee that we have the quality human resource eager to enter into post secondary and tertiary education. It is only thus and then, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that we can fulfil the objective of ours of ensuring that every family has, at least, one graduate in its midst.

My Ministry, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, has, in the context of the implementation of the Strategy Plan 2008-2020, initiated action on a host of measures, covering different levels of education, and focusing *inter alia* on -

- consolidation of the human resource base;
- productivity upgrading;
- redefining the curricula;
- innovative pedagogical practices;
- triggering digital revolution of the education system;
- new modes of assessment for benchmarking;
- quality improvement, and
- expanded educational and work related opportunities.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, you will appreciate that these measures I have just mentioned can take firm root only when the very foundational stages of education are properly consolidated. A lot of our innovations have accordingly been made to concentrate on the pre-primary, primary and secondary subsectors. As a matter of fact, innovative pedagogical programmes have been put in place to reduce the end-of-primary cycle failure rates, and to improve performance and quality standards at that level. Action has accordingly been sustained, as from 2008, to apply such innovative measures at an early stage, instead of waiting for the end-of-the-cycle examinations to reveal learning deficits. The Leader of the Opposition touched on what was

mentioned in the Budget, because we believe in it. *Il faut qu'on sache que le ministre des finances ne peut pas venir donner tous les détails pour chaque phrase. Il ne finira jamais, déjà que son discours a duré plus de deux heures. Cela a été mentionné, parce qu'on y croit vraiment.* Alors il faut commencer par le début.

I must say that we should not wait; we should start at the early stages. A host of new innovative measures have been introduced namely -

- (a) the splitting of the Primary cycle into three cycles of two years, and
- (b) the diagnostic assessment to identify deficits and set the basis for remedy.

We have introduced the Remedial Education. We have started to introduce the Continuous Assessment System, the ZIIS (Zone of Inclusive and Integrated Strategy). We have introduced the Enhancement Programme and continuous training of educators and capacity-building. All these, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, are some of the means by which we intend to transform the entire primary cycle of the education sector. However, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would not take too much the time of the House in elaborating too lengthily on those measures. *Parce qu'il y en a tellement, M. le président,* that with your permission, I would wish to table a document carrying the details of many points I have mentioned and I will continue to mention.

There is one domain, however, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that of private tuition, where I, as Minister entrusted with the responsibility for education, will not shy away. We may propose a whole gamut of measures, all well intentioned, but if we do not confront the issue of private tuition headlong, many of the actions will not yield the fruits expected. I believe, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that this deep-rooted phenomenon in our educational system and which has been lasting for years, has to be addressed holistically and in an integrated manner.

As a first step, we have already implemented this year the policy decision of not allowing private tuition on school premises to pupils of Std IV. We have successfully introduced the Enhancement Programme in the context of our policy review of private tuition.

The next step in driving forward this Agenda for ultimately phasing out private tuition relates to amendments of the Education Act. These amendments are currently being finalised at the Attorney General's Office and I propose to circulate same to this august Assembly soon.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I wish to highlight here something that is novel in our system, but which also has far-reaching implications and I am speaking of the Enhancement Programme. The received wisdom in our schools has always been that our children should turn out to be academically on top, but concern about their overall well-being has traditionally taken a back seat.

This is something that has to change, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, and this is central to my concern as a Minister and I must say also as a Doctor. This Programme, I must say at the very outset, has won public approval, parental support and ownership by the entire school community. It could not be otherwise, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir. The Programme has created a real breakthrough, a real revolution in the Primary Sector. It throws talents and creativity into the limelight. This Programme has demonstrated that potential exists in all our learners, no matter what type of school they go to or which region they are found in.

Their latent talent has been given the opportunity to blossom, to be exposed to the public gaze. In the process, pupils have developed their own self-esteem, their ability to display leadership qualities, all directly resulting in personality growth and development. Given the major success of this programme, we must be deeply appreciative of the Minister of Finance recognition given in its long-term benefits and has provided funds for its extension to pupils of Standard III also as from January 2011.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in the same line of thought and action, the holistic development of the students of secondary schools implies the provision of opportunities for them to better unleash their potential, develop their creativity and nurture innovation.

With this focus, new timetabling arrangements have been made involving the inclusion since January 2009, of four extra activity periods per week since January 2009. This is working marvellously well and has created another revolution at the Secondary level, where Co and Extra Curricular activities have thus been given their rightful place and indeed a new impetus.

Educators of Secondary Schools are hence, now organising and encouraging participation of students in extra-curricular activities featuring on the school timetable. These encompass –

- healthy lifestyle;
- civic education;

- sex education;
- promotion of arts and culture, and
- sustainable development (endemic garden, waste segregation, recycling of waste paper for example).

In addition, my Ministry has promoted efforts towards inculcating the notion of sustainability right from an early age through actions that lead to a green and embellished school environment. Tree planting is so simple but, at the same time, so crucial an activity. It is with the very inculcation of such notions that we can transform what appears to be so mundane an activity into one, that is, in fact, highly productive.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Budget has announced the setting up of a Creative Industry. This can only see the light of day when we start developing basic creative values in our children right from an early age, such that their potential, in fact, acts as a basis for the creation of economic value. The schools represent the right platform for driving such initiatives.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, one of the best definitions of quality is fitness of purpose. An education system has to ensure that its products not only eke out a profitable existence for themselves, but also that they become balanced social beings who collectively work towards the common weal, that is, the best citizens of the country.

This, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, places a heavy responsibility on the curriculum that has to be relevant and provide the sound base on which the future of learners is constructed.

I wish to inform the House that one of the strategic thrusts of the new educational reform initiated as from 2008 has been the complete review of the curriculum framework at all levels, pre-primary, primary and secondary. These reforms are all encompassing: innovative measures in the teaching and learning process have been highlighted. Assessment, evaluation and capacity-building are central to it and the new curriculum framework makes provision for the introduction of new subjects as well. The details regarding the array of curricular changes are given, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in the document I will be circulating.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, let me now address an issue that has become intrinsic to modernisation of all emerging economies. Nobody can deny that globalisation and rapid

technological changes have made knowledge a critical determinant of competitiveness in the world economy.

The impact on education is clear. In fact, this has led to UNESCO giving a high priority to the use of ICT in Education, with a view to ensuring a more equitable and pluralistic development in education.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, experience worldwide indicates that ICT plays an important role in the transformation of education and training. I wish to repeat it. It can enhance educational reform by enabling both teachers and learners to move away from the traditional teacher-centred, task-oriented, memory-based education to a transformed teaching and learning environment, characterised by inclusive and integrated practices, so, that no child be left behind.

It is with this goal in mind, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that my Ministry has forcefully embarked on the digitalisation of the Education System as a whole. We have now made of that revolution a central pillar of the system by ensuring empowerment across the board.

The approach, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, has been systemic -

- Provision of IT labs in all schools.
- Provision of broadband internet facilities.
- Improved communication processes through the EDUWEB with the school community which is a system of webcasting, and
- SMS to reach out to parents.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, these are just a few of the digital transformations we have brought into our schools. We are now on the verge of embarking on two unprecedented revolutionary projects that will take us indubitably several rungs on the digital ladder. These are projects that are not simply going to be new milestones, but will also be trail blazers. One of them will position the country as a *'plaque tournante'* for the African continent as a whole and the other will reengineer the operational process of the Ministry by strengthening the management and administrative capacity of the system. I am talking here, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, essentially of the Sankore Project as well as the School Administration and Management System.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, for the information of hon. Members, details again of the various ICT initiatives - and they are numerous - are included in the document I am circulating.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, my Ministry is addressing the issue of indiscipline and violence holistically in partnership with key institutions namely the Police force, the CDU, *la Brigade pour la Protection des Mineurs*, Probation Services, the Ministry of Youth & Sports with the support of all stakeholders including the parental and school community.

Central to our concern, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, is ensuring the need to safeguard the interest of the child. The child has fundamental rights that are as much generally enshrined in our Constitution as these are captured in the several conventions that Mauritius has ratified. The measures being implemented serve to both respect and protect the rights of the child and are based on a child-friendly approach.

Again, I have given details in the document circulated.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, assuring the social integration of the vulnerable through a set of affirmative measures is indeed the moral obligation of Government. And this has to start as early as possible by facilitating the inclusion of children with special and additional needs in the mainstream. Let me say in very clear terms, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that education has the responsibility of guaranteeing equity for all in the system. This is so by virtue of its being the key to societal transformation.

I will, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, take up two important components of this drive. First is the Special Education Needs. We did talk about that this morning in the course of a PQ that was put to me and to which I answered. Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the measures are numerous, including having recourse to an intensive campaign to persuade and encourage parents to register their wards in the nearest primary schools and for subsequent admission to the appropriate school or institution. This has already started since January this year and we are keen on reaching out to those who had for long remained the unreached.

Obviously, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we have to rely on the active collaboration of NGOs involved in the Special Education Needs. Among other things, it is also important that the system provides for an early detection and diagnosis of disability as and when it manifests itself. Only then can early intervention actions in the form of relevant care and support be provided to the

children in need. A Special Education Need Unit at the Early Childhood Care and Education Authority is therefore being created for this purpose, and the Special Education Need Unit of my Ministry is being further reinforced and closely monitored.

Of extreme necessity is the setting up of Special Education Need Resource and Development Centres. These strategically located centres will be properly equipped with specialised materials and also adequately staffed, so as to act as One-Stop-Shops where, *inter alia*, relevant services and support to Special Education Need children would be provided. The collaboration of specialist NGOs on a principle of complementarity would be secured to drive further this initiative.

Second, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, as the House is fully aware, the Zones d'Education Prioritaires (ZEP) strategy which aims at combating social inequalities by providing equal opportunities to all primary school children of the country was introduced in 2003.

After seven years of the implementation of the project, it has been observed that progress has been slow, especially in certain schools. Reflections carried out by my Ministry have revealed several drawbacks, which contribute to such slow progress. These relate to *inter alia* -

- Stigma on the ZEP schools.
- Concentration of low performing pupils in such schools.
- Low community involvement – Parents do not participate in school activities despite various efforts.
- Headmasters have difficulties to cope with situations especially where parents are very difficult.
- Teachers are often discouraged and frustrated.
- The allowance paid does not necessarily attract the most dedicated teachers to ZEP schools.
- The vision set up for the ZEP strategy is not shared by all stakeholders.

So, the need for a revisiting of the ZEP strategy is therefore being strongly felt. In this connection, a rethinking process has started at the level of my Ministry with a view to ensuring

that pupils attending ZEP schools are better supported and the stigma on such schools removed. I am open to not only proposals, but even advice from all stakeholders interested in the matter.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, let me now come to that measure in the Budget about which there cannot be any controversy. I am referring here to the fundamental change to the Scholarship schemes which are until today, based on merit and merit only.

I, Mr Deputy Speaker Sir, will be the last person to frown upon merit. But I also realise that there is not much that separates a laureate from his or her peer/ fellow student coming immediately after. Is it then fair or again morally just to distinguish between laureates and non laureates on the decimal differences in marks at exams organised during 2 or 3 hours after a preparation having lasted two years.

(Interruptions)

Of course ! Il faut commencer, on commence, la main à la pâte, aidez nous !

In fact, it is only fair and just that the rewards for hard work should be equitably distributed. I am especially referring here to the 38 new awards that have been recommended, of which 24 are to be reserved for brilliant deserving students coming from families with modest income.

So, I repeat, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, this is a measure whose fall out can only be positive for we are thereby rewarding the efforts of many and not just a few. We are rewarding academic merit, but also placing due emphasis on and showing consideration for social merit and this fits in very well with the concept so properly spelt out in French namely –

« Il ne suffit pas de réussir dans la vie, mais de réussir sa vie”..

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, inclusion and integration will not serve much of a purpose if completion of schooling is handicapped because of non-affordability factors. This Budget recognises that it is the sacrosanct duty of Government to ensure that learners do complete their cycles of study.

In this regard, I can only welcome on behalf of the numerous parents the policy measure to alleviate their financial burden through an increased subsidisation of examination fees. And I was myself the first one to introduce the measure when I was Minister of Finance in 1997. Je ne

peux pas être plus royaliste que le roi mais je me sens fier quand je vois cette mesure revenir. I must say that this will have a series of ripple effects.

The number of students so benefitting will, as I said earlier, be more than double to reach 19, 000, and we know that many of these will have successfully completed their exams, will be seeking seats - and securing them - in the post-secondary sub-sector.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the increased pace of life in our modern society is taking toll on the ability of parents, especially mothers, to take employment opportunities and at the same time providing the necessary mother care that children would and do require.

We all know that women's socio economic role should be enhanced. In this context, my Ministry is working towards the introduction of a new regulation under the ECCEA Act to address a long-standing issue regarding child minding services for children aged 3-5.

In fact, I am talking of the possibility of re-opening or leaving pre-primary school open after 2.30 hours and 3.00 hours. *Nous savons les difficultés que les parents ont ; si les parents travaillent, ils ne sont pas libres de venir chercher les enfants à 2.30 heures ou à 3.00 heures et beaucoup de dames refusent de travailler à cause des difficultés des enfants.* So, this will go in the right direction.

This amendment would ultimately permit mothers, especially from poor families, to take up full time employment without the stress of going to recuperate their children when they finish work. Incidentally, I must say, this will also optimise the use of resources that had so far not been properly tapped. This is a good measure which goes in the right direction.

In addition, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the implementation of the “*École des Parents*” project will help establish the “Home-School” network and also serve as a means to better “educate” the parents and make them alive to the issues in society at large. Such ‘*Écoles*’ will, among other things, cement the tie with the schools, encourage greater parental involvement as well as help forge strong partnerships with vulnerable children and their parents through solidarity actions and home visits.

My Ministry will implement all these measures in close collaboration with stakeholders of the education sector including, of course, the parent community.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, although Mauritius is well on the way to achieving the EFA goals and reckons high levels of literacy, there is still a need to sustain efforts to benchmark the educational system against internationally prevailing norms. Mauritius has participated in some major regional and organisation-based assessments namely PASEC (*Programme d'Analyse des Systemes Educatifs de la CONFEMEN*) and SACMEQ (Southern African Consortium for Monitoring Quality).

Such assessments, while serving the purpose of establishing a comparative picture with other countries have nonetheless been limitative in nature, confined as they have been to the region. The time has come now for our system to benchmark itself against the very best that exists globally.

For the first time, Mauritius is participating in an international assessment study administered by OECD in some 80 countries. Taken every three years, it will benchmark knowledge and skills of 15 years old, an age at which students in most countries are nearing the end of compulsory schooling. Results will be available by the end of 2011, that is, next year. PISA: it has already started and the results will be available next year.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, innovative approaches have also been adopted for assessment within the system so as to enable benchmarking of performances at National level and to create new avenues for the student –

(i) **National Assessment at Form III –**

I am raising a question of National Assessment at Form III level which being implemented for the first time as from this year at evaluating the competencies acquired by students and identifying their weaknesses at the end of the lower secondary cycle - a crucial stage in the education of a secondary level student.

The project has been implemented on a pilot basis this year with the participation of 33 schools, in which phase only four subjects have been assessed: English, French, Mathematics and Computer Studies. Next year more schools will join in with an extended number of subjects before it is institutionalised at the national level as from 2012.

(ii) **Revisiting The Pre-Voc Policy -**

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it is imperative to create new and expanded opportunities for pre-vocational students for their continued education and integration in the world of work.

In this context we are reviewing the Prevocational policy to make it adapted to the needs of the learner. Work has already started at the level of my Ministry to think anew the modalities underlying the whole prevocational education in the light of weaknesses that have been identified.

It is also envisaged to have a nationally recognised examination conducted by the MES for pre-vocational students so that they may obtain a certificate as an alternative qualification to the CPE.

(iii) **Diplome d'Etudes en Langue Francaise (DELF) -**

We have also introduced the DELF in collaboration with the French Government in secondary schools, and which aims at assessing competencies in French, both oral and written; it is of particular interest to Form V and VI students planning to pursue studies in Francophone countries. This has replaced the examination which was existing. It is about one third the cost which is paid for these examinations and the certificate that is given stays for life whereas the other one had a limited duration.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we have created expanded opportunities for access to learning as well as opening the gateway to creativity and artistic expression in line with the objectives of the HRKAD Fund set up last year. In addition, out of school, youth can now envisage new livelihood prospects through the Second Chance Programme while access to technology will become the norm for all.

The Fund has been set up timeously to fill a void that led to the restriction of opportunities to different categories of our human resources and to open up access to facilities otherwise non-existent for them.

From this Fund, scholarships are now being provided to students from low-income households following accredited programmes in recognised Higher Education Institutions in Mauritius and who face financial hardships (death or disability of parents). A substantial amount

has already been disbursed under the Scholarships Scheme of the Fund. Equally, the Fund provides for the Ministry to act as a guarantor to facilitate access to bank loans for those whose families possess no fixed assets.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, let me now come to that element of the Government Programme that has been on the lips of practically all stakeholders in education and in society at large. I am referring here to a seminal and ground breaking measure that this Government has committed itself to, namely the introduction of Mauritian *Kreol* and Bhojpuri as optional subjects in schools.

Let me say it in no uncertain terms that, right from the outset, I have been amongst the first who have stood firm in my conviction that we should not restrict the use of *Kreol* only as a support language and exclusively for the first three years of primary schooling as it has always been.

We have with the support of all stakeholders successfully organised a national forum for the introduction of *Kréol Morisien* at school and an *Académie du Kréol Morisien* has been set up to work out all modalities pertaining to this decision.

We have also progressed on the proposal to introduce Bhojpuri and a High Level Technical Committee led by the MGI is working towards its introduction in schools as an optional subject.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the policy of my Ministry to support an equitable, modern, high quality education system, is focused on investment for a revamped educational infrastructure. This should meet the needs of the 21st century teaching and learning, including the practice of sports activities and promotion of a healthy lifestyle. This is why, this Government has been investing massively in the upgrading and rehabilitation of all educational infrastructures and the House must know that, over the last five years, some Rs2.6 billion have thus been spent on projects in primary and secondary schools. *R 2.6 milliards!* Efforts are being sustained in that direction.

Efforts are being sustained in that direction. My Ministry has already embarked on the construction of some 11 pre-primary units including 4 in the underserved regions of Chamarel, Albion, Barkly and Belle Mare. This is in line with our drive to promote access across the country to quality pre-primary education for a good start in the educational lives of our children.

(Interruptions)

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, my Ministry has since the beginning of 2010 embarked on the ambitious Primary School Renewal Project with a view to replacing old buildings that are in a deplorable state by new ones provided with all modern facilities, including facilities for handicapped children.

This certainly includes keeping in mind the interests of our learners suffering from disabilities, as I have just said - they, too, Mr Speaker, Sir need to have their access and movement in schools assured. Continued emphasis is also being laid on health and safety issues through the construction and upgrading of toilets in primary and secondary schools where the toilets are in a poor state. I am aware of that. *Cela date de longtemps*. I have given directives at the level of my ministry to do away with all these poor toilets as soon as possible.

Further, in the secondary school sub-sector, the provision of additional infrastructural facilities such as specialist rooms, science and computer laboratories and playgrounds. Gymnasias will also be provided in six secondary schools and this project will be extended in the future to all secondary schools which do not have one. Similarly, all the secondary schools which do not have football playgrounds or volleyball/basketball pitches will be provided with same. This will encourage the pursuit of extra-curricular activities as well as the promotion of sport and healthy activities for the school community.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, whilst engaged in the process, my Ministry is now adopting a new approach to infrastructural development through the construction of Green buildings with a view to promoting sustainable development.

Furthermore, to encourage energy saving, the installation of photovoltaic cells in 10 primary and secondary schools is in the pipeline. This project will be extended to all primary and secondary schools in the future.

Details on all projects which are completed this year and also, ongoing and future projects in primary and secondary schools are again given, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in the Document which I will be tabling.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, Technical and Vocational Education and Training plays indeed a very important role in the national social and economic development. This is clearly reiterated in

the Government Programme 2010-2015 which aims at further consolidating equity, quality and relevance at all levels of the education and training system.

The importance of TVET (Technical and Vocational Education and Training) in raising productivity and employability is universally recognised. Furthermore, most countries, developed as well as developing, are increasingly having recourse to TVET as an instrument to address the problem of poverty and exclusion.

In order to attain the objectives enunciated in the 2011 Budget, it is, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, of strategic importance that the skill level of the workforce be upgraded. At the same time, considerable investment in training will be required to produce the manpower required, especially in the emerging sectors identified for future economic growth. In this respect, various measures have been undertaken by my Ministry to revitalise TVET.

As you are aware, the Mauritius Institute of Training and Development (MITD) has been set up in November 2009 with a view to streamlining TVET and building greater synergy among the public providers of training. As a result, now the MITD is the key arm of my Ministry and of Government for the provision of TVET.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with a view to increasing access to training and to bringing training closer to the public at large, the MITD has recently set up new training centres in Port Louis (the Knowledge Based Training Centre), Carreau Esnouf and Bel Air.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the MITD is also planning, in line with Government Programme of further decentralising TVET, to set up training centres in regions (North, South East and West) which are presently not adequately catered for.

The MITD is also closely collaborating with the National Empowerment Foundation to provide training for the vulnerable groups. In the context of the Support for the Unemployed Retrenched Employees (SURE), the MITD is also expected to provide training for the retrenched workers in order to facilitate their redeployment in other sectors.

The MITD has also been diversifying the training programmes offered to include, *inter alia*, hairdressing, beauty therapy, aluminium openings, security services, butchery. New training programmes are proposed for cruise line personnel by the MITD *Ecole Hôtelière* Sir

Gaëtan Duval. Higher level training programmes at diploma levels are also being developed in automotive engineering, refrigeration and air conditioning, 3-D animation and renewable energy.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is progressing at very high speed and is fast impacting all spheres of life, including the way in which teaching and learning take place. Whilst it is important to regularly review curriculum in TVET to ensure relevance to the needs of industry and provide for articulation with general education, it is equally important for the delivery of training to be enhanced through innovative technology and digitalisation.

In this context the MITD is planning to provide e-learning facilities in TVET. Furthermore, with the implementation of the Sankore Project will also cater for the TVET sector and a special attention will be given to the digitalisation of learning materials used in the sector.

The whole issue, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, of assessment and certification will be reformed and greater emphasis will be placed on competency-based assessment in line with best practices worldwide. This will contribute towards greater flexibility and quality in the provision of training.

In the context of the vocationalisation of education, there is also a proposal for reviewing the training programmes offered by the *Lycée Polytechnique* Sir Guy Forget with a view to introducing the *Baccalauréat Professionnel (Bac Pro)*.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the MITD has been closely collaborating with countries in the region for the development of TVET. In line with the Government Programme 2010-2015 of transforming Mauritius into a regional hub for TVET, the MITD is actively engaged in the development of a project aimed at the setting up of a regional Training of Trainers Centre to cater for the needs of technical instructors and managers of TVET from the Southern and Eastern African countries and neighbouring islands in the Indian Ocean. Initially a Business Plan will be developed to cater for the following sectors -

- (a) Hospitality and Tourism
- (b) Automation and Control Engineering
- (c) Garment Design and Manufacturing
- (d) Industrial Machine Maintenance.

Under the India-Africa Forum, Mauritius has also made a bid to host a Regional Training Centre in technical and vocational education.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, throughout the year 2010, my Ministry has left no stone unturned on the way towards having a competent skills base for Mauritius. The second edition of the National Human Resource Development Plan was launched in February of this year.

This document identifies the skills gaps in various sectors. Moreover it allows relevant training to be developed.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, more than 45,000 employees have been trained through the National Training Fund in 2010, for which an amount of Rs160 m. was disbursed by the HRDC.

In order to increase access to training, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, my Ministry has also encouraged SMEs to benefit from training and capacity building. More than 1,000 people have been trained in conducting a proper Training Needs Analysis (TNA), through the support from European Union, under the 9th Decentralised Cooperation Programme. This has also contributed to empower over 100 local consultants to provide support to SMEs.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, with a view to responding to the needs of Modern Mauritius, the HRDC has embarked on a national campaign to sensitise the population on the 24/7 economic model. Mauritians are being encouraged to change their mindset in order to free themselves from the 9 to 4 gravity pull.

In order to sustain our economic growth, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we must be able to attract a fair share of the several millions of jobs that are being outsourced in the world. For this, we need be able to offer the service to the clients at a time they need it rather than at a time convenient to us.

Building on the achievements in 2010, we are pursuing the Government Programme 2010-2015 with renewed energy.

The Strategy of my Ministry, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, is to offer broadened and flexible career guidance service to all. We are going to call it the "*Centre d'Orientation Académique et Professionnelle*". This will help our citizens to be better guided in their education, training and employment. Through the regular update of the National Human Resource Development Plan,

relevant and updated information about education, training and work will be made available to one and all on a regular basis.

As effective and continuous workforce development plays a pivotal role in the improvement of competitiveness and equity, we are planning, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, through, the Human Resource Development Council, to set up a One-Stop-Shop for HRD (Human Resource Development) for enterprises, in order to help them carry out activities for the empowerment of their employees. Services to be offered would include support to prepare Training Needs Analysis, Training Plan, Application for Training Grants, Staff Development Plan, and Talent Retention and Management Plan.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in a bid to motivate employers to invest in the development of their employees, a Skills Pledge Initiative and a National HRD Excellence Award will be launched by the Human Resource Development Council. We all know that if we want to have a productive workforce, we have to ensure that we are helping the employees to remain skilled and competent.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, human development is about putting people at the centre of development. It is about people realising their potential, increasing their choices, and enjoying the freedom to lead lives they value. I firmly believe, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, that, despite political and economic uncertainty in the global recovery, Mauritius remains a fertile ground for high value and productive activities and investments.

In fact, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I can say that my Ministry will spare no effort in realising this vision. By investing in education and training, we are investing in a secure and prosperous future for each and every Mauritian. In the field of education and training, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, much has been done; much still has to be done in the future. This Budget, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, has given us the means now, which we needed, to act and work to the expectation of the people.

With this new Budget presented by the hon. vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development, under the guidance of the hon. Prime Minister and his illumined guidance, I wish Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the country and our people well.

Thank you.

Dr. Kasenally: Sir, I move that the debate be now adjourned.

Dr. A. Boolell rose and seconded.

Question put and agreed to.

Debate adjourned accordingly.

ADJOURNMENT

The Deputy Prime Minister: Sir, I beg to move that this Assembly do now adjourn to Friday 26 November at 3.30 p.m.

The vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development (Mr P. Jugnauth) rose and seconded.

The Deputy Speaker: The House stands adjourned.

(7.34 p.m)

MATTERS RAISED

RIVIÈRE SÈCHE, FLOREAL - GREEN SPACE

Mrs F. Labelle (Third Member for Vacoas & Floreal): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would like very briefly to bring to the attention of the House, particularly to the attention of the hon. Minister of Environment, the deplorable state of Rivière Sèche in Floreal, particularly the part which flows between Engrais Martial and Cité l'Oiseau.

At the present time, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, you can't even see the river water, because it is full of weeds and different types of plants. Since these two areas are highly populated, they don't have spaces. Particularly at Engrais Martial, there is not even a green space for persons to spend some time. I would like to ask the hon. Minister whether he would look into cleaning part of this river, particularly the river banks and the river itself, so that people of both Engrais Martial and Cité l'Oiseau can enjoy some piece of green space in this area.

Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

The Minister of Environment and Sustainable Development (Mr D. Virahsawmy): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, usually rivers fall under the responsibility of the municipalities, but I shall ask my Ministry to have a look at that river and help cleaning it.

(7.37 p.m.)

(1) CAMP DE MASQUE

- (a) VILLAGE HALL**
- (b) CHILDREN'S PLAYGROUND**
- (c) COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTRE**
- (d) SSS – FOOTBALL GROUND**
- (e) VOLLEYBALL PITCH**
- (f) MAHADEO BABA LANE & SANTA CLAUS
PRIMARY SCHOOL – LIGHTING**

(2) BEL ETANG - GROTTÉ

Mr J. Seetaram (Second Member for Montagne Blanche & GRSE): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have two issues to address to the House, with regard to Camp de Masque Bel Etang.

The first one concerns the village hall at Camp de Masque, which is in a derelict state, where the walls and roof of that building are falling apart. We have concrete coming down accordingly and it is a hazardous area.

Further, we have the community centre found at Camp de Masque itself. Behind it, there is a children's playground, which state is regrettable inasmuch as the grass has grown very long and is in a wild state. It needs to be cut and cleaned up.

Annexed to the village hall of Camp de Masque, we have the Community Health Centre, which is a quite small one. The patients who attend this Community Health Centre have difficulties whenever there is rainfall or heavy sunshine. They don't have a shed. I would like to ask the hon. Minister if the needful could be done in relation to that.

Further, there is a football ground at the back of the State Secondary School of Camp de Masque, where again bushes and shrubs have grown all over it. If this can be attended to, inasmuch as we have students who might be in difficulty if ever they go around there.

The volleyball pitch behind the village hall is in a bad state and needs upgrading. That is the issue for Camp de Masque.

We have also the issue of lighting on the Mahadeo Baba lane, and Santa Claus Primary school...

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Member, I think that you should take only one issue. You are taking a long list of issues, and I have got five more Members who want to intervene.

Mr Seetaram: I will be very short. The issue is for Camp de Masque. I am going for the second issue, which is Bel Etang Village. For Bel Etang, I'll be very quick.

The Deputy Speaker: No. Unfortunately, you have raised so many issues that I don't know who the Ministers who will address them are. Please!

Mr Seetaram: There is '*la grotte*' found at Bel Etang, where a *profilage* covering project needs to be completed. Sir, those two issues concern firstly the Minister of Environment, the Minister of Local Government and the Minister Public Infrastructure. Thank you.

The Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping (Mr A. Bachoo): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I will take up the issues that concern my Ministry.

The Minister of Health & Quality of Life (Mrs S. Hanoomanjee): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I think I heard the hon. Member mentioning community health centre, or was he mentioning behind some community health centres?

(Interruptions)

Mr Seeruttun: There is a small community Health centre which needs a shed in bad weather.

Mrs Hanoomanjee: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have taken note of that.

(7.40 p.m.)

**(1) BEAU BASSIN ROUNDABOUT/VANDERMEERSCH ROAD & ROYAL ROAD –
CONSTRUCTION**

(2) BEAU BASSIN – JARDIN BIJOUX

Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, *j'ai deux points à soulever*. The first one concerns the Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping, the Minister of Local Government and the Minister of Environment and Outer Islands.

Après le rond-point de Beau Bassin se trouve un chantier de construction à l'angle de la rue Vandermeersch et la route royale. Depuis plus d'un mois, j'ai soulevé cette question avec le ministre Bachoo. J'ai attiré son attention sur un terrain de 10 à 15 toises, où il y a une construction de trois étages, sans aucun *parking* dans le tournant du rond-point. Je considère que cet endroit est très dangereux. J'ai aussi attiré l'attention du conseiller du ministre. En sus de cela, le *owner of the land*, le chantier illégal, a pris le reste de la terre qu'il a mis en face sur un terrain vague. Ce qui est devenu un dépotoir sur le centre de Beau Bassin. En fait, c'est en face de l'Eglise de Sacré-Cœur. Nous entrons dans la saison de pluie. Je ne sais ce qui va arriver en période de grosses pluies avec toute cette terre qui est sur ce terrain vague et qui va inonder le rond-point. D'autant plus que pour moi, c'est non seulement un *eyesore*, mais une construction illégale, qui ne respecte pas les normes de l'environnement et les normes du *Town and Country Planning*.

Je demande au ministre responsable de faire une enquête auprès de la Municipalité de Beau Bassin/Rose Hill qui a laissé le promoteur aller dans cette direction – *éna anguille sous roche, éna requin sous roche*.

Deuxièmement, je voudrais, encore une fois, attirer l'attention du ministre du logement, of the Ministry of *Local Government and Outer Islands, the Ministry of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping* sur ce fait.

Je voudrais remercier le vice-Premier ministre pour avoir agi vite. Je profite pour remercier aussi l'honorable ministre Aimée. A l'arrière du marché de Beau Bassin...

(Interruptions)

C'est cela la Municipalité de l'Alliance Sociale. Il y a le Jardin Bijoux qui existe sur une extension de la Promenade Roland Armand, c'est-à-dire à côté de Roxy, qui est là depuis des années. Ceux qui habitent à Beau Bassin sont au courant. Les gens de la Cité Barkly et de Beau Bassin l'utilisent. Voilà que la Municipalité commence à détruire le jardin, à passer le bulldozer parce qu'un conseiller qui est un professionnel, un dentiste, n'a pas de *parking*.

M. le président, cela demande une enquête. J'insiste à ce qu'il y ait une enquête dans l'intérêt du public, parce que non seulement c'est illégal et immoral, mais c'est un terrain qui est réservé pour le métro-léger. Ils n'ont même pas demandé la permission du ministère du logement, ou même celle du *MPI*. J'ai demandé à mes amis de prendre les gens de la MBC/TV pour leur faire visiter cet endroit pour ensuite le montrer à la population en première nouvelle. Voilà où on en est. C'est une Municipalité sans loi et est une ville sans loi.

Encore une fois, je remercie le vice-Premier ministre pour avoir agi vite, ainsi que l'honorable Aimée, qui, je suis sûr, va faire le suivi. Je reviendrai là-dessus encore une fois lors de mon intervention vendredi. Merci.

The Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands (Mr H. Aimée): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, both projects fall under my Ministry. The hon. Member is right. When he phoned to inform me about this particular problem, I intervened immediately and I stopped the project on the spot. I am going to look into it and surely I will take action.

(Interruptions)

Yes, of course, I will take action. The project concerns my Ministry and I am going to look at it.

(7.44 p.m.)

PLAINE VERTE – DESFORGES & MAGON STREETS - FENCING

Mr A. Ameer Meea (First Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I just hope that the hon. Minister would act the same way with regard to the problem that I will raise.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, it concerns the garden that is situated in the corner of Desforges and Magon Streets at Plaine Verte. This question is addressed to the hon. Minister of Local Government. The garden was fenced by some small trees or we may call it decorative bushes. These trees have been there for hundred years.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, recently the Municipality of Port Louis has removed all the small trees which were acting as fence around the four corners of the garden to replace it by a concrete and iron fencing. I don't know who got this genius idea at the Municipality of Port Louis. This is against the concept of the *Maurice Ile Durable* and also the beauty which these old trees represented.

I would impress upon the hon. Minister to stop the construction of the wall and fencing and to replace them by planting new trees and decorative bushes to act as fencing as it used to be.

Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir.

The Minister of Local Government & Outer Islands (Mr H. Aimée): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, the hon. Member does not have to impress upon me, because I will attend to his request and do the needful.

(7.46 p.m.)

CITE ANOUSHKA, 16EME MILLE – QUALITY OF LIFE

Mr S. Obeegadoo (Third Member for Curepipe & Midlands): M. le président, mes propos s'adressent au ministre de l'environnement, mais concernent aussi le ministre Aimée et autre sans doute le ministre de l'environnement aura les moyens de coordonner l'action gouvernementale.

Cela concerne la Cité Anoushka, que vous connaissez peut-être. Cette cité se situe à 16^{ème} Mille mais n'est pas sur la route principale. Donc, les problèmes ne sont pas immédiatement visibles. Ce lieu est un des plus pauvres de ma circonscription, où furent relogés les *squatters* Rodriguais de La Pipe vers 1996/97. Il existe un problème réel en termes de qualité de la vie, en termes d'aménagement, des lieux publics.

Je voudrais brièvement demander au ministre s'il pourrait initier une action au niveau du gouvernement avec ses collègues pour considérer l'éclairage des lieux publics, l'entretien de ces mêmes lieux, l'enlèvement des ordures, la réparation des drains et, finalement, le jardin d'enfants qui, comme partout ailleurs - à Curepipe d'ailleurs - est laissé à l'abandon. Evidemment, c'est un problème de fond. Ces habitants nécessitent un encadrement social mais, pour l'instant, ce sont des laissés-pour-compte. Cette région étant totalement négligée, totalement délaissée alors que ces problèmes relèveraient, à priori, du conseil de district du sud.

Je fais un appel pour une action urgente afin d'assurer un assainissement de la situation, l'embellissement éventuellement, qui est la responsabilité du ministère de l'environnement. Il serait bien qu'il y ait une action concertée avec les autres ministères. Je parle au nom de mes deux colistiers. Nous serons prêts à travailler avec vous et je suis sûr que le ministre Yeung Sik Yuen se joindra à nous pour une action urgente en faveur de la Cité Anoushka.

Merci, M. le président.

The Minister of Environment & Sustainable Development (Mr D. Virahsawmy): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I shall have to see first where my responsibilities rest on this matter. I will talk to the Ministers concerned, possibly the Minister of Social Integration and Economic Empowerment, and the Minister of Housing and Lands. We will have to see who are responsible and I will try to attend to the problem. Thank you.

(7.48 p.m.)

ROSE HILL - ROYAL HALL – NOISE POLLUTION

Mrs L. Ribot (Third Member for Stanley & Rose Hill): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, je voudrais m'adresser au ministre de l'environnement. Je me réfère aux doléances que nous avons reçues des habitants du centre ville de Rose Hill concernant la pollution sonore causée par une salle des fêtes, la Royal Hall, dans le bâtiment NSZ.

(Interruptions)

C'est la santé aussi, je suppose ! Donc, c'est une salle des fêtes qui devrait opérer jusqu'à 22 heures, mais qui opère en tant que *night club* jusqu'aux petites heures du matin. Dans le passé, les habitants ont porté plainte. La Police de l'Environnement est intervenue. Elle a fait insonoriser les deux salles des fêtes et cela a été un peu mieux pendant quelques temps. Mais, cela a recommencé de plus belle.

Would the appropriate Minister please look into the matter? Thank you.

ROSE-HILL - SEWERAGE WORKS

M. le président, le deuxième point que je voudrais soulever s'adresse au *Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities* regarding the sewerage works in Rose Hill, more precisely in the vicinity of Mont Roches and Roches Brunès. Les travaux sont terminés depuis un bon bout de temps déjà et les routes ont été laissées telles quelles, c'est-à-dire couvertes de poussières, de roches et de trous. *Would the hon. Minister be kind enough to look into the matter?*

The Minister of Environment and Sustainable Development (Mr D. Virahsawmy): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, if the responsibilities fall under my Ministry, we shall surely attend to it. We shall ask the *Police de l'Environnement* to have a check again, perhaps the Ministry of Health also can help.

The Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities (Dr. R. Beebeejaun): Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, I will look into the issue.

At 7.49 p.m. the Assembly was, on its rising, adjourned to Friday 26 November 2010, at 3.30 p.m.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS**CITE 50, HIGHLANDS – ACCIDENT - INQUIRY**

(No. 1B/648) **Dr. R. Sorefan (Fourth Member for La Caverne and Phoenix)** asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in regard to the recent accident at Cité 50 Highlands, during the weekend of 14 and 15 November 2010, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to –

- (a) the circumstances thereof, and
- (b) if an inquiry has been carried out thereinto and the outcome thereof.

Reply: I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that on 14 November 2010 at 19.26 hours, Police Personnel at the Phoenix Police Station received a request through telephone regarding an accident at Highlands.

Police reported on the spot and on reaching there they saw no vehicle and received information that two victims involved in the road accident were already conveyed to the hospital by volunteers.

The Police officers thereafter proceeded to Victoria Hospital to ascertain the identity of the victims but could not record their statements because of the seriousness of their injuries. They also received information that lorry bearing registration number 2075 MY 04 driven by one Mr M.R. a resident of Boundary Road, Highlands was involved in the road accident.

In the meantime, Mr M.R. had called in person at the Phoenix Police Station to report the road accident. Whilst he was still at the Police Station, a message was received to the effect that one of the victims Mr M.M. had passed away.

At 22.00 hours Mr M.R. was arrested and tested positive to an alcohol test performed upon him. However, he refused to give a blood sample for analysis. He is detained at Vacoas Detention Centre. On 15 November 2010, Mr M.R. was brought before the District Magistrate

of Curepipe under a provisional charge of “Murder” and was remanded to Police cell. On 22 November, he appeared before Court again and has been remanded to Police cell until Monday 29 November 2010.

Police enquiry into the matter is still underway.

NATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION - VACANCIES

(No. 1B/649) Mr V. Baloomoody (Third Member for GRNW and Port Louis West) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in regard to the National Human Rights Commission, he will -

- (a) for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commission, information as to if the vacancies that exist thereat will be filled and if so, when and
- (b) state if Government proposes to put at the disposal of the Commission, additional means to carry out its mandate in the best conditions.

Reply: in regard to part (a) of the question, I would like to refer the hon. Member to the reply made to Parliamentary Question 1B/266 of 13 July 2010 wherein the House was informed that consultations were ongoing at the level of the Prime Minister’s Office, the Attorney General’s Office and the Chairperson of the National Human Rights Commission regarding structural changes to be brought to the Human Rights Commission with a view to broadening its mandate, increasing its independence and strengthening its efficiency.

The process has now reached its final stage and amendments to the Protection of the Human Rights Act and the drafting of new pieces of legislation is being finalised.

In the light of these developments, it is not proposed to fill the existing vacancies for the time being.

In regard to part (b) of the question, I would like to inform the House that in line with the structuring exercise, it is proposed that the National Human Rights Commission be composed of a Chairperson, a Deputy Chairperson and other members. The Chairperson and the Deputy Chairperson will be from a legal background whilst the other members will be persons having

knowledge and experience in the field of human rights, law, employment, industrial relations, business administration, education, sociology, policing, social work, psychology, medicine and prison management.

This new composition will allow greater flexibility, better allocation of resources and a more professional and selective approach by the Commission, since the Chairperson will have the possibility to assign members to the different divisions.

The law will also make better provisions for the recruitment of staff of the Commission as in addition to public officers seconded for duty at the Commission, the latter will be able to engage people on a contractual basis.

I would also like to inform the House that the proposed Police Complaints Division will be able to start investigations either on a complaint or on its own initiative, and will be vested with wide powers of investigation.

As regard the National Preventive Division, it is being created in order to fulfill our obligations under the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, to which Mauritius is a party. One of the main functions of this Division will be to visit places of detention so as to examine the treatment of persons deprived of their liberty with a view to ensuring their protection against torture and inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

The proposed changes in the structure of the National Human Rights Commission will provide it with additional means and enhance its capacity to better fulfill its mandate.

LE MORNE WORLD HERITAGE SITE - SIGN POSTS

(No. 1B/676) Mrs J. Radegonde (Fourth Member for Savanne and Black River) asked the Minister of Arts and Culture whether, in regard to the putting up of conspicuous sign

posts in the region of Le Morne to indicate the Le Morne World Heritage site, he will state where matters stand.

Reply: Signboards indicating the Le Morne World Heritage site have been redesigned to include an indication plan and have been installed at conspicuous places.

I am tabling two photos of such boards fixed at Le Morne.

**PLAINES WILHEMS SEWERAGE PROJECT - ST SAUVEUR CHURCH,
BAMBOUS**

(No. 1B/677) Mr A. Ganoo (First Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether, in regard to the construction of a pumping station in connection with the Plaines Wilhems Sewerage Project, opposite the St Sauveur Church, at Bambous, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Waste Water Management Authority, information as to –

- (a) why another site has not been chosen in lieu of the present one;
- (b) if prior consultations were held with the *Forces Vives* and the neighbourhood, including the priest of the Paroisse de St Sauveur, and
- (c) if any letter was issued to the Authority requesting it to inform and consider the views of the inhabitants of the region in relation thereto.

Reply: The pumping station being constructed at Bambous falls under the Plaine Wilhems Sewerage Project, Lot 1A and is part of the process of conveyance of effluents from the catchment area under Lot 1A to the St Martin Treatment plant.

Taking into account developments that have taken place in the region, the Consultant advised routing of the trunk sewer through Bambous and enable connection of about 40% of households in part of Bambous and Beaux Songes to allow them to benefit from the sewer network sooner and prevent ground water contamination.

A pumping station in a sewerage network is necessary when the raw effluent has to travel uphill. As regards the choice of the site, the technology used for the construction of pumping stations is such that it should be located at the lowest point of the network. The site at Bambous, which has been acquired with great difficulty, is technically most appropriate and the station will also serve for future expansion of the network.

The trunk main sewer from Palma travels by gravity to Bambous, the lowest part of this *tracé*, and is then pumped uphill to St. Martin Treatment Plant which is on a much higher elevation.

For the information of the House, a pumping station is distinct from a treatment plant. It is a hermetic system located deep underground and only the electrical equipment will be at ground level. There is no risk of noise, odour or overflow. Moreover, once the works are carried out and the landscaping completed, the station situated at not less than 100 metres from the main entrance of the Church on the opposite side of the road and 35 metres away from the road will have no adverse visual impact.

As regard parts (b) and (c) of the question, I am informed by the Wastewater Management Authority that, in September 2010, prior to the start of the excavation works in Bambous, it carried out a public relations exercise to sensitise the inhabitants. This exercise triggered a number of requests from inhabitants to be connected to the network.

On 20 October 2010, a meeting was held between representatives of the WMA, the Consultant, the Contractor and the Curé, followed by a site visit, during which all the explanations were provided.

On 16 November 2010, the WMA met the representatives of the local community. Further communications will follow.

There are 68 pumping stations around the island, mostly in residential areas, or close to shopping centres, restaurants and numerous religious institutions without any inconvenience to the neighbourhood.

SEBASTOPOL, BEL AIR - STREET LIGHTING

(No. 1B/678) Mr J. Seetaram (Second Member for Montagne Blanche & GRSE) asked the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the road from Sebastopol to Bel Air, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Moka/Flacq District Council, information as to if street lighting will be provided thereat as pedestrians using that road regularly face serious risks of accident.

Reply: I am informed by the Moka-Flacq District Council that following a survey carried out from Sebastopol to Bel Air, it has been observed that street lighting is not available along the main road from Sebastopol to Kewal Nagar over a distance of approximately 6.2kms.

The Council has further informed that the extension of the lighting network from Sebastopol to Kewal Nagar is estimated at Rs6m., but street lighting cannot be provided there as currently there is no CEB network along that stretch of the road and funds are not available for the time being.

**HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL - 24/7 EVENTS - COST
INCURRED**

(No. 1B/679) Mr D. Nagalingum (Second Member for Stanley & Rose Hill) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether, in regard to the editions of 24/7 organised by the Human Resource Development Council, he will –

- (a) for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Council, a breakdown of the cost incurred in each case, indicating -
 - (i) the names of the sponsors and the respective amount donated, and
 - (ii) if tenders were launched for the provision of services, and
- (b) state if public funds were used therefor, and if so, under which item of expenditure.

Reply: With regard to the five editions of the 24/7 events organised by the Human Resource Development Council (HRDC), I am arranging to table the following information -

- (i) a breakdown of amount incurred in each case, and
- (ii) the names of the sponsors and the respective amount donated.

I am informed that for all the five (5) editions of the 24/7 events, prescribed tender and procurement procedures for all services were followed in accordance with the Public Procurement Act 2006.

With regard to part (b), I would like to inform the House that no public funds were utilised. The expense involved for the 24/7 Events were met from donations by sponsors as well as from the National Training Fund (NTF) made up of contributions from Employers of the Private Sector. Necessary funds were earmarked in respect of the Project: “National Sensitisation Campaign to change work attitude and implementation of the 24/7 Economic model”, which has been duly approved by the Human Resource Development Council.

MAURITIUS COMMERCIAL BANK LTD. - IT SYSTEM – IMPLEMENTATION

(No. 1B/680) Mr M. Seeruttun (Second Member for Vieux Grand Port & Rose Belle) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether

in regard to the Mauritius Commercial Bank Ltd., he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Bank of Mauritius, information as to if the Mauritius Commercial Bank has complied with the provisions of the Banking Act regarding its obligations to inform –

- (a) all the authorities and its clients of the implementation of its new IT system, and
- (b) the Bank of Mauritius of the problems encountered during the implementation phase and the hardships caused to the clients and, if not, the actions that have been initiated against the Mauritius Commercial Bank, if any.

(Withdrawn)

**MORCELLEMENT SUROOWAN & CHEMIN LA POMPE, CAROLINE, BEL
AIR - LIGHTS**

(No. 1B/681) Mr J. Seetaram (Second Member for Montagne Blanche & GRSE) asked the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the Morcellement Suroowan Road and Chemin La Pompe, situated at Caroline, Bel Air, he will state if it is proposed to put up new lights thereat, in view of the difficulties, faced by the road users at night.

Reply: I am informed by the Moka-Flacq District Council that a survey has already been carried out within the Morcellement Suroowan (also known as Morcellement Sohawon) at Caroline, Bel Air. As at date, 16 sodium lanterns (CFL 40) have been fixed within the Morcellement where poles and conductors were already available. However, it has been observed that there is a dark spot at Chemin La Pompe due to the absence of poles and conductors. The Council is making necessary arrangements with the Central Electricity Board for the fixing of poles and conductors.

SCHOOL LANE, BRAMSTHAN - DRAINS

(No. 1B/682) Mr J. Seetaram (Second Member for Montagne Blanche & GRSE) asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping whether he will state if it is proposed to put up new drains along the school lane, Bramsthan, as there is recurrent water accumulation thereat after heavy rainfall.

(Withdrawn)

MUNICIPAL COUNCIL – EMPLOYEES ALLOWANCES - OVERTIME

(No. 1B/683) Mr D. Nagalingum (Second Member for Stanley & Rose Hill) asked the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the Municipal Council of Beau Bassin/Rose Hill, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Council, information as to if some of its employees have not yet been paid their overtime allowances and if so, give a list thereof, indicating, in each case -

- (a) since when;
- (b) the quantum thereof, and
- (c) the reasons therefor.

Reply: I am informed by the Municipal Council of Beau Bassin-Rose Hill that all approved overtime allowances due to its employees have already been paid to date.

RODRIGUES – REGIONAL POLICE BAND - RECRUITMENT

(No. 1A/159) Dr S. Boolell (Second Member for Curepipe & Midlands) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in regard to the recruitment of police constables from Rodrigues for the constitution of a Regional Police Band, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to –

- (a) where matters stand, and
- (b) if the Police Constables from Rodrigues enlisted for training in music could be posted for longer periods in Rodrigues, on family grounds.

Reply: Vacancies in the Mauritius Police Force are advertised throughout the State of Mauritius and potential candidates both from mainland Mauritius and Rodrigues may submit their applications. There has never been recruitment in Rodrigues for the constitution of a regional Police Band.

As regards part (a) of the question, following a recruitment exercise for the post of Trainee Bandsman in 2003, eight Rodriguans were enlisted. They were all appointed as Bandsmen on 14 November 2005 and are posted to the Mauritius Police Band.

The eight Bandsmen, restyled Band Constables, are undergoing practical and on-the-job training with a view to attaining the required level of proficiency and competency and it is a long

process to turn them into good musicians. The Rodriguan Band Constables have not yet reached the required standard to act as professional musicians, and they need additional years of training to become reliable instrumentalists.

Also, for the proper setting up of a sub-unit of the Police Band in Rodrigues, at least 18 musicians/instrumentalists and supervisors must have attained the required level of proficiency and competency.

As for part (b) of the question, three of the seven married Band Constables are presently living with their families in Mauritius. To enable them to spend time with their families in Rodrigues, since 2007 necessary arrangements have been made with the Special Mobile Force to send two Rodriguan Band Constables at a time with the SMF Task Force on a tour of duty of 45 days to Rodrigues.

Accordingly, on average, each of the Bandsman Constables has served three tours of duty per year. However, it is to be noted that longer periods of posting in Rodrigues would hinder their training and development as Band Constables.

AIR MAURITIUS LTD. – AEROPLANES - PURCHASE

(No. 1A/160) Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in regard to Air Mauritius Ltd., he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Company, information as to if it is in the process of purchasing new aeroplanes and if so, indicate the –

- (a) type;
- (b) cost;
- (c) delivery period, and
- (d) if any guarantee from Government has been requested for.

Reply: In regard to parts (a), (b) and (c) of the question, matters relating to renewal of fleet or acquisition of airplanes are operational matters which fall under the responsibility of the management and Board of the Company.

Regarding part (d) of the question, no request for Government Guarantee has at to-day been made in connection with the acquisition of new airplanes.

AIR MAURITIUS LTD. – HEDGING LOSSES

(No. 1A/161) Mr R. Bhagwan (First Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in regard to hedging losses at Air Mauritius Ltd., he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Company, information as to the amount paid to-date, in Mauritian rupees, as guaranteed by the Government of Mauritius.

Reply: Information about hedging losses of the Company is disclosed by the Company to all its shareholders in the part of its Annual Report dealing with Financial Statements and is also disclosed to the public through the press in its quarterly interim financial statement and the hon. Member may wish to take cognizance of such information in those documents.

In 2008, Government provided guarantees of USD 65 Million to a hedging counterparty as collateral. However, in view of the fact that, Air Mauritius Ltd has always honoured its hedging payment obligations, the guarantees were never drawn upon. The hedging transactions with the counterparty expired in July 2010.

TRAFFIC BRANCH – POLICE RIDERS – LEATHER JACKETS

(No. 1A/162) Dr R.Sorefan (Fourth Member for La Caverne & Phoenix) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in regard to the Police Riders posted at the Traffic Branch, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to the frequency at which they are provided with leather jackets, indicating the –

- (a) date on which they were last issued with same, and
- (b) present number thereof available in stock.

Reply: Leather jackets are issued to Traffic Riders, Despatch Riders and Police Riders posted to the VIPSU on an individual basis, since 1998. There is no established frequency for the issue of such jackets but in general, these are issued for a period of three years subject to

wear and tear and damage resulting from accidents. The last issue of leather jackets was effected on 31 July 2010.

Police has now decided to acquire a new waterproof suit (Goretex) instead of leather jackets. While the latter protects only the upper part of the body, the new suit provides full body protection and better protects Police Riders against rainy weather and other unfavourable climatic conditions. A first consignment of 19 such suits has already been received, and procurement of an additional 300 has been initiated and quotations are presently being evaluated by the Police Tender Committee.

Consequently, there is no need to have leather jackets in stock.

SECURITY FIRMS – FIRE ARMS AND AMMUNITIONS

(No. 1A/163) Mr V. Baloomoody (Third Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Home Affairs and External Communications whether, in regard to fire-arms and ammunitions, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Commissioner of Police, information as to the number thereof authorized for possession by security firms, indicating the –

- (a) conditions attached thereto concerning the safe keeping thereof, and
- (b) if there are cases of security firms which are not registered but are in possession of fire-arms and ammunitions and if so, the actions taken against them, if any.

Reply: In regard to part (a) of the question, as at 18 November 2010, out of the 17 private security firms which are duly licensed to undertake security and property protection services under the Private Security Service Act 2004, only 6 of them hold a firearm licence and possess a total of 182 firearms and 4,475 ammunition, duly authorized by the Commissioner of Police. Such firearms are used by employees of the security firms engaged on escort duties for cash-in-transit only.

Section 15 of the Firearms Act 2006 spells out some of the conditions attached to the issue of a Firearm Licence to a private security service provider. As regards the safekeeping of firearms and ammunition, section 15(2)(a) of the Firearms Act provides that the Commissioner of Police may direct any private security service provider to provide and maintain such armouries or other storage facilities for firearms, ammunition, and other related equipment, to be kept safe. In fact, one of the terms and conditions attached to the grant of firearm licence to

private security service providers is that all firearms or ammunition should, at all times, when not in actual use, be kept in two separate secured places to prevent access by unauthorised persons and to safeguard against any loss or theft.

In regard to part (b) of the question, as at 18 November 2010, there are no such cases.

SCHOOL CAREER GUIDANCE – COUNSELLING

(No. 1A/164) Ms S. Anquetil (Fourth Member for Vacoas & Floreal) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether, in regard to the school career guidance, he will state the measures taken by his Ministry to assist students and parents in making subject choices.

Reply: The main functions of the Careers Guidance Service are the following -

- To offer Careers Guidance to young people.
- To provide careers information.
- To encourage and support careers education activities in schools.

A new orientation is being given to Careers Guidance. In order to be pro-active, Educare, the website of Careers Guidance, has been developed to offer comprehensive information on education and Careers Guidance. Counselling is being given to parents and students on choice of subjects and careers guidance. The aim is to provide career advice at an early stage on subjects which must be taken to pursue the right course for a career in a chosen field. Training programmes will be organised for the benefit of Educators to ensure that in different schools, there are trained Educators to guide students on choice of subjects. Steps are being taken to reinforce the Career Guidance Service to enable it to operate effectively to offer Career Guidance to students in general.

MUNICIPAL COUNCIL OF VACOAS/PHOENIX – LEGAL ADVISERS

(No. 1A/165) Mrs F. Labelle (Third Member for Vacoas & Floreal) asked the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the legal advisers of the

Municipal Council of Vacoas/Phoenix, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Council, information as to the names of the incumbents, indicating in each case -

- (a) since when their services have been retained;
- (b) their terms and conditions of appointment, and
- (c) the total amount of retainer or any other fees which have been paid to them.

Reply: The information requested by the hon. Member is being compiled by the Municipal Council of Vacoas-Phoenix and will be placed in the Library as soon as it will be made available.

CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY FUND - BENEFICIARIES

(No. 1A/166) Mrs F. Labelle (Third Member for Vacoas & Floreal) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development whether, in regard to the Corporate Social Responsibility Fund, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Fund and table the list of the Non-Governmental Organisations which have, since the setting up thereof, benefitted therefrom, indicating the -

- (a) names thereof;
- (b) projects funded, and
- (c) amount disbursed.

Reply: I am herewith tabling the list of Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) which have been benefitted from the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Fund.

The list provides –

- (i) the names of the NGOs;
- (ii) the project which have been funded, and
- (iii) the amount disbursed as at to date.

CARNEGIE LIBRARY - UPGRADING

(No. 1A/167) Dr. S. Boolell (Second Member for Curepipe & Midlands) asked the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether he is aware of the poor conditions prevailing at the Carnegie Library, in Curepipe and if so, will he state if he will effect a site visit

thereat and use his good offices to impress upon the Municipal Council of Curepipe, the need to address the problems in relation thereto, including the renewal and upgrading of the reading materials and to give logistic support.

Reply: I have been to the Carnegie Library on the occasion of the inauguration of an American Corner financed by the Embassy of the United States of America.

Due to extension works to the Municipal Building for offices behind the Carnegie Library, part of the Carnegie Library had to undergo certain demolition works. As such, the Lending and Children Sections were demolished and these services are currently being accommodated in another place.

The Carnegie Library will be reinstated back to its normal state shortly as the construction of the new Administrative Centre has been completed.

Also, with the implementation of the E-Governance project for Local Authorities, data are being input in the computer system to provide a better service to the public.

As regards renewal of books, an amount of Rs600,000 is spent annually on this item.

VALLEE PITOT, PORT LOUIS – METHADONE - DISTRIBUTION

(No. 1A/168) Mr R. Uteem (Second Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central) asked the Minister of Health and Quality of Life whether, in regard to the distribution of methadone to the drug addicts, in the region of Vallée Pitot, Port Louis, she will state if she has received any complaint against such distribution from the inhabitants of the area and if so, if her Ministry proposes transferring the distribution of same to another area, indicating the measures taken in relation thereto.

Reply: My Ministry has received two written complaints, namely one dated 18 May 2010 from a few residents of Vallée Pitot and a second one on 8 October, 2010 from the “*Forces Vives*” of the locality.

I have to point out that prior to starting the dispensing unit at Vallée Pitot in May 2009, a meeting was held with the Community Leaders and the representatives of the “*Forces Vives*” of the region. A consensus was reached for the Mobile Dispensing Caravan to be placed in the compound of the Vallée Pitot Community Health Centre, in the absence of a more suitable site for the dispensing of methadone to the clients residing in the locality.

My Ministry intends to relocate the dispensing unit and two sites have been identified as follows, of which one will be chosen -

- (i) Dr Idrice Goomany Area Health Centre after relocation of its activities to the new medi-clinic at Plaine Verte; and
- (ii) a building at Abattoir Street, Port Louis after refurbishment and upgrading.

CREMEA STREET/ MILITARY ROAD – ROAD CONSTRUCTION

(No. 1A/169) Mr R. Uteem (Second Member for Port Louis South & Port Louis Central) asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to the project for the construction of the road linking the Cremea street, in Vallée Pitot, to the Military Road, he will state where matters stand.

Reply: The information requested is being placed in the Library.

MUNICIPAL COUNCIL OF BEAU BASSIN/ROSE HILL - MAYOR'S FUND - BENEFICIARIES

(No. 1A/170) Mrs L. Ribot (Third Member for Stanley & Rose Hill) asked the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the Mayor's Fund, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Municipal Council of Beau Bassin/Rose Hill, a breakdown of the disbursements therefrom, since October 2005 to-date, indicating, in each case, the –

- (a) names of the beneficiaries;
- (b) quantum thereof, and
- (c) purpose therefor.

Reply: The information requested by the hon. Member is being compiled by the Municipal Council of Beau Bassin/Rose Hill and will be placed in the Library as soon as same are made available.

BOUNDARY & HUGNIN ROADS - HAND RAILS & TRAFFIC LIGHTS

(No. 1A/171) Mrs L. Ribot (Third Member for Stanley & Rose Hill) asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping

whether, in regard to the junction at Boundary and Hugnin Roads, at St Patrick, in Rose Hill, he will state if it is proposed to install hand rails and traffic lights thereat.

Reply: The Traffic Management and Road Safety Unit (TMRSU) has stated that it is not advisable to put handrails at the junction at Boundary and Hugnin Roads at St. Patrick in Rose Hill. There is a footpath only along one side of the road at junction starting from Hugnin Road and heading towards Boundary Road. By placing handrails at that junction, pedestrians crossing the Boundary Road would not be able to get access on the footpath and will, therefore, have to walk on the road. In addition, handrails would hinder the visibility of drivers exiting from Hugnin Road to join Boundary Road.

As regards traffic lights, TMRSU has stated that junction cannot be in view of a bus stop located very near the junction at 10.5m along Hugnin Road at the widest portion of the road that would affect the proper operation of the traffic lights. The bus stop cannot be relocated because of lack of appropriate location in the vicinity.

LAND CONVERSION

(No. 1A/172) **Mr K. Li Kwong Wing (Second Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière)** asked the Minister of Agro-Industry and Food Security whether, in regard to the applications for conversion of agricultural land under irrigation to non-agricultural purposes, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Irrigation Authority, information on a yearly basis since 2006 to-date, as to the –

- (a) number thereof that have been approved, indicating in each case, the names of the owners, and
- (b) if there has been any complaint of conflict of interest in the application for conversion of lands of the extent of 4 220,87 sq metres, 1A39 and 2A12 respectively and belonging to the Chairperson and a member of the Board and if so, the actions taken, if any.

Reply: For part (a) of the question, I am tabling all the information as provided by the Irrigation Authority. Lands under gazetted irrigation areas are considered as agricultural land and conversion to non agricultural use or excision of these lands from irrigation areas is granted

under the Sugar Industry Efficiency Act 2001. The Irrigation Authority has no power to approve conversion or excision of land.

I am advised that the practice of excising land from irrigation zone started in November, 2003 and this practice has perpetuated over the years and was only stopped in February 2008 following written instructions from my Ministry.

As regards part (b) of the question, I am informed by the Irrigation Authority that the Independent Commission Against Corruption, ICAC, had conducted an inquiry between May and December 2008. Two officers of the Irrigation Authority were delegated to give statements at ICAC in December 2008. We do not know the outcome of the query yet.

EUGENE DUPONSEL STREET, PORT LOUIS - FOOTBRIDGES

(No. 1A/173) Mr A. Ameer Meea (First Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East) asked the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether he is aware that the two footbridges and the retaining wall along the bridge situated at Eugène Duponsel Street, Port Louis, ex Pont Rouge Street are in a bad state and have been severely damaged thereby representing hazards and if so, will he, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Municipal Council of Port Louis, information as to the urgent remedial measures that will be taken.

Reply: I am informed by the Municipal Council of Port Louis that the two footbridges are long standing ones and have been affected by wear and tear.

The Council is identifying funds for the reconstruction of the footbridges as well as for the upgrading of the retaining wall and upon approval of its Public Works Committee, works will be carried out.

In the meantime urgent remedial maintenance works have been carried out to ensure the safety of the public.

SPORTS FEDERATIONS - GRANTS ALLOCATION

(No. 1A/174) Mr F. Quirin (Third Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Youth and Sports whether, in regard to the Sports Federations, he will give a breakdown of the grants allocated thereto for the financial year 2010.

Reply: The information requested is being placed in the Library.

BEAU BASSIN & PETITE RIVIÈRE - WATER SUPPLY

(No. 1A/175) Mr F. Quirin (Third Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether he is aware of the hardships being faced by consumers in regard to water supply in Constituency No.20, Beau Bassin and Petite Rivière and if so, will he, for the benefit of the House –

- (a) obtain from the Central Water Authority, information as to the remedial measures that will be taken, and
- (b) if the network of Cité Vuillemin and Dumat Street, Beau Bassin, will be upgraded and if so, when.

Reply: I am informed by the Central Water Authority that the regions of Beau Bassin are supplied from Rose Hill and Meldrum Service Reservoirs which receive water from Trianon borehole (6,500 m³/day) and Herchenroder borehole (3500 m³/day).

Due to the dry season, as at end of October 2010, the yield of these boreholes had decreased by about 45%. As a result, the water supply to Beau Bassin region is intermittent and the hours of supply are from 4.00 a.m. to 9.00 a.m. and 4.00 p.m. to 9.00 p.m.

I am informed that the region of Petite Rivière is supplied from Bosquet Service Reservoir which receives water from Pierrefonds tunnel (30,000 m³/day) and St. Martin borehole (2500 m³/day). In addition, water supply at Petite Rivière is supplemented from Petite Rivière borehole at the rate of 2,200 m³/day.

Due to dry season, the yield at Pierrefonds tunnel has decreased by 47% from 30,000 m³/day to 16,000 m³/day while the Petite Rivière borehole has been closed due to the depletion of the ground water.

The CWA is carrying out valve operations to share the available water resources in the region and to supply Petite Rivière with water between 04.00 p.m. and 08.00 a.m. It also provides a tanker service, as and when necessary.

With regard to part (b) of the question, I am informed that -

- i. at Cité Vuillemin, the AC pipe reticulation is in good condition and the need for a replacement does not arise for the time being, and
- ii. an extent of 100 meters of defective pipe at Dumat street has been renewed some three weeks ago and water supply to Dumat Street has improved.

LA GAULETTE & CASE NOYALE – WATER SUPPLY

(No. 1A/176) Mrs J. Radegonde (Fourth Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether he is aware of the problems in the supply of water in the regions of La Gaulette and Case Noyale, in Constituency No.14, Savanne and Black River and if so, will he, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Central Water Authority, information as to the remedial measures that will be taken

Reply: The hon. Member may wish to refer to my reply to Parliamentary Question No. 1A/12 on 06 July 2010, wherein I informed the House that -

- i. the regions of La Gaulette and Case Noyale receive water from Bois Puant Reservoir, which is fed from Yemen borehole.
- ii. due to the dry season, water in the Yemen borehole has decreased from 4000m³ day to 2000m³ daily, resulting in reduced hours of supply to consumers, and
- iii. the water shortage problems in the regions of La Gaulette and Case Noyale can only be addressed by transferring additional water resources from La Marie Treatment Plant to Bois Puant Service reservoir.

This project involves about the installation of 27 kms of pipeline at an estimated cost of Rs292 m. The bidding documents are being finalised and bids are expected to be invited in January 2011, subject to funds being obtained.

The project has been delayed because the Central Water Authority has had to re-align of the pipeline due to way leave problems.

FLIC EN FLAC – ELECTRICITY SUPPLY

(No. 1A/177) Mrs J. Radegonde (Fourth Member for Savanne & Black River) asked the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities whether he is aware that there was a problem of high voltage in the supply of electricity in the region of Flic en Flac, in Constituency No.14, Savanne and Black River at the beginning of October 2010 and if so, will he, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Central Electricity Board, information as to the remedial measures that have been taken.

Reply: I am informed by the Central Electricity Board that on 04 October 2010, two complaints were received on the Hotline Service 130, namely –

- i. at about 06.46 a.m., in respect of low voltage, and
- ii. at 7.01 a.m., about voltage fluctuation.

An immediate investigation carried out by a team from the Central Electricity Board revealed that a neutral connector of CEB's low voltage network (LV) was burnt, resulting in a surge of voltage. The burnt neutral connector was replaced and supply was restored, following repairs and inspection at around 08.27 a.m.

I am advised by the Central Electricity Board that following a survey carried out on 04 and 05 October 2010, it was found that 13 households had suffered damage of their electrical appliances, mainly of TV sets, washing machines, water pumps and lamps.

These households have been advised by the Central Electricity Board to submit their claims to CEB's Insurance Company, SICOM, for refund.

MUNICIPAL COUNCIL OF QUATRE BORNES - MAYOR'S FUND - DISBURSEMENTS

(No. 1A/178) Mr K. Ramano (Second Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes) asked the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the Mayor's

Fund, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Municipal Council of Quatre Bornes, a breakdown of the disbursements therefrom, since October 2005 to-date, indicating the –

- (a) names of the service providers;
- (b) amount paid to each of them, and
- (c) amount paid for food and beverages.

Reply: The information requested by the hon. Member is being compiled by the Municipal Council of Quatre Bornes and will be placed in the Library as soon as they will be available.

BELLE ROSE & QUATRE BORNES – NDU PROJECTS

(No. 1A/179) **Mr K. Ramano (Second Member for Belle Rose & Quatre Bornes)** asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping whether, in regard to the projects undertaken by the National Development Unit, in Constituency No.18, Belle Rose and Quatre Bornes, since July 2005 to date, he will give the list thereof, indicating, in each case, the –

- (a) nature;
- (b) cost involved, and
- (c) start and completion dates.

Reply: The information is being placed in the Library.

MUNICIPAL COUNCIL OF PORT LOUIS - LEGAL ADVISERS

(No. 1A/180) **Mr A. Ameer Meea (First Member for Port Louis Maritime & Port Louis East)** asked the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands whether, in regard to the legal advisers of the Municipal Council of Port Louis, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Council, information as to the names of the incumbents, indicating, in each case

–

- (a) since when their services have been retained;
- (b) their terms and conditions of appointment, and
- (c) the total amount of retainer or any other fees which have been paid to them.

Reply: The information requested by the hon. Member is being compiled by the Municipal Council of Port Louis and will be placed in the Library as soon as they will be available.

VANDERMEERSCH STREET, BEAU BASSIN - TARRING

(No. 1A/181) Mr K. Li Kwong Wing (Second Member for Beau Bassin & Petite Rivière) asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping whether he will state if he is aware of the deplorable state of the Vandermeersch Street in Beau Bassin from the roundabout to the Rose Hill Bus Station thereby creating risks of accidents and if so, will he state if it is proposed to have the road tarred and if so, when.

Reply: The improvement and resurfacing works along Vandermeersch Street from the roundabout in Beau Bassin to the Rose Hill Bus Station will be undertaken in the next Financial Year.

PQ No. IB/650

CEB – CFL LAMPS – PURCHASE**(i) Composition of Evaluation Committee**

The Evaluation Committee is appointed by the General Manager and was composed of:-

Mr J.Seetohul Senior Engineer – Chairman

Members

Mr R.Busgeeth Engineer

Mr R. Appadu Engineer

Ms N. Ancharaz Accounting Technician

(ii) Composition of Tender Committee

Name	Responsibility held on the Tender Committee	Substantive Post at the CEB
Mr R.Nundall	Chairman	Principal Engineer
Mr A.Lachmansingh	Member	Principal Engineer
Mr K.Ellayah	Member	Accountant

(iii) Composition of Finance Committee

Dr P.M.K.Soonarane	Representative of the Ministry of Energy and Public Utilities (Chairman)
Members	
Mr K.Seebundhun	Representative of the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development
Mr S. Kinnoo	Representative of the Institution of Engineers
Mr C. Dabeedin	General Manager

APPENDIX II**PQ No.1B/654****EUROPEAN FREE TRADE AREA – SWITZERLAND & NORWAY –
DIPLOMATIC TIES**

As the House is aware, the European Free Trade Area (EFTA) consists of four countries namely, Switzerland, Norway, Liechtenstein and Iceland. Mauritius already has diplomatic relations with these countries, except Liechtenstein.

With Switzerland, diplomatic relations were established in September 1968 and our Embassy in Paris is accredited to that country. Government has agreed to the appointment of our Permanent Representative to the United Nations and World Trade Organisation in Geneva as the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Mauritius to Switzerland. The *Agrément* in respect of Ambassador Servansing, our Permanent representative in Geneva, has been obtained on 03 June 2008 and the latter will present his letter of Credence shortly.

Diplomatic Relations between Mauritius and the Kingdom of Norway were established on 30 January 1973 and our High Commission in London is accredited to Norway.

As regards our diplomatic relations with Iceland, on 15 December 2003, the Permanent Representative of Mauritius to the United Nations and the Ambassador of Iceland signed a Joint Communiqué establishing diplomatic relations between Mauritius and Iceland.

I would like to inform the House that Mauritius maintains good relations with the EFTA countries, both at the political and economic levels. Through our proactive diplomacy, we have been able to derive significant benefits from Switzerland and Norway. I would like to highlight some of the achievements as follows:

With Switzerland

- A “*Short-stay Visa Waiver and on Mutual Exemption for Holders of Diplomatic and Service Passports*” between Mauritius and Switzerland was signed on 26 October 2010.
- An *Investment Promotion and Protection Agreement (IPPA)* between Mauritius and Switzerland was signed in November 1998 and it entered into force in April 2000.
- A *Bilateral Air Services Agreement (BASA)* between Mauritius and Switzerland was concluded in 1979.
- In December 2005, Mauritius and Switzerland signed an “*Agreement concerning cooperation in the event of natural disaster, crisis or serious accident*”.
- A *Consulting Agreement* was signed in September 2002 with Lausanne Hospitality Consulting, which is a division of the *Ecole Hotelière de Lausanne*. The Agreement focuses *inter-alia* on training, carrying out academic audits of the Mauritius Hotel School, exchange of students and guidance on the development of the Hotel school building and campus. According to the IVTB, which bears all the costs pertaining to the consulting agreement, the contribution of the *Ecole Hotelière de Lausanne* has been very beneficial to the Hotel School, the trainers and the trainees. The Consulting agreement was, however, not renewed when it ended in September 2005.
- In the health sector, *Mauritius has signed three MoUs with “Hôpitaux Universitaires de Genève”* and Mauritius benefits from extensive assistance from Switzerland in the medical field.

With Norway

- *Cooperation in Fisheries*: An Agreement between the Ministry of Agro-Industry and Fisheries and the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD) regarding Development Cooperation concerning combating Illegal Fishing, Marine Resources Management and Strengthening Quality Control of Fish Products was signed on 17 April 2008 by myself in my then capacity as Minister of Agro-Industry and H.E. Mr Torbjorn Gaustadsaether, former Ambassador of Norway in Maputo.

Besides the bilateral relations we maintain individually with the EFTA countries, I also wish to inform the House that Mauritius has already signed a Joint Declaration on Cooperation

with the EFTA States, as a bloc, on 09 June 2009. The Joint Declaration on Cooperation provides for enhanced economic relations between Mauritius and the EFTA countries, in particular concerning trade in goods, services and investment. The Joint Declaration on Cooperation is a first step towards the conclusion of a Comprehensive Agreement with the EFTA States with a view to expediting the launch of FTA negotiations. I wrote to the EFTA Secretary General on this issue, with copy to the Member States on 10 August 2010. In his response dated 14 September 2010, the Secretary General of EFTA proposed that a first meeting of the Committee established under the joint Declaration be held to chart the way forward.

While Mauritius has been relatively successful on the diplomatic front to represent and safeguard the interests of Mauritius vis-à-vis EFTA countries, we are committed to further strengthening our relations and pursuing more elaborated diplomatic ties with the EFTA member countries individually. In this regard, we have identified some additional areas of cooperation to further consolidate our relations with the EFTA countries, which are as follows –

With Switzerland

- In the field of health, Switzerland could be approached for assistance in the field of (i) non Communicable Diseases, (ii) Vector Biology & Control, (iii) Primary Health Care.
- Another possible area of cooperation with Switzerland could be in the field of manufacturing industry, given that Switzerland has a manufacturing industry that specialises in high technology. In this regard, Mauritius and Switzerland could set up joint ventures, alliances and partnerships in the relevant manufacturing sectors.
- As Switzerland has developed an edge in many high precision and leading technology in a wide range of sectors, which are of interest to Mauritius such as watch-making, pharmaceutical, biotechnology, manufacture of machine tools and precision engineering, assistance could be sought in terms of technology transfer and skills development.

With Norway, assistance and cooperation could be sought in the following fields:

- **Education:** Developing links between the *Conservatoire National de Musique François Mitterand* and Norwegian Schools of Music, setting up a Child Study Centre to serve as a

Research and Documentation Centre for both educators and parents; scholarships at postgraduate and doctorate levels in marine sciences, oceanography, clinical medicine and financial services, develop links between the Mauritius Qualification Authority and its Norwegian counterpart for the mutual recognition of qualifications.

- **Industry:** Developing our agro-based, including, food and dairy processing industries; and promoting joint ventures in sectors like fishing and seafood, dairy products, paper products, shipbuilding, food processing, paper products, metals, chemicals and textiles.
- **Investment Opportunities:** Norway is a rich country exporting gas, petroleum and petroleum products. The strategic location of Mauritius as a gateway to Africa coupled with preferential trade regime under COMESA and SADC could be instrumental in attracting investment from Norway. Besides, duty free access through AGOA could be explored to have businessmen from Norway establish their production units in Mauritius so as to access the US market.
- We have proposed a broad development cooperation agenda with Norway that would span over several sectors, including environment, education, investment, amongst others.

With Iceland, cooperation could be sought in the field of energy, particularly, renewable energy, fisheries and the Maritime Research Institute of Iceland.